

**Barnard College Student Government Association
Engineering Student Council
General Studies Student Council**

Resolution on Diversity and Affirmative Action in Higher Education

WHEREAS Columbia University currently has a policy of consciously seeking to admit students of traditionally disadvantaged and underrepresented groups¹, a policy commonly known as Affirmative Action, in admissions decisions, which contributes to the diversity of our campus; and

WHEREAS all undergraduate students benefit from the diversity created by this policy, in that students learn to work with and appreciate their peers of different backgrounds, and in that students from traditionally disadvantaged groups are afforded opportunities in line with their abilities rather than historical prejudice; and

WHEREAS the legal framework for Affirmative Action outlined in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* is currently under threat², with the case *Gratz v. Bollinger et.al.*³ presently being argued before the Supreme Court of the United States of America. This case, if the appellants prevail, could overturn decades of admissions policy in American higher education, with uncertain but troubling implications for both public and private institutions, including Columbia University.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the councils urge their respective admissions offices to maintain their policies of seeking to admit students from a wide range of backgrounds, in part through Affirmative Action, thereby promoting the growth of diversity among the student bodies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the councils' delegates to the Ivy Council be urged to affirm the principles enumerated here when constructing that body's Affirmative Action resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is the sense of the councils that the US Supreme Court, in its deliberations in the *Gratz* case, ought to uphold the principles outlined in *Bakke* and recognize the continuing value of diversity and Affirmative Action in American higher education.

¹ The *Columbia College Bulletin* states, "In its final selection, the College seeks a diversity of personalities, achievements, and talents, and of economic, social, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds." The other schools' bulletins have similar statements.

² For example, the Plaintiff's brief in *Gratz* has an entire section (some 17 pages of the 50-page brief) entitled "'Academic freedom' and 'diversity' are not compelling interests justifying racial preferences."

³ As the councils represent the undergraduate student body, we are primarily concerned with the *Gratz* case, which deals with undergraduate admissions. The *Grutter* case, which deals with law school admissions, raises some similar issues, but is not the topic of this resolution.