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The Right to Inclusion and Success in Education is Reaffirmed

Statement by Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO, on the Fifth Circuit Decision in Fisher vs. University of Texas at Austin on the University of Texas’ Holistic Admissions Program – July 16, 2014

Yesterday, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued its ruling in the *Fisher vs. University of Texas* that upheld University of Texas’ holistic admissions program. The Fifth Circuit’s decision affirms the importance of striving for diversity in all state colleges and universities, stating “Universities may use race as part of a holistic admissions program where it cannot otherwise achieve diversity.” The ruling acknowledges that the Top Ten Percent Plan has contributed to improving access to Texas’ premier higher education institutions but that other factors with varying criteria including race can be used as well to improve broad representation of students from different geographic areas, family backgrounds and educational experiences. UT-Austin’s holistic admissions plan includes race as just one small factor in a complex set of admission criteria.



The Fifth Circuit’s ruling demonstrates once again that it is possible and constitutional to develop approaches that use race and ethnicity in a narrowly-tailored admissions process designed to increase student diversity. IDRA applauds the ruling and all those involved in the effort to ensure more equitable access to all students from prekindergarten through college.

With this ruling, Texas colleges and universities can and should continue to take steps to ensure that there is equitable access to all state-funded colleges and universities for all students, resulting in enrollments that reflect the diverse populations of the state.

Also, while ensuring access to diverse students, institutions of higher education working with state policymakers should focus on both access and success for all students. This must include ensuring that all students are prepared for college from pre-K through high school, that resources are provided equitably to pre-K-12 public schools, that support systems are in place for successful high school to college transitions, and that there are sufficient needs-based financial aid programs available to students. These are all integral parts of a holistic approach to ensuring student success up to and through graduation as shown in IDRA’s [Quality Schools Action Framework™](#).

If we are to achieve a vision of inclusion and success, all students of all backgrounds and financial circumstances must be prepared to enter and graduate from college. And our colleges and universities must adapt to welcome students and provide the supports needed for them to graduate. Our nation’s future depends on getting this right.

See Also

[Court Ruling – July 15, 2014](#)

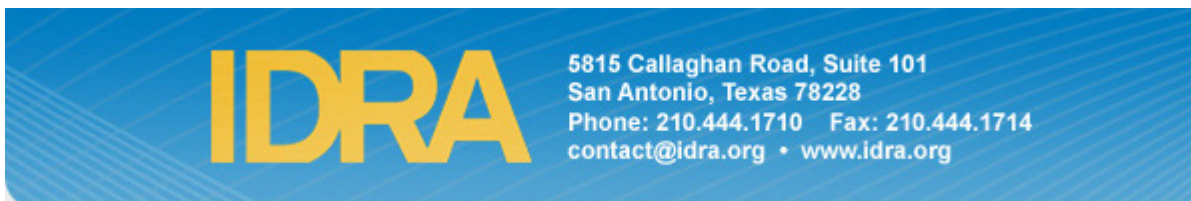
MALDEF Statement: [Fifth Circuit Upholds University of Texas Holistic Admissions Program – Race May be Considered as One Factor in UT-Austin Admissions Decisions – July 15, 2014](#)

IDRA Statement: [Affirming the Right to Inclusion and Success in Education – June 24, 2013](#)

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