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# SEF President Raymond Pierce's statement on the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action in college admissions

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“Today’s decision is yet another sad attempt to absolve the nation of any responsibility for the continuing effects of discrimination on the basis of race.

The roots of [today’s decision](#) can be traced back to [Regents of the University of California v. Bakke](#) in 1978, a ruling that sent us down a path of distancing ourselves from efforts to redress the damage done to African Americans by more than a century of brutally discriminatory policies following emancipation and the conclusion of the Civil War.

We believe today’s ruling against Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill contradicts the original meaning of the 14th Amendment and many decades of laws and policies enacted to repair African Americans for the unconstitutional denial of rights and opportunities guaranteed all Americans. Affirmative action was simply a tool designed as a redress against the continuing impact from long-standing policies that damaged the educational, economic, and social growth of generations of African Americans.

This decision could have serious consequences for higher education, particularly in the South where state laws and policies expressly barred Black students from most public colleges and universities less than a lifetime ago. The damaging impact of these policies continue to manifest themselves to this day. The decision could lead to further drops in Black students’ college enrollment, when the nation needs many additional students of color to succeed in college. New state laws that restrict longstanding diversity, equity, and inclusion programs have already forced some institutions to modify their enrollment processes.

The Supreme Court’s harmful decision must be met with a renewed national resolve and political will for improving college access for student populations with a history of suppression and denial, consistent with the rule of law.”

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