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universities and special schools

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Iowa State University  
University of Northern Iowa  
Iowa School for the Deaf  
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School  
Lakeside Laboratory Regents Resource Center  
Northwest Iowa Regents Resource Center  
Quad-Cities Graduate Center  
Southwest Iowa Regents Resource Center



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September 12, 2016

Kathy Hanlon  
Legislative Services Agency  
State Capitol Building  
1007 E. Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Re: Regent Admissions Policies - Affirmative Action

Ms. Hanlon:

You recently inquired as to the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* on the Regents institutions. You also posed the following questions:

- Once the universities have accepted all of the Iowa residents who meet the [RAI] criteria, what criteria do the universities use when filling the remaining spaces for the freshman class, and for acceptance in the University of Iowa's Law School and Medical School?
- Are the universities' admissions policies totally race-neutral?
- Do the universities work to increase the enrollment of "underrepresented minorities" and to "enroll students who can offer underrepresented perspective?"
- What is included in the more "holistic set of criteria" referenced in a June 23, 2016 statement from SUI Chief Diversity Officer Georgina Dodge?

In response to your inquiry, the universities have provided the following information regarding the extent to which race is a factor in admissions, and campus efforts to increase diversity in enrollment and admissions. Should you have any additional questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Board office.

#### Undergraduate Admissions

Undergraduate admissions policies at the Regent universities are race-neutral, so the decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* is not anticipated to have an impact on the Regent universities. For undergraduate admissions, the Board of Regents has adopted a Regent Admissions Index (RAI), which is a composite score based on the following factors: SAT or ACT score, high school grade point average, high school percentile class rank (when available), and number of core high school courses completed. Resident applicants with a RAI of 245 or higher are automatically admitted.

Students who do not meet the RAI requirements may be reviewed on an individual basis to determine whether to accept an application for admission. The University of Iowa conducts a holistic review of a student's application materials to determine if he/she has the ability to be successful at the institution, or if there are circumstances that negatively impacted the educational

record but are not otherwise reflective of the potential for success. This holistic review process considers individual course grades, trends of performance and rigor of schedule, subject specific test scores to identify potential areas of weakness, and extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to a period of poor performance.

Iowa State University conducts a complete review of individual students based on the following factors: grades in core courses; grade trends throughout high school; overall grade point average; ACT/SAT composite and sub-scores; class rank; and changes in class rank and class size throughout high school. The purpose of this review is to predict the ability of the student to be successful at the university.

The University of Northern Iowa conducts a holistic review of a student's application materials; including: strength of academic core courses taken, GPA in core courses, ACT/SAT composite and sub-scores, written personal statement, motivation to pursue a 4 year degree, letters of recommendation, overall trend in academic performance, and extenuating circumstances that may have impacted performance in high school.

### Graduate/Professional Admissions

Graduate and professional admissions at each of the three Regent universities is conducted on a competitive basis, and race is not a specific factor in the process. At the University of Iowa, graduate programs are encouraged to utilize a student's complete admissions application portfolio. This portfolio consists of quantitative measures, such as GPA and test scores, and qualitative components indicative of potential for graduate work. Qualitative components include letters of recommendation, statement of purpose or essays, and a "match" of student interests with those of the department or program. Professional program admissions is considered under a similar holistic review, taking into account performance in undergraduate study, standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, personal statements, written and oral communication skills, and personal interview.

Iowa State University requires that all degree-seeking graduate students have graduated with a bachelor's or post-baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution, or from a recognized foreign institution that has bachelor's (or equivalent) degree requirements similar to those in the United States. Full admission status may be granted to an applicant who has achieved a grade point average of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale), or who ranks in the upper one-half of his/her undergraduate class. Applicants whose native language is not English must demonstrate proficiency in the English language by achieving a specified minimum score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Applicants who meet these overall Graduate College requirements are then considered by the specific graduate program to which they seek admission. Program-specific admission requirements vary, but all include quantitative and qualitative elements, such as GPA and standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, match of potential student interest to the program, essays, and prior experience.

The University of Northern Iowa engages in two levels of review for admissions to a graduate or professional program. A general review is conducted to determine if minimum standards for admissions have been satisfied. A personalized review is then conducted, which considers multiple factors specific to the particular discipline to determine if a student has the potential to be successful in the program. The general review determines whether an applicant has a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, has a 3.0 GPA and familiarity with the English Language, and meets the minimum TOEFL score. Qualified applicants are submitted to department/program-specific admissions review committees. The committees consider strength of academic record, specific degree area, letters of recommendation, scores on graduate admissions tests, trend of academic performance, and work experience. Individual program criteria based on professional standards and class/cohort size may also be taken into account.

### Diversity Efforts in Enrollment/Admissions

While the admissions application process is race-neutral, each Regent university engages in additional efforts to increase diversity and encourage application of underrepresented groups. The University of Iowa primarily focuses on outreach and recruitment efforts to achieve diversity. This includes contacts with colleagues and alumni to identify qualified underrepresented applicants, follow-up with contacts made through activities with undergraduate pipeline programs, recruitment efforts coordinated with programs and colleges, and direct contact with potential applicants to encourage application.

Iowa State University primarily focuses on outreach and scholarships targeting underrepresented student populations. The George Washington Carver and Multicultural Vision scholarships provide financial support to diverse applicants - up to 100% tuition for minority students who meet the RAI standards. Iowa State directs recruitment resources to high schools with highly diverse student bodies in an effort to encourage underrepresented application. The University partners with specifically identified Des Moines area middle and high schools to provide information and support to students in preparation for a successful college experience. The University also partners with two Des Moines area elementary schools as part of the ISU for 4 program, which encourages and provides incentives for students to prepare academically for college. Multicultural students are brought to campus to participate in a number of scholastic camps directed at underrepresented students.

The University of Northern Iowa has been increasing efforts to recruit qualified applicants from underrepresented groups. The University hosts group campus visits for middle school, junior high, and high school students in an effort to increase overall college awareness. Targeted events, such as Multicultural Visit Day and the UNI Youth Leadership Conference, are also hosted on campus. The University partners directly with UNI CUE, TRiO/Upward Bound, Gear Up, and similar internal and external offices, agencies, and organizations. Representatives participate in recruitment fairs and activities that focus on diversity (I'll Make Me a World, CelebrAsian, Latino Heritage Festival, etc.). Scholarship programs are also utilized to encourage minority enrollment, including the Residents of Iowa Scholars of Excellence and the Multicultural Scholars Award. In the Graduate College, graduate assistantship awards are provided to underrepresented students based on their status.