College Advising after the End of Race Conscious Admissions

Although media coverage has repeatedly referred to the SFFA decision as a ban on affirmative action, in reality the majority opinion was narrowly focused on college admissions decisions. The phrase “affirmative action” does not appear in the majority opinion, and the opinion does not address representation, college counseling, campus diversity programs, hiring practices, or financial aid.

Because the vast majority of colleges and universities did not consider race in their admissions process before the SFFA decision, the majority opinion directly affects a small number of colleges and universities.

It will be important for counselors and college access organizations to be on the lookout for ripple effects on financial aid, campus programming, hiring practices, and more. Some public institutions of higher education have already eliminated scholarships that were connected to an applicant’s race.

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Four things should be kept in mind about the decision:

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The following list of Dos and Don’ts is intended to help provide clarity. It is based on the advice that experts from college admissions, school counseling, college access organizations, and advocacy groups provided in a series of webinars Education Reform Now hosted in the 2023 fall season.