

# UConn after SFFA v. Harvard & UNC

*Reaffirming our Commitment to Diversity*

October 2, 2023



# University Mission Statement

## Mission And Purposes of The University of Connecticut

*Adopted by the Board of Trustees on April 11, 2006 and amended on June 20, 2006*

The University of Connecticut is dedicated to excellence demonstrated through national and international recognition. As Connecticut's public research university, through freedom of academic inquiry and expression, we create and disseminate knowledge by means of scholarly and creative achievements, graduate and professional education, and outreach. Through our focus on teaching and learning, the University helps every student grow intellectually and become a contributing member of the state, national, and world communities. Through research, teaching, service, and outreach, ***we embrace diversity and cultivate leadership, integrity, and engaged citizenship in our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.*** As our state's flagship public university, and as a land and sea grant institution, we promote the health and well-being of Connecticut's citizens through enhancing the social, economic, cultural and natural environments of the state and beyond.

# Message to the UConn Community on the Supreme Court Decision

“It is essential to UConn’s mission as a public university that we create and maintain a student body in which people of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds can thrive. Our great challenge now in the wake of these decisions is continuing to build on that vital mission with the tools we still have available to us.”

*[President Radenka Maric, June 29, 2023](#)*

## **UConn is a great university.**

But it's more than that. A top-ranked Land and Sea Grant research institution, with campuses and staff across Connecticut, built to inspire the global community that is UConn Nation. UConn's talented students exceed expectations. Our expert researchers, faculty, and alumni drive Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (CIE) for a better tomorrow. *We fuel the State's economy and are committed to inclusion with emotional intelligence in benefiting the greater good.*

**This is UConn.**

**STUDENTS FIRST. UCONN ALWAYS. HUSKIES FOREVER.**



# Impact of SCOTUS Decision

*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. \_\_ (2023)

## What it impacts

**A Holistic consideration including race no longer meets strict scrutiny**

- Interests are not measurable or subject to meaningful review**
- Racial categories too broad, vague, and open to stereotypes**
- Race used as a negative in a “zero-sum” game**
- No logical end point, and reaching Grutter’s 25-year mark**

**Harvard and UNC were following precedent; but that precedent no longer meets strict scrutiny.**

*Released June 29, 2023; effective immediately*

*Majority decision 6-3 (UNC) and 6-2 (Harvard, with Jackson abstaining)*



# Impact of SCOTUS Decision

*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. \_\_ (2023)



## What it doesn't impact

### Individual Consideration

*“At the same time, as all parties agree, nothing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.”*

### Knowing the applicant’s race (it just shouldn’t be a factor in a decision)

*“[U]niversities may not simply establish through application essays or other means the regime we hold unlawful today.”*

### Recruitment

Kavanaugh concurrence: Universities can still act to undo effects of past discrimination in permissible ways that do not involve classification by race.

*Released June 29, 2023; effective immediately  
Majority decision 6-3 (UNC) and 6-2 (Harvard, with Jackson abstaining)*

# What does this mean for admissions today?

**No direct  
consideration of  
race in evaluation  
and selection**

**Can consider the  
applicant's lived  
experiences**  
*hardships,  
overcoming challenges,  
contributions to the  
community*

**Can engage in  
targeted  
recruiting and  
marketing**

# UConn Programs, Activities, Policies, Initiatives

## Risk levels

**Admissions/selection:  
Considering the  
applicant's race**

**Legacy admissions  
\*not done at UConn**

**Scholarships with a  
racial or gender  
preference**

**Admissions/selection:  
Allowing admissions  
reviewers to see  
racial/demographic  
data**

**Running data reports  
on race during  
admissions process**

**Race used in student  
personal statements  
as part of individual  
context**

**Race and gender  
themed programs  
(open to all)**

**Student support,  
mentoring, advising,  
peer-counseling  
programs (open to all)**

**Prizes and awards  
(open to all)**

**Targeted recruitment/  
marketing**

**Affinity groups and  
cultural  
centers/programs  
(open to all)**

**Affinity-based  
orientation events  
(open to all)**

**Collecting data with a  
racial demographic  
checkbox for post-  
admission use**

# Moving Forward from the Decision



## This decision does not change UConn's Mission

"...we embrace diversity and cultivate leadership, integrity, and engaged citizenship in our students, faculty, staff, and alumni."

When appropriately designed, admissions evaluations and decisions should further the pursuit of UConn Mission.



## This decision has a personal impact

Maintain cognizance of how this decision weighs on the mentality of segments of our student population



## Plan to Ensure Diversity

Recruitment, Marketing, Outreach, Pipeline Development, Pathways are still allowed, and will pursue enhancements that create impact

Race neutral alternatives are being implemented, including neighborhood and school information, and consideration of personal adversity and lived experience.



# Admitting Authorities Convenings

## Initial Steps: Revise and Update Admissions Evaluation & Selection Systems and Process

- Training & Messaging to Students & Community
- Evaluation Screens, Instruments, Committee & Selection Procedures
- Race Neutral Factors
- Scholarships; Pooling & Matching

## Ongoing Steps: Design and Implementation of Recruitment, Outreach & Marketing Initiatives

- Pre-Admission Activities; including Pipeline & Pathway Programs, Targeting Recruitment, Community Outreach
- Post Admissions Conversion Activities; Targeted Recruitment & Marketing, Visits & Events

# Questions & Discussion