

Diversity Distorted: How the University Of Michigan Ignored Inconvenient Data in Order to Sell “Diversity” to the Courts and the Public

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by

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The University of Michigan possesses data and at least two different statistical reports on UM undergraduates that seriously undermine its claims that its diversity policies are overwhelmingly good, not bad, for its students. UM's public reports misstate and ignore key findings here that show serious racial tension and polarization among groups on campus that gets worse the longer students stay at the university. Findings include:

- ◆ Interracial tension in residence halls increases dramatically from the initial survey to the end of the second year.
- ◆ Perceptions of significant friendships between students of color and white students decrease from entrance to the end of two years.
- ◆ Friendships among students of different races continue to decline through the fourth year.
- ◆ The longer a student is at UM, the more they see racial conflict on campus.
- ◆ Perceptions of UM support of students of color diverge by race through the second year.
- ◆ Perceptions of UM support for students of color continue to diverge by race through senior year.
- ◆ Students are polarized by race as to whether white faculty respect students of color through the end of the second year.
- ◆ Students are even more polarized by race as to whether white faculty respect students of color through the end of senior year.
- ◆ White and Asian students increasingly disagree over a four-year period that enrollment diversity increases a university's excellence, while African American and Hispanic students believe the opposite.
- ◆ Black students overwhelmingly disagree that students of color are given advantages that discriminate against other students, Hispanics and Asians are evenly split, but white students agree.
- ◆ White student attitudes on affirmative action policies are largely formed prior to admission.

Background

These reports and the dataset itself (the Michigan Student Study or MSS) were uncovered by writer and researcher Chetly Zarko through a Freedom of Information Action (FOIA).¹

There are two main documents based on the MSS data, plus many other documents. The first is a second-year summary report with accompanying charts;² the second was a fourth-year statistical analysis with no accompanying report.³ Both documents were apparently prepared in 1994. UM's only public documents based on the MSS data are Professor Patricia Y. Gurin's expert report⁴ and a report of findings from the MSS available on the UM website.⁵

While the data remain unavailable to outsiders, persons connected with the University of Michigan have used the MSS for a number of conference papers, articles published in scholarly journals, and eight doctoral dissertations.⁶ To our knowledge, however, none of them makes use of the findings discussed below.

The MSS is a four-year panel study of University of Michigan freshmen. All students of color were interviewed, as was a sample of white students at the beginning of their freshman year, then reinterviewed during the middle of their freshman year, at the end of their second year, and during their senior year.⁷

In the next section, we turn UM's charts and figures into easy-to-read tables so the reader can see what UM collected in its sealed archives.

Suppressed Findings

- ♦ Interracial tension in residence halls increases dramatically from the initial survey to the end of the second year.

¹ Mr. Zarko's account, "Lying to the Supreme Court? Three Findings from the Same Dataset: How U-Michigan Manipulated Diversity Data and Withheld Contrary Research," can be found on <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/chetly/mss-analysis.html>. Mr. Zarko photographed these documents found in the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library in the files of former president James Duderstadt and files from the Vice Provost for Academic and Multicultural Affairs. He subsequently sent us a copy on CD-ROM. Each picture is a jpg file and has a photograph number for reference purposes. We have permission from Mr. Zarko to refer to his photographed copies.

² We refer to this as the *Second-Year Executive Summary*. Its full title is "Executive Summary: The Michigan Study Project, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives, May 24, 1994," made up of a nine-page report, three tables, and nine bar charts.

³ We refer to this document as the *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*. It is comprised of 14 bar charts and 4 tables of statistical analyses.

⁴ We refer to this document as *Expert Report*. The MSS database was one of three databases used by the expert report. <http://www.umich.edu/~urel/admissions/legal/expert.gurintoc.html>.

⁵ We refer to this document as *Website Report*. <http://www.umich.edu/~oami/mss/downloads/synopsis0103.pdf>

⁶ Website Report, p. 34.

⁷ Website Report, p. 6.

Table. Interracial Tension in Resident Halls: Perceived as “Quite a Bit” or “A Great Deal”⁸

| | Entrance | End of Year | End of Second Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 20% | 22% | 31% |
| Asian American | 3% | 11% | 15% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 14% | 24% | 31% |
| White | 4% | 11% | 15% |

Among African American students, perceptions of interracial tension in UM dorms increased by 50 percent from the time they entered until the end of their second year. For Asian Americans and whites, it triples, while it doubles for Hispanic students. These results were not reported in either the expert report or in the website report.

Moreover, UM deleted this question about racial tension in the dorms from their fourth-year questionnaire.⁹ The researchers didn’t want to know the results and didn’t want anyone else to know either.

- ◆ Perceptions of significant friendships between students of color and white students decrease from entrance to the end of two years.

Table. Friendships between Students of Color and White Students Perceived as “Quite a Bit” or “A Great Deal”¹⁰

| | Entrance | End of Year | End of Second Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 81% | 72% | 51% |
| Asian American | 91% | 84% | 76% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 86% | 72% | 66% |
| White | 90% | 76% | 70% |

Perceptions of significant friendships between students of color and whites decline significantly over two years—they decline by 30 percent among blacks, so that by the end of the second year, only half the African American students see substantial degrees of friendships among students of difference races and ethnicities. There is a 15 percent decline among Asian Americans, while Hispanic and white perceptions drop by 20 percent.

- ◆ Friendships among students of different races continue to decline, all the way to the fourth year.

⁸ Figure 6, Interracial Tension in Resident Halls,” *Second-Year Executive Summary*, jpg P1010129.

⁹ Compare *The Undergraduate Experience at Michigan: Opinions and Expectations of Entering Students*, jpg P1010082; *The Undergraduate Experience at Michigan: Opinions and Expectations of Fourth Year Students*, jpg P1010092. There were no questionnaires that were available for the other years.

¹⁰ Figure 7, Friendships Between Students of Color and White Students,” *Second Year Executive Summary*, jpg P1010130.

Table. Friendships between Students of Color and White Students: Mean Response Scores¹¹

| | Entrance | Fourth Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| African American | 3.17 | 2.64*** |
| Asian American | 3.46 | 3.01*** |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3.33 | 2.84*** |
| White | 3.42 | 2.92*** |

*** $p \leq 0.001$; Response to the question ranged from 1.0, “Little or none,” to 4.0, “A Great Deal.”

The decline in friendship among students of different races and ethnicities continues through out college. The drop is statistically significant. The average scores for all ethnic groups dropped significantly from the time they first entered UM until their fourth year.

This statistically significant drop in interracial/ethnic friendships is another suppressed finding. The expert report and the website report only divulge the results for the fourth-year students and ignore the statistically significant drop from entrance.¹²

- ♦ The longer a student is at UM, the more they see racial conflict on campus.¹³

Table. Racial Conflict on Campus: A Comparison of Mean Response Scores from Entrance to the Fourth Year

| | Entrance | Fourth Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| African American | 2.39 | 2.59 |
| Asian American | 2.04 | 2.23** |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1.96 | 2.14 |
| White | 2.04 | 2.12*** |

** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$; Response to the question ranged from 1.0, “Little or none,” to “4.0, “A Great Deal.”

All racial and ethnic groups report increases in the amount of racial conflict on campus after four years, as represented by the mean scores above. There is a statistically significant increase in perceptions of racial conflict on campus among Asians and whites.

The expert report does not mention these findings. The website report mentions only the senior year results, ignoring the trend data reported above.¹⁴

- ♦ Perceptions of UM support of students of color diverge by race through the second year.

Table. University Commitment to Students of Color Perceived as “Quite a Bit” or “A Great Deal”¹⁵

¹¹ “Friendships Between Students of Color and White Students,” *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010056.

¹² Expert Report, Appendix E, p. 6, Website report, p. 19.

¹³ “Racial Conflict On Campus” *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010057.

¹⁴ Website Report, p. 19.

| | Entrance | End of First Year | End of Second Year |
|------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 46% | 21% | 19% |
| Asian American | 49% | 53% | 55% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 52% | 51% | 60% |
| White | 57% | 69% | 70% |

Opinion on UM support of students of color is quite polarized by the end of the second year and beyond. Roughly half of Asian and Hispanic students at entry and 57 percent of whites at entry think UM has a substantial commitment to students of color. These percentages increase substantially by the end of their second year. In contrast, less than half the African American students upon entrance believe the same, which declines to 19 percent by the end of the second year. Note that 70 percent of white students after two years think the same—a gap of over 50 percentage points between whites and blacks.

- ◆ Perceptions of UM support for students of color continue to diverge by race through senior year.

Table. University Commitment to Admit More Students of Color and Develop an Environment That Is Conducive to Their Success: Mean Responses¹⁶

| | Entrance | Fourth Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| African American | 2.53 | 2.00*** |
| Asian American | 2.59 | 2.62 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.59 | 2.59 |
| White | 2.67 | 2.87*** |

** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$; Response to the question ranged from 1.0, “Little or none,” to “4.0, “A Great Deal.”

After four years, white students are more likely to believe that the university is strongly committed to admit more students of color and develop an environment that is conducive to their success. At the same time, however, after four years, black students are less likely to believe that the university is strongly committed to admit more students of color and develop an environment that is conducive to their success. The changes for blacks and whites are statistically significant, while the initial differences are not so.

The expert report does not mention these findings, while the website report notes the results, but provides no explanation for them.¹⁷

- ◆ Students are polarized by race as to whether white faculty respect students of color through the end of the second year.

¹⁵ Figure 9. “University Commitment to Students of Color,” *Second-Year Executive Summary*, jpg P1010131.

¹⁶ “University commitment to admit more students of color and develop an environment that is conducive to their success,” *Four Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg. P1010059.

¹⁷ Website Report, p. 20.

Table. Respect by White Faculty for Students of Color Perceived as “Quite a Bit” or “A Great Deal”¹⁸

| | Entrance | End of First Year | End of Second Year |
|------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 33% | 37% | 32% |
| Asian American | 69% | 69% | 67% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 76% | 82% | 81% |
| White | 86% | 86% | 88% |

These findings change very little from entry to the end of the second year, so that, after two years at UM, opinion on how white faculty treat students of color is still polarized. Only 32 percent of black students believe that students of color receive “quite a bit” or “a great deal” of respect from white faculty, compared to 67 percent of Asians, 81 percent of Hispanics, and 88 percent of white students after two years.

As the authors of the Second-Year Executive Summary note, this difference supports the concern in the literature on minority students that they feel disrespected by the faculty at predominantly white institutions.¹⁹ They fail to note that the large average differences in qualifications between blacks and other students might cause these differences in faculty perception. The median black math SAT score of the entering class of 1995 was 130 points less than the white median, while the median black verbal SAT score for the same class was 100 points less.²⁰

- ♦ Students are even more polarized by race as to whether white faculty respect students of color through the end of senior year.

Table. Respect by White Faculty for Students of Color: Mean Responses

| | Entrance | Fourth Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| African American | 2.41 | 2.16** |
| Asian American | 2.87 | 2.78 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.98 | 2.87 |
| White | 3.18 | 3.07** |

**p≤0.01; Response to the question ranged from 1.0, “Little or none,” to 4.0, “A Great Deal.”

Black and white students report a statistically significant decline in the respect for students of color among white faculty over a four-year period. However, whites and other ethnic groups continue to believe that students of color receive respect; blacks do not believe that students of color receive respect. The white-black difference is statistically significant, according to the secret chart.²¹

¹⁸ Figure 8, “Respect by White Faculty for Students of Color,” *Second-Year Executive Summary*, jpg P1010131.

¹⁹ *Second Year Executive Summary* p. 4, jpg P1010117.

²⁰ *Pervasive Preferences: Racial and Ethnic Discrimination in Undergraduate Admissions across the Nation*, Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai, pp. 13-14, Center for Equal Opportunity, 2001.

²¹ “Respect by white faculty for students of color,” *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010058.

These findings are not mentioned in the expert report. The website report mentions similar findings among seniors from a differently worded question without comment.²² In no place is the test score gap mentioned.

- ◆ Over a four-year period, white and Asian students increasingly disagree that enrollment diversity increases a university's excellence, while African American and Hispanic students believe the opposite.

Table. In the Long Run, a Greatly Increased Enrollment of Students of Color Will Enhance the Excellence of Universities: Mean Responses²³

| | Entrance | Fourth Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| African American | 1.63 | 1.48 |
| Asian American | 2.05 | 2.17 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.10 | 1.92 |
| White | 2.44 | 2.82*** |

*** $p \leq 0.001$; Response to the question ranged from 1.0, "Agree," to 4.0, "Disagree."

Between their first semester freshman year and their senior years, white students come to disbelieve that enrollment diversity enhances excellence. The change over time is statistically significant. Moreover, according to the *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*, the difference in mean responses between African American students and all other groups is statistically significant, as is the difference in mean scores between whites and all other groups. In other words, African Americans are significantly more likely than all other groups to believe that greatly increasing the number of students of color increases the excellence of universities; in contrast, whites are significantly more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to think the opposite. These findings appear in neither the expert report nor the website report.

- ◆ Black students overwhelmingly disagree that students of color are given advantages that discriminate against other students, Hispanics and Asians are evenly split, while white students agree.

Table. Students of Color Are Given Advantages That Discriminate against Other Students: Mean Scores²⁴

| | Entrance | Fourth Year |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| African American | 3.21 | 3.57** |
| Asian American | 2.54 | 2.60 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.64 | 2.83 |
| White | 2.17 | 2.22 |

** $p \leq 0.01$; Response to the question ranged from 1.0, "Agree," to 4.0, "Disagree."

²² Website report, p. 12.

²³ "In the long run, a greatly increased enrollment of students of color will enhance the excellence of universities," *Four Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010051.

²⁴ "Students of color are given advantages that discriminate against other students" *Four Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010052.

Once again, these findings are not discussed, either in the expert report or the website report. Neither the admissions grids nor the point system of admissions used by the University of Michigan are mentioned by either report.

- ◆ Student attitudes on affirmative action policies are largely formed prior to admission.

Table. Fourth Year White Student Support for Affirmative Action Policies: Statistically Significant Standardized Regression Coefficients

| | Standardized Regression Coefficients |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Entrance Characteristics</u> | |
| Family's Socio-Economic Status | 0.08* |
| Pre-College Intergroup Contact | 0.07* |
| Political Ideology | -0.17*** |
| Attitudes at Entrance | 0.38*** |
| <u>College Experience</u> | |
| Friendships with African Americans | 0.08** ²⁵ |
| Curriculum | 0.23*** |

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

The statistical analyses show that political ideology and attitudes towards affirmative action upon entering college remain by far the most important predictors of senior attitudes among whites, with standardized regression coefficients of -0.17 and 0.38 respectively. In contrast, contact with students of other racial and ethnic groups in college have almost no effect. Only friendship with African American students during college shows any statistical significance, and then it was only a small effect (0.08), while the curriculum has almost three times the effect on student attitudes after four years (0.23).²⁶ There are no results presented for students of other racial/ethnic backgrounds.

The expert report ignores these data. The website report deliberately ignores the role of political ideology in predicting student beliefs and exaggerates the importance of prior friendships.²⁷

Conclusion

We have discussed data and manuscript analyses that are at serious variance with published findings and a key expert report in an important legal case. These data and manuscripts show that diversity achieved by racial preference policies results in many

²⁵ Friendships between white and Asian and white and Hispanic students have no effect (i.e., not statistically significant).

²⁶ "Support for Educational Equity: Affirmative Action Policies and Curriculum Revision," *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010064; Path Diagram, "Fourth Year Support for Educational Equity: Affirmative Action Policies," *Four-Year Statistical Analysis*, jpg P1010066.

²⁷ Website report, p. 16.

negative effects, and these negative effects appear to worsen the longer students attend the university.

It is especially important to note that the expert report makes false claims about UM data. The author claims any problem that students have in making interracial friendships is simply due to their prior socialization in segregated environments.²⁸ This is false.

In fact, the time trend data, none of which is presented in her expert report, show that students begin with high hopes and anticipations. Polarization among the races becomes worse the longer students are at the University of Michigan. If the problems were solely a result of the individual background students bring to the university, the problems should diminish and not increase over time. Use of the suppressed data completely refutes the Gurin claims and give lie to her argument that diversity works.

The findings in these suppressed documents are sufficient by themselves to cast serious doubt on UM's claims regarding the positive impact of diversity in fostering the education of students. The point of our study is not whether diversity does or does not improve educational outcomes: The point is that UM has apparently ignored or distorted data that were inconsistent with the conclusion it wishes the courts to reach.

²⁸ Expert report, p. 34.