

# Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity Urges Colleges and Universities To Continue to Create Global Leaders

*The LEAD Fund urges Academic Institutions and Corporations to Use Creative Strategies to Prepare the Next Generation of Leaders*

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Washington, DC – June 29, 2023. The Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity (LEAD Fund), a national not-for-profit organization styled as a “Think and Do Tank,” strongly urges the nation’s academic institutions to use creative strategies to prepare the next generation of leaders notwithstanding the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions Inc v. the University of North Carolina (SFFA)*. In SFFA, the plaintiffs, including White and Asian-American students, asked the Court to rule that race-conscious higher education admissions programs should be declared

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*Dr. Christopher Metzler, Chair of the LEAD Fund’s Board of Directors*

unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In both cases, the lower courts found no discrimination and upheld the principle that diversity in admissions is a compelling interest under the Constitution.

Reversing 45 years of precedent the Supreme Court ruled that both Harvard University and the University of North Carolina violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and Title VI. It curiously argued that the 14th Amendment, enacted to overcome the vestiges of slavery, is color-blind and that the institutions failed to sustain the

strict scrutiny test used by the Court because they failed to operate their race-based admissions programs in a manner that is “sufficiently measurable to permit judicial [review]” and because



their admissions programs operated as a “stereotype.” The Court added: “College admissions are zero sum, and a benefit provided to some applicants but not to others necessarily advantages the former at the expense of the latter.” The Court also argued that these programs lacked a “logical endpoint.”

The Court’s decision is limited to higher education admissions, not employment or contracting.

Founded in 2014, the LEAD Fund was established to provide thought leadership in promoting inclusive organizations and institutions through research and education on issues related to diversity, social responsibility, human and civil rights. A 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. the Fund complements the work of the American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED) through programs and activities that address a range of concerns, including affirmative action, equal opportunity, equity, access, civil rights, and diversity and inclusion in education, employment, business and contracting. The LEAD Fund places a special emphasis on the emerging demographics in the United States in all of its work. In 2022, the Fund joined AAAED in filing an amicus curiae brief in support of the universities’ admissions programs.

Dr. Christopher Metzler, Chair of the LEAD Fund Board, stated: “One of the central objectives of affirmative action is to promote inclusivity and diversity in various sectors. The Court failed to understand that by actively considering individuals from underrepresented groups in employment, educational admissions and contracting, affirmative action seeks to create a level playing field and increase representation. This approach acknowledges the benefits of a diverse workforce and student body, including improved creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities.”

Shirley J. Wilcher, Fund President and CEO, stated: “As Justice O’Connor wrote in the Grutter decision (2003): ‘These benefits [of diversity] are not theoretical but real, as major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today’s increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints.’”



Dr. Christopher Metzler



Shirley Wilcher

Wilcher added: "Companies and colleges must increase their efforts to enhance DE&I programs and promote partnerships to amplify the pipeline of potential leaders at the K-12 and collegiate levels. Such partnerships can develop students who are ready to thrive in the workplace of the future."

President Biden spoke on the Supreme Court's decision: "Our nation is stronger when our colleges and universities reflect the vast and rich diversity of our people. But while talent, creativity, and hard work are everywhere across this country, equal opportunity is not."

Despite the Court's decision, in 2021, 54.7 percent of K-12 students enrolled in public schools were students of color: Only 45.2 percent were White.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/236244/enrollment-in-public-schools-by-ethnicity-and-us-state/#:~:text=In%20California%20in%202021%2C%2021,and%2055.9%20percent%20were%20Hispanic>. Dr. Metzler continued: "This is a crucial moment where selective institutions will be either the nation's gate-keepers by foreclosing opportunities to a growing, multi-ethnic population, or will be the pathway to a more inclusive workplace from the entry level to the C-Suite."

On July 24, 2023, the LEAD Fund will host a meeting of corporate and higher education experts to discuss the implications of the decision and strategies moving forward. For more information contact the Fund's coordinator Shirley Wilcher at [shirleyj@leadfund.org](mailto:shirleyj@leadfund.org). The event will be in person in Washington, DC.

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