From Bakke to Fisher: African American Students in U.S. Higher Education over Forty Years

WALTER R. ALLEN, CHANNEL MCLEWIS, CHANTAL JONES, AND DANIEL HARRIS

We consider how antiblack legal precedents constrain African American access and success in higher education. We employ critical race theory to assess status and trends for African American college, graduate, and professional students. Our forty-year analysis traces national patterns of African American student enrollment and degree completion at public, four-year institutions. Using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, we find that higher education remains a site of intense racial struggle for African American students. Across institutions we see various trends: the number of African American students at flagships has declined, more students enroll and complete degrees at black-serving institutions, and historically black colleges and universities are more racially diverse.

Keywords: higher education, college access, racism, affirmative action, African American education

Black undergraduates are severely underrepresented at more selective four-year institutions. This situation has mostly remained unchanged, but in many cases markedly declined, with the adoption of anti–affirmative action policies and practices (Ashkenas, Park, and Pearce 2017). We explore how policies and practices since the 1968 report on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission and thus the Kerner report) have systematically created a separate and unequal system of higher education. Particularly, we extend the analysis by Walter Allen and his colleagues (2005) to examine how higher education enrollment and degree completion among African American students is affected by several court decisions. We conclude that antiblack sentiments are major drivers of inequality in enrollment and degree completion in higher education.

Between 1965 and 1972, African American college students across the nation confronted

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racism with organized protest, demanding institutional and societal change (Rogers 2012). More than two hundred campuses were rocked by a "dramatic explosion of militant activism [which] set in motion a period of conflict, crackdown, negotiation, and reform that profoundly transformed college life. At stake was the very mission of higher education" (Biondi 2012, 1). In 1967, the policies and practices of most historically white institutions (HWI) were implicitly—if not explicitly—committed to the segregation and subjugation of African Americans (Allen et al. 2007). At historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), African American students protested traditional attitudes and conservative politics (Rogers 2012). However, African American student activism sometimes faced violent backlash. For example, in the 1968 Orangeburg massacre, police fired on unarmed African American college students at South Carolina State University, killing three and wounding twenty-seven. Widespread campus protests linked African American college students to civil unrest across the country. Whether on campuses or in ghettoes, African American communities rose up to resist racial oppression, racist attitudes and rampant antiblack violence.

In the fall of 2015, students protested across ninety campuses, drawing national attention to the hostile racial climates, ongoing racism, and glaring inequality that many African American students attending HWIs experienced (Kelley 2016). Mass and social media captured the Concerned Student 1950 movement at the University of Missouri on the national stage. Student activists at other institutions stood in solidarity to confront institutional racism and antiblackness (Ali 2016). African American college student-led protests and social movements resulted in the removal of several campus and administrative leaders who failed to address the deep history of campus racial hostility, exclusion, and discrimination (Tatum 2017).

African American college student activism, campus unrest, and broader progressive social movements, such as the #BlackLivesMatter movement, highlight how higher education systematically reproduces society's racial hierarchies. Thus, universities are neither neutral nor safe spaces for African American students (Smith et al. 2016). In fact, Daniel Solórzano and Octavio Villalpando conclude that "higher education reflects the structural and ideological contradictions that exist in the larger society" (1998, 220). Antiblack racism confronts African American college students with severe inequities in enrollment, retention, degree completion, hostile campus climates, unequal resources, and the dismal underrepresentation of African American faculty.

We use Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data to analyze national patterns and trends in African American college enrollment and degree completion in public higher education, in the twenty states with the largest proportion African American populations. We ask the broad question "What is the status and prospects for African American higher education?" and discuss its implications. In today's society, the baccalaureate degree is more essential for future economic viability than the high school diploma was during the late 1960s (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2018a). We therefore focus on African Americans in higher education institutions to explore three central questions: How far have we come? What worked and did not work? What are the implications for the twenty-first century?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The critical race theory (CRT) literature helps explain how race, racism, and power shape African American student trajectories in higher education (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995). CRT challenges dominant frames that perpetuate white supremacy, maintains the centrality of race and racism as key components of U.S. society, seeks social justice, and recognizes higher education as both an oppressive and empowering space (Solórzano and Yosso 2002). Emerging from legal frameworks, CRT has informed critical higher education research (Harris 2015). Lori Patton Davis discusses higher education's deep connections to white supremacy; links higher education to "imperialistic and capitalistic efforts that fuel the intersections of race, property, and oppression"; and validates transmission and production of knowledge rooted in white supremacy (2016,

317). CRT also reveals how larger cultural, political, economic, social, and legal factors intersect to create, maintain and explain the stubborn persistence of African American student disadvantages in U.S. higher education and in wider society (Bell 2003).

Antiblackness Framework

Michael Dumas and kihana ross argue "antiblackness is not simply racism against Black people. Rather antiblackness refers to a broader antagonistic relationship between blackness and (the possibility of) humanity" (2016, 429). Further, "antiblackness does not signify a mere racial conflict that might be resolved through organized political struggle and appeals to the state and to the citizenry for redress. Instead, antiblackness marks an irreconcilability between the Black and any sense of social or cultural regard. The aim of theorizing antiblackness is not to offer solutions to racial inequality, but to come to a deeper understanding of the Black condition within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence against the Black" (Dumas 2016, 13).

Dumas also argues that education policy has historically been a site of antiblackness, under which African American children suffer from "(mal)distribution of material resources," struggle against negative ideologies and representations, and "endure physical and psychic assaults" (2016, 16). Interrogating "anti-Blackness in higher education means looking for more than explicit forms of oppression, as the structure and culture norms mask violence as normal" (Mustaffa 2017, 725).

Walter Allen argues that U.S. higher education has been content with the inequities in African American college student experiences and outcomes and committed to their perpetuation (1992). He links political, historical, social, and economic factors identified in the 1968 Kerner report to widespread racial disadvantages across higher education institutions. These disparities result from negative effects of racial hierarchy based on overlapping systems of racial oppression dating back to 1619. Higher education is deeply implicated in perpetuating white supremacy. Although colleges and universities have the expertise, power, and resources to eliminate racial inequities, they have lacked the will and commitment to implement enduring systematic change.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is believed to be "a special, deeply political, almost sacred, civic activity" (Bowen and Bok 1998, xxii). We expect higher education to produce benefits for society, "through knowledge production, leadership development, a literate electorate, and cultural and economic development, to name a few" possibilities (Kezar, Chambers, and Burkhardt 2005, xiv). We highlight the importance of higher education for African American people and overview the landscape of African American participation in U.S. public universities.

The pursuit of a college education is influenced by the anticipated returns on investment (Sissoko and Shaiu 2005), including wealth accumulation (Shapiro 2017), better employment prospects (Bishop 1977), improved lifestyle and well-being (Mirowsky and Ross 1998), and enhanced civic engagement (Baum, Ma, and Payea 2013). The reality that higher education can be a site of antiblackness, however, is antithetical to these ideals (Dumas and ross 2016; Mustaffa 2017).

According to the U.S. Department of Education, African Americans students make up 13 percent of current college students; in 1976, they constituted 9 percent (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2018b). This suggests improvements; however, on closer examination we see that African American students concentrate in particular segments of higher education. African American college students represent 14 percent of total enrollment at public two-year institutions; more than 50 percent of all African American college students are enrolled in community colleges, and only 40 percent of whites attend these institutions. African American students are also overrepresented in for-profit institutions, where students pay higher tuition, more frequently default on student loans, and graduate less often (Iloh and Toldson 2013).

Increased numbers of African American college students indicates some progress, but the growing number of African American college students concentrated at community colleges and for-profits is problematic. It is not clear

"whether these colleges offer long-term strategies to ameliorate educational and economic inequities, or ineffective bandages for racism that is entrenched in the economic and educational structure of the U.S." (Iloh and Toldson 2013, 209). The concentration of African American students in community colleges and in for-profit institutions, relative to their underrepresentation in baccalaureate degree-granting institutions, symbolizes a separate and unequal system of higher education.

Compared with African American men, African American women are more likely to be enrolled in higher education (Allen et al. 2005). However, in 2012, 23 percent of all African American undergraduate women and 19 percent of all African American undergraduate men attended for-profit institutions (Baum 2013). Tressie McMillan Cottom cautions that though college attendance is increasing for African American women, they tend to be concentrated in lower prestige programs with lower postgraduate employment and earnings returns (2017).

Overall, African American college students make up only 11 percent of the public and 16 percent of the private total four-year sectors (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2018b). Notably, as of 2015, although HBCUs are approximately 2 percent of the higher education landscape, they award 14 percent of baccalaureate degrees to African American students (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2018c, 2018d, 2018e). The pivotal contributions of HBCUs to increasing African American college attendance and graduation is well documented (Allen 1992). Although we affirm the central importance of examining African American student enrollment and degree completion across all sectors and institutional types, our attention is on public, four-year institutions. Since 2015, public four-year degree-granting institutions were the largest higher education sector, enrolling approximately 8.4 million students, 917,000 of whom were African American (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2018b).

The Courts and African American Access to Higher Education

Despite the clear benefits of higher education, the U.S. legal and judicial system has systematically limited African American attendance at public institutions (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009). HBCUs, established under the Morrill Land Grant Act, gave African American students the opportunity to attend college despite being denied entry to HWIs. Because "separate but equal" was overturned in federal courts, the majority of African American college students now attend HWIs (Allen et al. 2007). However, despite expanded access to HWIs, African American student college opportunities continue to be limited by structural disadvantages and systematic racism. Moreover, legal incrementalism and failures to adequately implement and enforce equity-based policies have limited the participation of African Americans in higher education (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009).

In 1973, *Adams v. Richardson* concluded that Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Florida, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Maryland, and Virginia continued to operate segregated systems of higher education.[1] Although the district court ordered these states to submit desegregation plans, many ignored the order or presented unacceptable plans, yet faced few consequences.[2]

Supreme Court decisions in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Gratz v. Bollinger*, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, and *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* narrowly tailor or eliminate the use of race to achieve equality within higher education.[3] Legislation such as Proposition 209 in California and Proposal 2 in Michigan validated the language of "color blindness" or "reverse racism" and decreased campus di-

1. *Kenneth Adams et al. v. Elliot L. Richardson, Individually, and as Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, et al.*, 356 F. Supp. 92 (D.D.C. 1973).

2. Ibid., Declaratory Judgment and Injunction Order (John H. Pratt), https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/356/92/1892620 (accessed May 7, 2018).

3. *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978); *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003); *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* 570 U.S. __ (2013), 579 U.S. __ (2016).

versity (Vue, Haslerig, and Allen 2017). As a result, African American higher education participation has declined and been severely challenged (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009). In the aftermath of continued bans of affirmative action and *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* it is important to assess African American educational progress. We examine African American student college enrollment and degree completion in public universities since the Kerner report to better understand past, present, and future patterns. The answers will also provide a lens onto the current status of African Americans in America.

DATA AND METHODS

We use Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and other data from the Department of Education to examine racial patterns and trends in public higher education since the Kerner report. IPEDS provides key descriptive, longitudinal information about students attending U.S. higher education institutions. We examine higher education enrollment and completion trends for African American college students across four-year, public universities in the twenty states with the largest numerical African American populations (table 1). In each state, we focus on selected public, four-year institutions, including the state flagship university, most prominent black-serving institution (BSI), and the most prominent HBCU (where present). Flagships have designated leadership roles and emphasis in state public higher education systems. BSIs—traditionally white institutions with a high representation of African American students, such as Georgia State University and Chicago State University—are prominent in the production of African American college graduates. Finally, HBCUs such as Morgan State University or Savannah State University, once legally segregated by race, continue to play significant roles in contemporary African American higher education.

Our sample also includes states that received national attention for desegregation cases (for example, *Adams v. Richardson*, *United States v. Fordice*, and *Ayers v. Fordice*) and challenges to affirmative action (for example, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, and *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*).[4] Forces in all these states mobilized to actively resist and subtly undercut African American progress toward equity in higher education. It is therefore imperative to now ask, "What is the status of African American students in public higher education institutions in these states?"

Our race definition includes people who identify as African American or as African American in combination with other races. Although this operational decision can essentialize racial identity, we acknowledge the wealth of diversity within the African American community. The simple fact is that we are bound by earlier government and university decisions regarding the statistical classification of race. Limitations aside, these data provide the best, most comprehensive, empirical overview available on African American student participation in U.S. higher education.

We use 1976–2015 enrollment and completion data for African American undergraduate and graduate full-time students. This reflects the fact that until the mid-1970s, the majority of African American college student enrollment and degree completion was at HBCUs (Lambert 1979). Our analyses focus on full-time enrollment and completion (total number of degrees conferred each year) in baccalaureate, graduate, and professional programs by race and gender at public, four-year universities. For undergraduates, we look at all full-time students seeking baccalaureate degrees; for completion, we only select baccalaureate degrees. We also note the majority of undergraduates in degree-granting postsecondary institutions are full-time students (McFarland et al. 2016). Results from our forty-year longitudinal view compare only the years 1976 to 2015 in the text. However, for those who seek more detailed comparisons, data are also compared at five-year intervals between 1976 and 2015 (see online appendix, tables 3 and 4).[5]

4. *United States v. Fordice*, 505 U.S. 717 (1992); *Ayers v. Fordice*, 40 F. Supp. 2d 382 (1999).

5. The online appendix is available at: https://www.rsfjournal.org/doi/suppl/10.7758/RSF.2018.4.6.03.

Table 1. Largest African American Population by State: List of States, Institution Names, and Institution Type

State	Number and Percent of State Total		Institution Name	Institution Type
Florida	3,401,179	17.3	University of Florida	Flagship
			Florida A&M University	HBCU
			Florida Atlantic University	BSI
Texas	3,390,604	12.8	University of Texas at Austin	Flagship
			Texas Southern University	HBCU
			University of Houston, Downtown	BSI
New York	3,344,602	17	SUNY, Albany	Flagship
			CUNY, Medgar Evers College	BSI
			CUNY, City College	BSI
Georgia	3,212,824	32.1	University of Georgia	Flagship
			Savannah State University	HBCU
			Georgia State University	BSI
California	2,710,216	7.1	University of California, Berkeley	Flagship
			University of California, Los Angeles	Flagship
			California State University, Dominguez Hills	BSI
North Carolina	2,241,952	22.8	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Flagship
			North Carolina A&T State University	HBCU
			University of North Carolina at Charlotte	BSI
Illinois	1,972,360	15.3	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Flagship
			Chicago State University	BSI
			Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	BSI
Maryland	1,848,257	31.2	University of Maryland, College Park	Flagship
			Morgan State University	HBCU
			University of Maryland, Baltimore County	BSI
Virginia	1,717,174	20.8	University of Virginia	Flagship
			Norfolk State University	HBCU
			Old Dominion University	BSI
Ohio	1,585,347	13.7	The Ohio State University	Flagship
			Central State University	HBCU
			Cleveland State University	BSI
Pennsylvania	1,561,343	12.2	Pennsylvania State College, University Park	Flagship
			Lincoln University	HBCU
			Temple University	BSI
Louisiana	1,528,695	33.1	Louisiana State University	Flagship
			Southern University and A&M College	HBCU
			Northwestern State University of Louisiana	BSI

Table 1. (*continued*)

State	Number and Percent of State Total		Institution Name	Institution Type
Michigan	1,509,779	15.2	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Flagship
			Michigan State Uni.	BSI
			Wayne State University	BSI
South Carolina	1,367,604	28.6	University of South Carolina, Columbia	Flagship
			South Carolina State University	HBCU
			Francis Marion University	BSI
New Jersey	1,314,132	14.8	Rutgers University, New Brunswick	Flagship
			Kean University	BSI
			Rutgers University, Newark	BSI
Alabama	1,312,584	27.2	University of Alabama	Flagship
			Alabama State University	HBCU
			University of Alabama Birmingham	BSI
Tennessee	1,150,035	17.7	University of Tennessee	Flagship
			Tennessee State University	HBCU
			Middle Tennessee State University	BSI
Mississippi	1,136,159	38	University of Mississippi	Flagship
			Jackson State University	HBCU
			University of Southern Mississippi	BSI
Missouri	764,195	12.6	University of Missouri	Flagship
			Lincoln University	HBCU
			University of Missouri St. Louis	BSI
Indiana	678,881	10.3	Indiana University Bloomington	Flagship
			Indiana State University	BSI
			Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis	BSI

Source: Authors' calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau 2015.
Note: HBCU: historically black college and university; BSI: black-serving institution.

Limitations

Viewed over time, IPEDS offers a reliable summary of patterns and trends across higher education institutions. IPEDS data provide a standardized snapshot of key institutional characteristics for U.S. colleges and universities. However, a key limitation of IPEDS data is the restricted range of information and variables reported. Also, because the data are self-compiled and self-reported, institutional errors are possible. Finally, IPEDS collects only aggregate, institutional data; therefore rich, detailed information about individual student factors such as backgrounds, values, experiences, and outcomes is lacking.

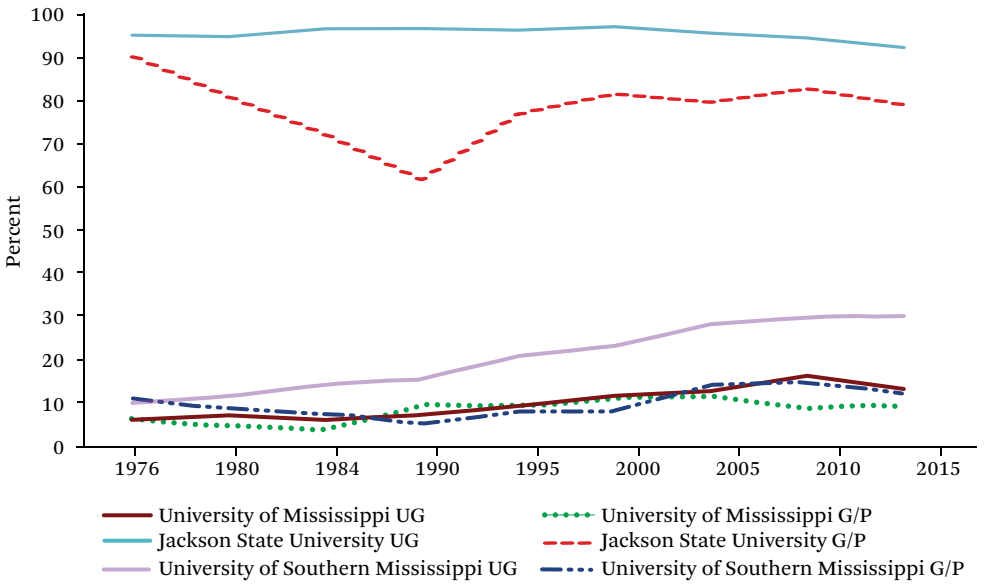
FINDINGS

We examined African American student enrollment and completion patterns and trends at public, four-year institutions to investigate African American student access and success in higher education from 1976 to 2015. Our comparisons and analyses are presented across three distinct types of institutions: flagship universities, black-serving institutions, and historically black colleges and universities.

Enrollment: Flagships

The overall proportion of African American undergraduates enrolled at public flagship institutions has remained persistently low over

Figure 1. Mississippi Percent African American Enrollment, 1976–2015



Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978a.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

forty years. Given the overall number of African American undergraduates attending public four-year institutions has increased, we would expect comparable enrollment increases at public flagship institutions. But this is not the case. Further, when we consider the African American proportion of the overall state population, African American undergraduate enrollment at flagship institutions (generally less than 4 percent) is significantly below the representation of African Americans in the state (tables 1 and 2). The most striking example is Mississippi. In 2015, the African American population in the state was nearly 40 percent, however, African American undergraduate enrollment at the University of Mississippi was only 13.4 percent (tables 1 and 2, figure 1). This pattern confirms Hechinger report data showing that more than a third of U.S. states had a least a 10-point gap, including eight with a 20-point gap, between the percentage of public high school graduates who are African American and the percentage of their flagships' freshman class who are African American (Kolodner 2018, para. 2).

African American undergraduate enrollment has remained significantly lower than the African American proportion of state population where affirmative action faced court challenges. For example, African American undergraduate enrollment at the University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and University of Texas, Austin was approximately 4.5 percent or lower in 2015 (table 2). This, despite the fact that the African American population is 7.1 percent in California, 15.2 percent in Michigan, and 12.8 percent in Texas (table 1). Striking declines in African American undergraduate enrollments in California and Michigan were not surprising given the strong anti–affirmative action sentiments expressed in bans passed by voters in both states (Proposition 209 in California and Proposal 2 in Michigan).

By contrast, African American undergraduate enrollment was typically higher at institutions not directly named in affirmative action litigation. Still, 2015 African American undergraduate enrollment only reached double digits at five institutions: University of Alabama,

(*Text continues on p. 56.*)

Table 2. Percent African American Enrollment and Completion by Gender, 1976 and 2015

	Enrollment								Completion							
	1976				2015				1976				2015			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Alabama																
University of Alabama																
UG	12,835	8.5	5.0	3.5	28,447	10.5	6.6	3.9	2,329	5.0	3.3	1.7	5,662	10.7	7.3	3.3
G/P	3,618	7.6	4.8	2.7	3,321	11.1	8.5	2.6	1,392	6.3	4.7	1.6	2,195	12.4	9.6	2.8
Alabama State University																
UG	3,209	99.7	56.2	43.5	4,377	92.4	57.5	34.8	451	99.8	67.6	32.2	529	92.2	59.9	32.3
G/P	891	99.3	69.4	30.0	291	55.3	40.2	15.1	405	100.0	75.1	24.9	177	63.3	47.5	15.8
University of Alabama Birmingham																
UG	7,788	20.7	14.2	6.5	8,259	25.4	16.9	8.5	1,041	10.2	6.8	3.4	2165	23.0	16.0	6.9
G/P	3,059	11.7	7.7	4.0	3,515	9.4	7.1	2.4	1,103	12.7	11.4	1.3	2,248	12.9	10.1	2.8
California																
University of California-Berkeley																
UG	19,837	4.0	2.1	1.9	26,622	2.1	1.1	0.9	5,713	3.4	1.6	1.8	7,647	1.9	1.1	0.8
G/P	9,425	4.1	2.1	2.1	9,338	3.0	1.8	1.2	3,346	4.0	1.6	2.4	3,551	2.9	1.5	1.4
University of California-Los Angeles																
UG	20,588	5.3	3.1	2.2	29,000	3.0	1.8	1.1	4,733	5.3	2.9	2.5	7,977	2.3	1.5	0.8
G/P	10,303	5.1	2.5	2.6	11,493	3.5	2.3	1.2	3,020	5.1	2.9	2.2	4,376	3.0	2.0	1.0
California State University Dominguez Hills																
UG	5,202	33.8	16.2	17.6	9,173	12.4	8.2	4.2	904	30.0	13.8	16.2	2,581	16.3	11.6	4.7
G/P	768	23.2	14.1	9.1	1,049	11.4	8.7	2.8	365	27.1	11.2	15.9	771	14.8	10.5	4.3
Florida																
University of Florida																
UG	20,852	4.8	2.6	2.2	29,862	6.3	4.1	2.2	4,998	2.5	1.5	1.0	8,393	7.3	4.9	2.5
G/P	6,206	3.4	1.5	2.0	12,479	4.7	2.8	2.0	2,359	4.3	1.8	2.5	5,520	4.6	2.9	1.7
Florida A&M University																
UG	4,896	89.4	46.2	43.1	6,943	91.2	59.0	32.3	612	91.2	46.7	44.4	1,507	95.0	59.6	35.4
G/P	140	75.0	49.3	25.7	1,523	72.0	49.8	22.3	217	88.9	59.9	29.0	584	79.8	55.3	24.5
Florida Atlantic University																
UG	4,425	5.5	4.0	1.5	15,670	18.3	11.1	7.2	1,419	4.8	3.4	1.4	5,473	11.7	7.8	3.9
G/P	1,017	6.2	4.2	2.0	2,014	13.9	9.8	4.0	542	8.1	4.8	3.3	1,559	6.9	4.8	2.1

(*continued*)

Table 2. (*continued*)

	Enrollment								Completion							
	1976				2015				1976				2015			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Georgia																
University of Georgia																
UG	16,759	8.5	2.0	1.6	25,737	7.6	4.8	2.8	3,777	2.1	1.3	0.7	6,935	7.2	5.2	2.0
G/P	4,178	2.6	1.3	1.3	6,640	7.3	5.6	1.7	2,308	4.5	2.8	1.7	2,490	8.9	6.4	2.5
Savannah State University																
UG	2,458	89.3	54.2	35.1	4,030	83.5	49.6	33.8	259	97.7	61.4	36.3	492	86.8	53.9	32.9
G/P	389	33.9	23.4	10.5	104	64.4	51.9	12.5	—	—	—	—	71	64.8	50.7	14.1
Georgia State University																
UG	13,278	15.5	9.3	6.1	18,652	40.9	27.2	13.8	1,911	11.0	4.9	6.1	4,771	36.4	25.1	11.3
G/P	7,005	13.6	9.9	3.7	5,075	18.1	12.5	5.6	2,303	13.6	8.6	5.0	2,561	19.6	13.0	6.6
Illinois																
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign																
UG	24,435	3.9	2.2	1.7	31,552	5.5	3.2	2.3	5,903	2.2	1.1	1.2	8,024	5.0	3.0	2.1
G/P	8,565	3.2	1.4	1.8	9,767	3.4	2.1	1.3	3,685	3.9	2.0	1.9	4,390	3.8	2.2	1.6
Chicago State University																
UG	4,361	76.1	48.8	27.4	2,259	73.1	53.7	19.4	1,037	67.5	46.0	21.5	661	78.1	57.5	20.6
G/P	841	47.1	34.2	12.8	736	42.0	28.5	13.5	327	48.0	32.1	15.9	286	48.3	38.1	10.1
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale																
UG	18,282	9.1	4.4	4.7	11,255	19.6	11.2	8.4	3,128	5.7	2.7	3.0	3,259	16.0	8.6	7.4
G/P	3,769	5.5	2.8	2.8	2,589	10.9	7.1	3.8	1,040	5.4	3.1	2.3	1,512	8.7	5.4	3.3
Indiana																
Indiana University Bloomington																
UG	23,233	4.8	2.6	2.3	31,559	4.2	2.4	1.8	4,077	2.7	1.5	1.2	7,339	3.6	2.2	1.4
G/P	8,612	2.9	1.4	1.5	6,275	3.2	1.5	1.8	3,077	3.1	1.7	1.4	3,280	3.4	1.9	1.5
Indiana State University																
UG	9,175	10.0	5.3	4.7	9,623	19.5	11.2	8.4	1,661	5.8	3.4	2.4	1,784	11.7	7.7	4.0
G/P	2,339	2.1	0.8	1.3	991	9.3	6.0	3.3	978	1.0	0.5	0.5	613	7.7	5.5	2.1
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis																
UG	12,427	10.9	6.7	4.2	16,932	9.2	6.0	3.1	1,258	4.8	2.8	2.0	3,922	8.1	5.6	2.5
G/P	6,379	5.2	3.1	2.1	4,575	7.4	5.0	2.4	1,273	4.2	1.3	2.8	2,367	5.8	4.2	1.6

Louisiana																
Louisiana State University																
UG	18,781	8.5	2.1	1.4	23,450	12.1	7.5	4.6	2,892	2.0	1.3	0.7	4,649	9.6	6.0	3.6
G/P	5,008	4.2	2.6	1.6	4,236	8.6	5.7	2.9	1,386	4.3	2.9	1.4	1,734	9.6	6.3	3.2
Southern University and A&M College																
UG	7,646	96.3	53.2	43.2	4,631	93.5	59.9	33.6	1,251	98.8	62.1	36.7	652	94.5	61.2	33.3
G/P	1,187	93.3	61.3	31.9	632	71.2	52.1	19.1	425	97.2	67.8	29.4	307	83.7	57.0	26.7
Northwestern State University of Louisiana																
UG	5,230	13.8	7.5	6.3	5,016	30.4	20.0	10.5	787	69.1	37.4	31.8	1,069	26.6	19.7	6.8
G/P	1,121	11.8	8.7	3.1	193	19.7	11.9	7.8	564	19.9	6.9	12.9	252	17.1	13.9	3.2
Maryland																
University of Maryland, College Park																
UG	25,895	7.8	4.6	3.2	25,272	12.7	7.1	5.6	5,058	4.3	2.7	1.5	7,166	11.2	6.7	4.5
G/P	7,141	5.5	3.4	2.1	8,091	6.1	3.7	2.5	1,842	4.3	2.9	1.5	3,255	6.5	3.5	3.0
Morgan State University																
UG	4,750	95.6	54.0	41.6	5,589	82.4	46.6	35.8	658	88.6	55.3	33.3	931	87.3	52.1	35.2
G/P	900	61.0	29.9	31.1	1,003	61.0	41.1	19.9	255	58.8	32.9	25.9	292	78.8	48.3	30.5
University of Maryland, Baltimore County																
UG	5,135	19.9	13.5	6.4	9,577	17.1	9.2	7.9	625	7.8	5.3	2.6	2,432	16.9	9.8	7.0
G/P	207	8.7	5.3	3.4	1,160	9.1	4.8	4.2	15	0.0	0.0	0.0	794	13.9	7.8	6.0
Michigan																
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor																
UG	22,120	6.9	3.9	3.1	27,161	4.3	2.6	1.8	4,839	5.4	3.2	2.2	7,091	4.0	2.7	1.3
G/P	14,743	8.4	4.4	4.0	13,856	3.9	2.3	1.6	4,989	7.7	4.3	3.3	5,902	4.0	2.5	1.5
Michigan State University																
UG	35,561	5.8	3.4	2.3	35,425	7.2	4.5	2.7	7,343	5.4	3.2	2.2	8,299	5.6	3.7	1.9
G/P	12,235	5.3	2.9	2.4	8,381	4.6	2.9	1.6	3,464	5.5	2.2	3.2	3,342	4.5	2.8	1.7
Wayne State University																
UG	23,410	27.7	15.3	12.4	11,617	15.8	10.2	5.5	3,288	19.9	11.9	8.0	3,180	15.4	10.8	4.6
G/P	9,574	13.3	8.3	5.0	6,066	7.6	5.7	1.9	2,917	15.2	10.7	4.5	2,856	10.9	8.5	2.3

(*continued*)

Table 2. (*continued*)

	Enrollment								Completion							
	1976				2015				1976				2015			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Mississippi																
University of Mississippi																
UG	6,973	8.5	3.5	2.7	17,120	13.4	8.6	4.7	1,352	3.6	2.1	1.4	3,659	13.8	10.1	3.7
G/P	1,505	5.9	2.7	3.2	3,270	9.6	6.7	2.8	778	6.8	4.4	2.4	1,478	13.4	10.2	3.2
Jackson State University																
UG	6,203	95.4	48.5	46.9	6676	91.5	58.1	33.4	669	95.5	54.9	40.7	989	88.5	58.6	29.8
G/P	1,135	91.5	55.6	35.9	870	79.3	58.0	21.3	393	91.1	62.8	28.2	504	82.9	61.9	19.8
University of Southern Mississippi																
UG	9,069	10.0	6.5	3.5	10,297	30.3	20.7	9.6	1,974	5.8	3.7	2.1	2,352	23.4	16.7	6.7
G/P	2,569	10.5	6.5	4.0	1,435	12.2	9.1	3.1	854	8.1	4.8	3.3	943	10.5	8.7	1.8
Missouri																
University of Missouri																
UG	17,704	2.9	1.6	1.3	25,909	8.2	5.0	3.2	3,398	1.2	0.6	0.6	5,995	6.6	4.2	2.4
G/P	6,153	2.2	0.9	1.2	4,963	3.3	1.9	1.5	1,741	1.6	0.7	0.9	2,352	2.8	1.4	1.4
Lincoln University of Missouri																
UG	2,098	39.1	19.1	20.0	1,911	57.5	28.7	28.8	329	39.2	17.9	21.3	287	33.1	19.5	13.6
G/P	243	18.1	8.2	9.9	53	22.6	11.3	11.3	84	17.9	8.3	9.5	35	20.0	17.1	2.9
University of Missouri St. Louis																
UG	10,187	12.6	6.6	6.1	5,541	15.6	11.0	4.6	1,499	4.2	1.8	2.4	2246	15.3	11.4	4.0
G/P	1,419	8.8	6.2	2.6	1,001	9.3	7.0	2.3	372	3.2	2.4	0.8	886	11.4	9.0	2.4
New Jersey																
Rutgers University–New Brunswick																
UG	17,883	8.2	4.9	3.3	33,294	7.3	4.5	2.8	3,832	9.3	5.0	4.3	7,569	7.6	4.8	2.8
G/P	9,056	6.9	4.3	2.6	8,737	7.9	6.0	2.0	1,804	8.8	4.9	3.9	4,033	9.0	7.0	2.0
Kean University																
UG	8,734	13.6	8.6	5.1	9,191	19.9	12.0	7.9	1,554	8.6	6.6	2.1	2,712	17.3	11.3	6.0
G/P	1,355	7.7	5.9	1.8	853	20.0	14.8	5.3	508	9.6	6.7	3.0	621	18.4	12.9	5.5
Rutgers University-Newark																
UG	3,754	13.7	8.8	5.0	6,206	18.5	11.2	7.2	1,095	17.3	9.8	7.5	1,544	17.9	10.2	7.6
G/P	2,849	8.9	3.8	5.1	1,805	10.0	5.8	4.2	778	8.4	2.1	6.3	1,317	12.1	6.5	5.5

New York																
SUNY Albany																
UG	9,321	8.5	2.2	2.1	12,151	16.6	9.6	7.0	2,154	1.8	0.9	0.9	2,875	13.8	8.5	5.3
G/P	3,458	2.3	0.9	1.4	2,218	6.7	5.2	1.5	1,401	2.4	1.6	0.9	1,435	5.2	3.0	2.2
CUNY, Medgar Evers College																
UG	2,806	82.9	60.9	22.0	4,366	78.0	55.7	22.4	120	86.7	44.2	42.5	472	82.8	62.9	19.9
G/P	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CUNY, City College																
UG	11,918	32.7	17.0	15.7	9,636	15.3	8.7	6.6	2,278	23.6	12.6	11.1	2,156	21.8	13.1	8.7
G/P	1,663	22.5	15.6	6.9	376	17.3	8.2	9.0	956	16.9	11.4	5.5	861	17.1	10.9	6.2
North Carolina																
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill																
UG	13,170	6.1	3.4	2.7	17,606	7.8	5.1	2.7	3,078	4.6	2.5	2.1	4,624	8.9	6.0	2.9
G/P	5,534	6.4	3.1	3.3	6,425	7.0	4.8	2.1	1,909	4.6	2.3	2.4	3,360	6.5	4.6	1.9
North Carolina A&T State University																
UG	4,754	95.1	47.6	47.5	8,376	85.1	47.6	37.5	769	97.0	45.4	51.6	1,293	86.6	50.0	36.7
G/P	671	69.6	37.3	32.3	907	56.7	35.9	20.7	285	65.3	33.7	31.6	473	62.6	38.9	23.7
University of North Carolina at Charlotte																
UG	5,909	5.7	3.0	2.6	19,745	16.5	9.3	7.2	1,177	3.6	1.4	2.2	4,513	14.4	9.7	4.6
G/P	1,225	15.0	11.1	3.9	2,419	8.8	6.7	2.1	257	14.4	7.4	7.0	1,467	7.9	5.5	2.5
Ohio																
The Ohio State University																
UG	38,408	6.3	3.6	2.7	40,898	5.2	2.9	2.4	6,418	2.8	1.6	1.2	10,414	5.8	3.4	2.5
G/P	11,574	4.5	2.7	1.9	9,861	4.1	2.7	1.5	3,841	4.2	2.5	1.7	4,400	4.0	2.5	1.6
Central State University																
UG	1,849	91.9	43.2	48.7	1,649	95.3	52.8	42.5	339	84.4	47.2	37.2	287	95.5	51.9	43.6
G/P	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	100.0	50.0	50.0
Cleveland State University																
UG	12,446	12.2	7.1	5.1	9,046	15.4	10.1	5.3	1,794	7.9	4.2	3.6	2,317	14.4	9.9	4.5
G/P	3,914	11.4	6.0	5.4	2,269	10.1	7.7	2.4	786	8.9	5.9	3.1	1,666	11.1	7.7	3.4

(*continued*)

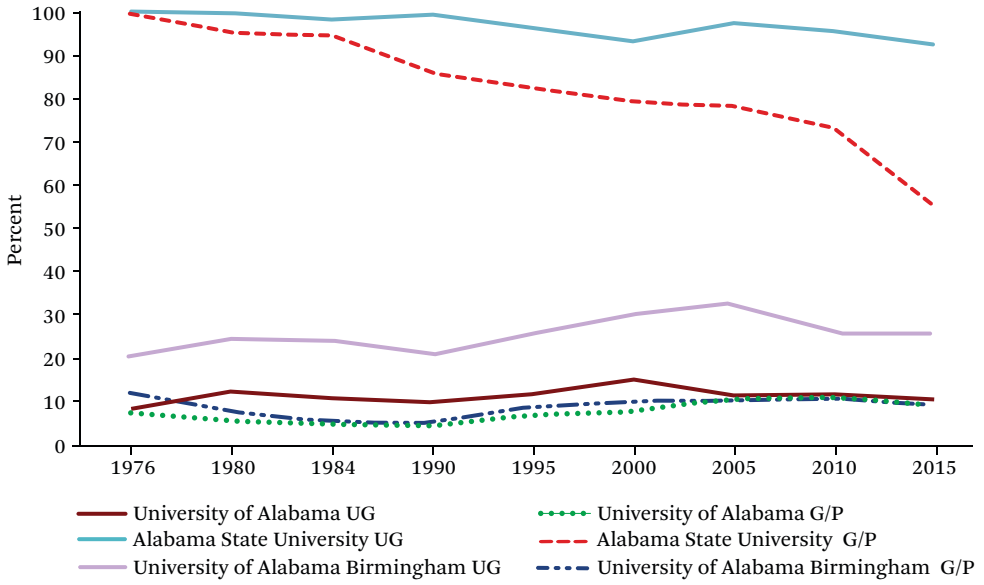
Table 2. (*continued*)

	Enrollment								Completion							
	1976				2015				1976				2015			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pennsylvania																
Pennsylvania State College, University Park																
UG	26,037	8.5	1.0	0.8	39,294	4.2	2.3	1.8	7,562	1.5	1.0	0.6	10,876	4.7	3.0	1.8
G/P	4,797	2.1	0.9	1.3	5,890	3.0	1.7	1.3	1,747	1.6	0.9	0.7	2,015	3.5	2.0	1.4
Lincoln University																
UG	1,090	95.6	47.5	48.1	1,546	86.0	54.6	31.4	191	91.6	52.9	38.7	265	74.3	46.8	27.5
G/P	—	—	—	—	139	95.0	64.0	30.9	—	—	—	—	99	92.9	56.6	36.4
Temple University																
UG	18,078	18.7	11.9	6.8	25,128	12.2	7.8	4.4	3,090	12.7	7.8	4.9	6,024	12.8	8.1	4.6
G/P	8,563	8.6	5.2	3.5	6,979	6.7	4.2	2.5	2,350	10.3	5.9	4.3	2,638	8.0	5.4	2.5
South Carolina																
University of South Carolina, Columbia																
UG	16,079	10.8	6.4	4.5	23,328	9.0	5.3	3.7	3,138	5.4	3.1	2.3	5,412	10.2	6.6	3.6
G/P	7,261	9.7	6.0	3.5	5,828	10.2	7.9	2.3	2,165	9.8	7.0	2.8	2,374	12.3	9.1	3.2
South Carolina State University																
UG	2,931	98.7	55.1	43.6	2,223	96.2	48.4	47.8	448	98.2	59.4	38.8	486	93.6	53.1	40.5
G/P	502	85.3	55.4	29.9	200	87.0	63.5	23.5	232	83.2	56.0	27.2	131	84.0	61.8	22.1
Francis Marion University																
UG	2,237	12.8	7.3	5.5	3,106	47.1	36.1	11.0	293	9.6	5.5	4.1	569	38.7	30.8	7.9
G/P	374	26.7	22.7	4.0	102	15.7	13.7	2.0	72	13.9	9.7	4.2	93	15.1	11.8	3.2
Tennessee																
University of Tennessee																
UG	22,494	5.0	2.8	2.2	20,467	7.0	3.8	3.2	3,751	2.4	1.5	0.9	4,445	6.1	3.6	2.5
G/P	5,947	4.0	2.5	1.5	3,894	5.4	3.7	1.7	1,938	3.8	2.4	1.4	2,133	4.8	3.0	1.8
Tennessee State University																
UG	4,462	91.7	49.5	42.2	5966	72.0	46.1	25.9	563	92.0	51.2	40.9	872	73.4	48.4	25.0
G/P	869	43.4	27.5	15.9	830	29.4	19.3	10.1	283	83.7	51.2	32.5	462	36.4	26.4	10.0

Middle Tennessee State University																
UG	8,660	7.3	3.8	3.5	16,141	22.3	13.7	8.6	1,433	4.5	2.1	2.4	4,051	15.7	10.0	5.6
G/P	997	3.1	1.0	2.1	794	9.4	6.3	3.1	647	4.6	2.5	2.2	821	9.1	5.7	3.4
Texas																
University of Texas at Austin																
UG	32,415	8.5	1.2	1.0	36,357	4.2	2.6	1.6	7,126	1.0	0.5	0.5	9,503	3.9	2.3	1.6
G/P	8,972	1.5	0.6	0.9	10,442	2.9	1.9	1.0	2,464	1.1	0.3	0.8	4,567	2.9	1.8	1.1
Texas Southern University																
UG	7,754	84.4	43.5	40.9	5,884	80.1	47.8	32.3	571	92.6	53.2	39.4	927	77.3	48.8	28.6
G/P	1,616	75.8	44.2	31.6	1,650	59.9	37.9	22.1	404	82.4	41.6	40.8	622	67.5	43.2	24.3
University of Houston-Downtown																
UG	—	—	—	—	6,640	20.0	12.8	7.2	—	—	—	—	2,338	23.2	16.6	6.5
G/P	—	—	—	—	45	28.9	20.0	8.9	—	—	—	—	97	29.9	18.6	11.3
Virginia																
University of Virginia																
UG	10,070	3.9	2.0	2.0	15,218	6.1	3.7	2.5	2,275	2.5	1.4	1.2	3,836	6.5	4.0	2.5
G/P	5,067	2.9	1.2	1.7	5,940	4.2	2.3	1.9	2,024	3.1	1.2	1.9	2,651	4.6	2.6	2.0
Norfolk State University																
UG	6,599	95.9	56.1	39.8	3,738	84.5	51.7	32.9	762	94.1	54.1	40.0	992	80.2	55.6	24.6
G/P	292	68.8	51.0	17.8	385	75.6	58.4	17.1	12	91.7	58.3	33.3	199	72.9	52.8	20.1
Old Dominion University																
UG	8,280	4.2	2.3	1.8	15,319	29.0	17.2	11.8	1,512	1.7	0.9	0.8	3,858	21.0	14.2	6.7
G/P	1,641	6.6	4.0	2.6	1,604	10.5	7.5	2.9	481	5.4	3.3	2.1	1,335	9.9	7.2	2.7

Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978a, 1978b.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional; 1: grand total; 2: percent African American total; 3: percent African American women; 4: percent African American men.

Figure 2. Alabama Percent African American Enrollment, 1976–2015



Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978a.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

10.5 percent; Louisiana State University, 12.1 percent; University of Maryland, College Park, 12.7 percent; University of Mississippi, 13.4 percent; and State University of New York at Albany, 16.6 percent (table 2, figures 1 and 2).

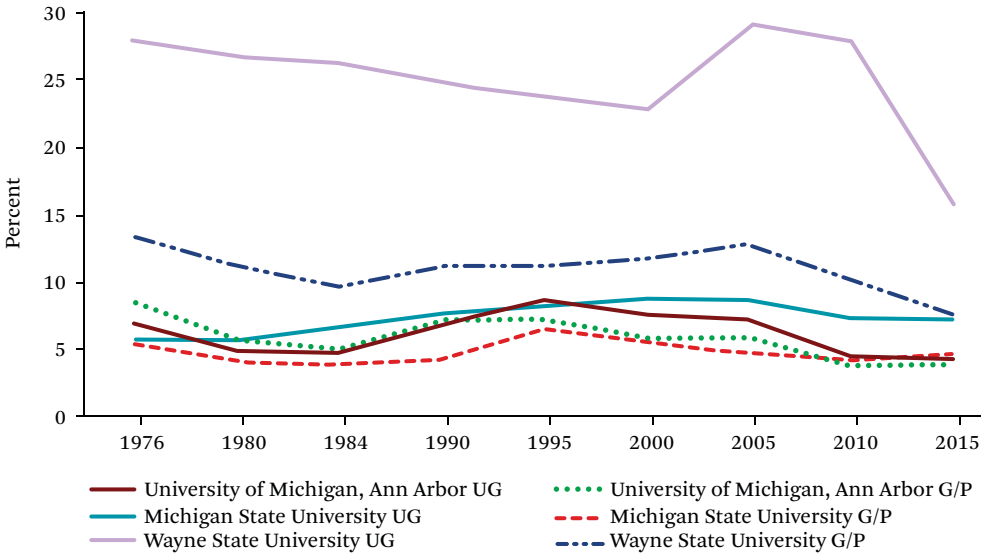
Patterns were similar for African American professional and graduate students at public flagship campuses. In states where affirmative action cases reached the Supreme Court, African American graduate enrollment at public flagships dropped below already-abysmal levels. For example, in 1976 African American graduate enrollment at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor; the University of California, Berkeley; and University of California, Los Angeles was 8.4 percent, 4.1 percent, and 5.1 percent respectively (table 2, figure 3). Following increases, African American graduate enrollment at these institutions peaked and then sharply declined after states adopted anti–affirmative action policies.

At other flagships, African American graduate and professional enrollment either held steady or declined. For example, African American graduate and professional enrollment at the Ohio State University was 4.5 percent in 1976 and 4.1 percent in 2015 (table 2). This pattern is repeated for University of Alabama, University of Missouri, and University of Georgia (table 2, figure 2). Overall, these findings confirm that African American undergraduate and graduate enrollment at flagships has not approached African American representation in the state. We would logically expect African American enrollment at flagship institutions to be higher given that increasing numbers of African American students are entering higher education. Yet we see continued declines in African American undergraduate and graduate enrollment in states where anti–affirmative action litigation, policies, and practices were adopted.

Enrollment: Black-Serving Institutions

There were pronounced and variable changes in African American undergraduate enrollment between 1976 and 2015 across BSIs (table 2). The University of Maryland, Baltimore County experienced relatively small declines in African American student enrollment, less than 3 percent. However, for many BSIs, African American undergraduate student enrollments in-

Figure 3. Michigan Percent African American Enrollment, 1976–2015



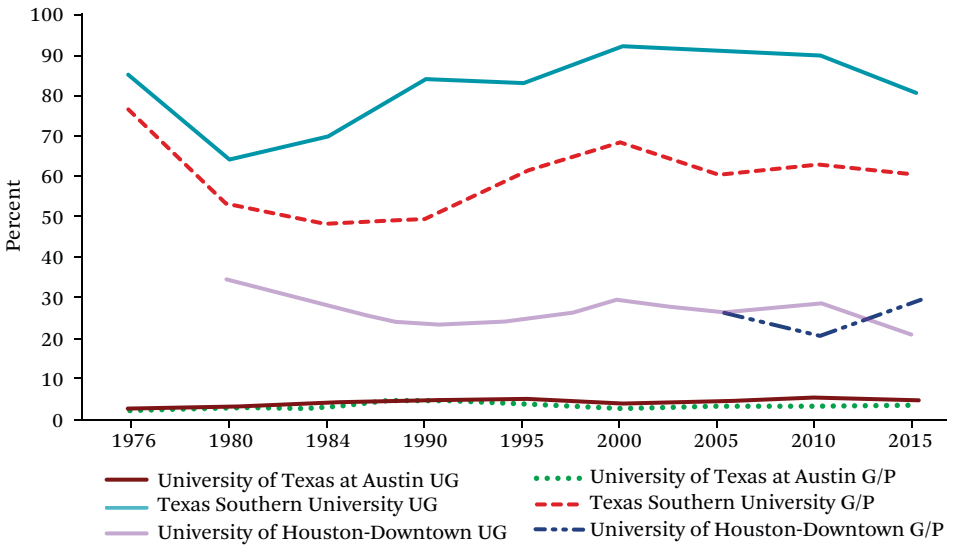
Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978a.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

creased between 1976 and 2015. It is striking that in states where the proportion of African American undergraduate students at public flagship universities declined, total African American undergraduate enrollment at BSIs generally increased. For example, in South Carolina, African American undergraduate enrollment at Francis Marion University grew from 12.8 percent in 1976 to 47.1 percent in 2015. At the University of South Carolina, Columbia, however, it declined from 10.8 percent in 1976 to 9 percent in 2015. Similar patterns were evident in New Jersey at Kean University and Rutgers University, New Brunswick. Some states—such as Florida, Louisiana, and Georgia—saw increases at both BSIs and flagships from 1976 to 2015, but much larger gains at BSIs. Interestingly, African American undergraduate enrollment at Georgia State University grew exponentially, from 15.5 to 40.9 percent, but African American enrollment fluctuated at the University of Georgia (table 2).

Over the period, substantial gains at many BSIs reinforced their prominent roles in educating African American college students. At face value, this seems to support anti–affirmative action arguments that African American students excluded from flagships will simply cascade down to lower-ranked institutions, better suited to their academic qualifications. In fact, this pattern of displacement represents substantial overall net losses in African American undergraduate enrollment. For example, not only was African American enrollment in California down at University of California flagships Berkeley (4 percent in 1976 to 2.1 percent in 2015) and Los Angeles (5.3 to 3 percent), it also declined at the BSI California State University, Dominguez Hills (33.8 to 12.4 percent). It also dropped on several other BSI campuses: from 27.7 percent in 1976 to 15.8 percent in 2015 at Wayne State University; from 32.7 to 15.3 percent at City University of New York, City College; and from 18.7 to 12.2 percent at Temple University (table 2).

Turning to African American graduate and professional student enrollment, we see many similarities to patterns and trends in African American undergraduate enrollment. Since 1976, the proportion of African American graduate enrollment at BSIs has significantly increased. For example, close to a third (28.9 per-

Figure 4. Texas Percent African American Enrollment, 1976–2015



Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978a.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

cent) of University of Houston–Downtown graduate students were African American, as were 18.1 percent at Georgia State University and 19.7 percent at Northwestern Louisiana State University (table 2, figure 4). Overall, compared with flagship institutions, BSIs are now enrolling most African American graduate and professional degree seekers.

Enrollment: Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Since 1976, although the African American proportion of total institutional enrollment grew at several HBCUs (for example, Florida A&M University, Lincoln University of Missouri, and Central State University), the majority of HBCUs (eleven of fourteen) saw undergraduate decreases between 2.5 percent and 20 percent (table 2). This trend is distinct from the large increases reported for most other public institutions. Disproportionate growth between BSIs and HBCUs from 1976 to 2015 was particularly pronounced in certain states. Savannah State University's proportion African American undergraduate enrollment dropped nearly 6 percent, 89.3 in 1976 to 83.5 percent in 2015, relative to a 25 percent increase at Georgia State University, 15.5 to 40.9 percent. This symbolizes how "separate and unequal" policies, practices, and funding have penalized public HBCUs and greatly restricted their capacity to serve more students (Minor 2008).

Many HBCUs increased the percentage of African American graduate and professional students enrolled by 2015. Among these are Savannah State University, from 33.9 to 64.4 percent, and Norfolk State University, from 68.8 to 75.6 percent (table 2). HBCUs also enroll higher proportions of African American students overall than flagships. It is important that for both undergraduate and graduate or professional enrollment at HBCUs, the proportion of white and nonblack students is increasing; for example, graduate and professional students at: Morgan State University, 39 percent; North Carolina A&T, 43 percent; and Texas Southern, 40 percent. The racial diversity of HBCU graduate and professional student enrollments shows their power and promise as tools to help desegregate public higher education in states that previously operated de jure or de facto racially segregated systems (Conrad, Brier, and Braxton 1997).

Enrollment: Gender Differences

In general, African American women outnumber African American men in undergraduate and graduate-professional degree enrollment across all institutional types (table 2). Although in comparison, African American women enrollments are higher, when "raced," or viewed through a critical race lens, the gender differences are negligible at select public flagship institutions. For example, in 2015 at University of California flagships Berkeley and Los Angeles, African American women represented 1.1 percent and 1.8 percent to 0.9 percent and 1.1 percent for African American men. Similarly, at the University of Michigan, only 2.6 percent were African American women and 1.8 percent were African American men. At the end of the day, African American enrollment on these campuses is alarmingly low—for both African American women and African American men.

The percent enrollment for undergraduate and graduate-professional African American women at BSIs rose between 1976 and 2015. For example, at the University of Southern Mississippi, undergraduate African American women increased from 6.5 to 20.7 percent, and among graduate or professional students, from 6.5 to 9.1 percent (table 2, figure 1). By contrast, declines occurred at City University of New York, City College, from 17 to 8.7 percent, and 15.6 to 8.2 percent, respectively. Many BSIs saw increased enrollment for undergraduate and graduate-professional school African American men, including Florida Atlantic University, from 1.5 to 7.2 percent, and 2 to 4 percent. As well, we find instances of significant enrollment declines, for example, California State University–Dominguez Hills, from 17.6 to 4.2 percent, and 9.1 to 2.8 percent, respectively.

We also observe increases and decreases in undergraduate and graduate-professional enrollment across HBCUs between 1976 and 2015. At Jackson State University, African American women undergraduates increased from 48.5 to 58.1 percent; at Alabama State University, however, graduate or professional students decreased from 69.4 to 40.2 percent (table 2, figures 1 and 2). In addition, marked declines in enrollment of undergraduate and graduate-professional African American men are visible across the majority of HBCUs. For example, African American male enrollment at Jackson State University declined from 46.9 to 33.4 percent and 35.9 to 21.3 percent, respectively, and Southern University and A&M College, from 43.2 to 33.6 percent and 31.9 to 19.1 percent.

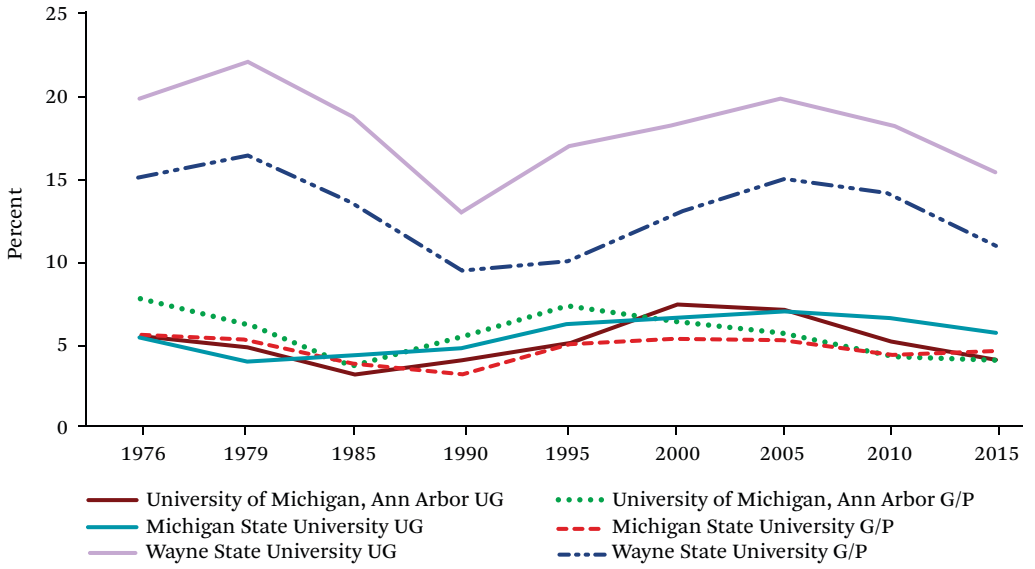
Completion: Flagships

Given enrollment patterns and trends, African American student degree completion at flagships is predictably discouraging. Among several public flagship institutions explored in this study, African American degree completion declined from already low levels in 1976 (table 2). For example, African American undergraduate degree completion at the University of California, Berkeley dropped from 3.4 percent in 1976 to 1.9 percent in 2015. Similarly, at the University of California, Los Angeles degree completion dropped from 5.3 percent in 1976 to 2.3 percent in 2015. At the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor it was 5.4 percent in 1976 and 4 percent in 2015 (table 2, figure 5). Significantly, at these institutions, African American completed degrees peaked between 1990 and 2000 and then declined (online appendix table 4).

By comparison, the proportion of African American undergraduates earning baccalaureate degrees actually increased at several other state flagships between 1976 and 2015: University of Mississippi, from 3.6 to 13.8 percent; University of Maryland, from 4.3 to 11.2 percent; University of Alabama, from 5 to 10.7 percent); University of Georgia, from 2.1 to 7.2 percent; and University of Texas at Austin, from 1 to 3.9 percent (table 2, figures 6, 7, and 8). These findings suggest that, particularly at so-called Public Ivy state flagships, African American students are less likely to be represented among the graduates. Even when institutions increased the proportion of African American undergraduate degree completion, the proportion of African Americans graduating is still notably lower than the proportion enrolled.

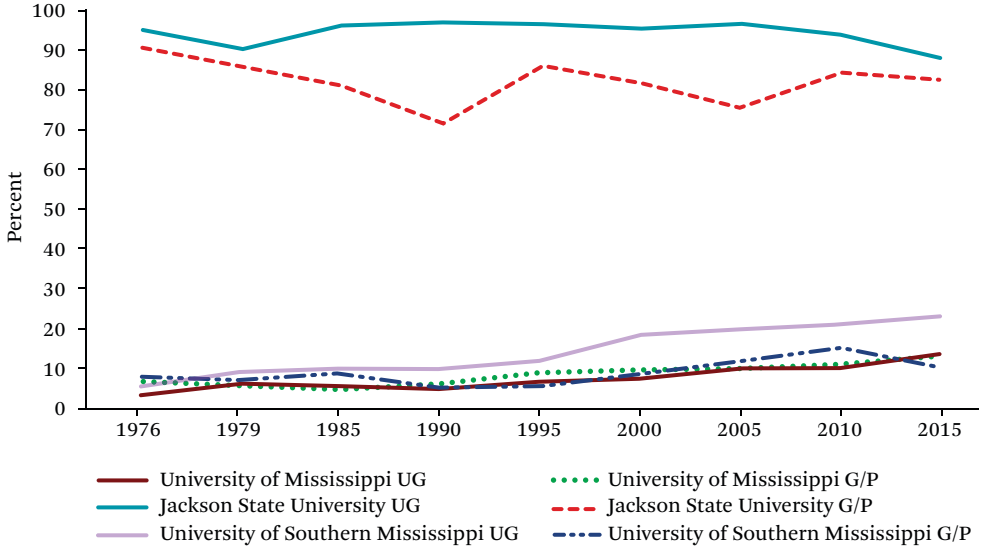
In terms of African American graduate and professional degree completion, we find graduation at public flagship institutions has kept pace with enrollment. These trends indicate African American graduate and professional degree earners complete degrees at rates more closely proportional to their enrollment at public flagship institutions. Despite this encourag-

Figure 5. Michigan Percent African American Degree Completion, 1976–2015



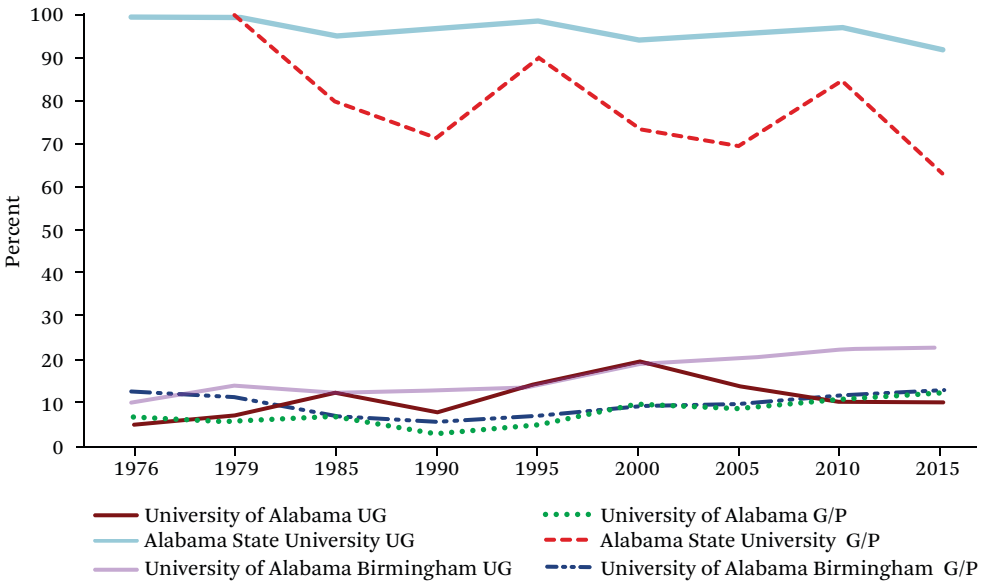
Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978b, 1981.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

Figure 6. Mississippi Percent African American Degree Completion, 1976–2015



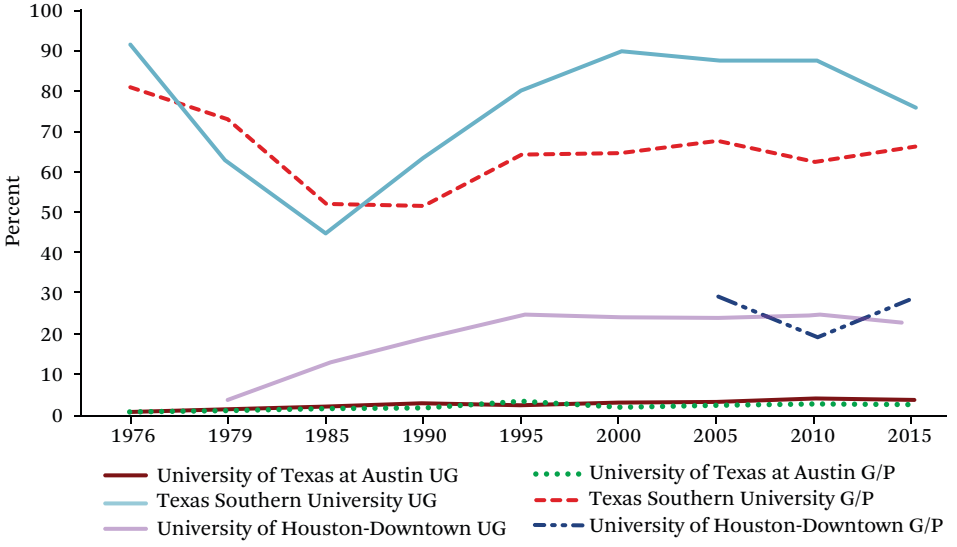
Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978b, 1981.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

Figure 7. Alabama Percent African American Degree Completion, 1976–2015



Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978b, 1981.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

Figure 8. Texas Percent African American Degree Completion, 1976–2015



Source: Authors' calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1978b, 1981.
Note: UG: undergraduate; G/P: graduate and professional.

ing sign, there has been little growth in African American graduate and professional degree representation on these campuses.

Completion: Historically White, Black-Serving Institutions

African American undergraduate degree completion at BSIs increased overall during the forty-year period. In some instances, the proportion of baccalaureate degrees awarded to African American undergraduates increased dramatically from 1976 to 2015. For example, degree completion at Georgia State University was 11 percent in 1976 and 36.4 percent by 2015 (table 2). However, some schools also saw significant declines. At California State University–Dominguez Hills, for example, completion was 30 percent in 1976 but only 16.3 percent in 2015. In other cases, completion rates changed little over four decades. At Michigan State University, completion essentially held steady: 5.4 percent in 1976 and 5.6 percent in 2015 (table 2, figure 5).

Overall, African American graduate and professional degree completion at BSIs increased during the observed period. Several BSIs recorded impressive gains: Georgia State University and University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Others, however, recorded declines: Wayne State University. Notably, since 1995, African American graduate and professional degree completion trend has mirrored African American enrollment, suggesting African American students are graduating BSIs proportionate to their representation at the institution (online appendix tables 3 and 4).

Completion: Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HBCUs represent a large share of African American undergraduate degree completion in our data set. To place the sheer scale of HBCU college degree production in perspective, consider the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded to African American undergraduates in 2015: Florida A&M University (1,432), North Carolina A&T State University (1,120), Morgan State University (813), Norfolk State University (796), and Texas Southern University (717). Relative to both flagships and BSIs that have as many as ten times more students enrolled and earning degrees, HBCUs claim a disproportionate share of African American undergraduate degrees. Despite these consistently impressive overall numbers, total undergraduate degrees among African Americans completed at HBCUs have largely decreased, with the exception of Florida A&M University and Central State University (table 2).

Similar trends are apparent for the proportion African American of all graduate and professional degrees awarded at HBCUs. Several HBCUs saw declines since 1976, up to 47.4 percent at Tennessee State University (table 2). This is clear evidence that students in graduate and professional programs at HBCUs are becoming increasingly diverse. African American graduate-professional degree completion at HBCUs notably increased at several institutions; for example, in 1976, 58.8 percent of Morgan State University's graduate degrees were awarded to African American students, compared to 78.8 percent in 2015. African American graduate-professional degree completion also grew at HBCUs including Lincoln University of Missouri (17.9 to 20 percent) and South Carolina State University (83.2 to 84 percent).

Completion: Gender Differences

As expected more African American women than African American men earned undergraduate and graduate-professional degrees (table 2). Like with enrollment, gender differences in African American degree completion rates nearly disappear at Public Ivy flagships, where African American enrollment is persistently low. Remarkably, at the University of California, Berkeley African American women earned 1.1 percent of baccalaureate and 1.5 of graduate degrees in 2015, and African American men earned 0.8 percent of baccalaureate and 1.4 percent of graduate degrees. Similarly, at the University of California, Los Angeles, 1.5 percent of baccalaureate degrees were awarded to African American women and 0.8 percent to African American men; graduate earned degrees were 2 percent and 1 percent respectively.

African American women had higher completion rates than African American men on many flagship campuses, similar to the gender difference for other racial-ethnic groups. Although African American women completed

degrees at higher rates than African American men, both had alarmingly low rates overall. At the University of Georgia, African American undergraduate degree completion was 5.2 percent for African American women and 2 percent for African American men (total African American completion was only 7.2 percent) (table 2).

The gender gap between African American women and African American men in degree completion widens for BSIs. For example, at California State University–Dominguez Hills, the number of African American women earning baccalaureate degrees was twice that for African American men in 2015, 11.6 percent versus 4.7 percent of total degrees conferred (table 2). The gender disparity in earned degrees even persisted for schools where both African American men and African American women had double-digit baccalaureate degree completion rates: Chicago State University (African American women earned 57.5 percent of total degrees and African American men 20.6 percent) and Georgia State University (25.1 and 11.3 percent. African American women were also twice as likely to earn African American graduate and professional degrees at many BSIs. For instance, in 2015, African American–earned degrees at the University of Alabama at Birmingham were 10.1 percent for women and 2.8 percent for men; at Georgia State University, to 13 and 6.6 percent; and at California State University–Dominguez Hills, to 10.5 and 4.3 percent. However, the gender disparity in earned degrees was negligible at several BSIs, including the University of Maryland–Baltimore County (7.8 and 6 percent) and Rutgers University–Newark (6.5 and 5.5 percent).

Both African American women and men graduated HBCUs with baccalaureate degrees at double digit rates (table 2, figures 6 and 7). However, African American women were roughly twice as likely to graduate at several HBCUs in 2015: at Alabama State University, 59.9 percent were African American women and 32.3 percent were African American men; at Jackson State University, 58.6 and 29.8 percent; and at Morgan State University, 52.1 percent and 35.2 percent. In 2015, the proportion of African American women was also higher among African American–earned graduate and professional degrees at HBCUs. The gender difference was nearly triple at Savannah State University: 50.7 percent African American women and 14.1 percent African American men. Although African American women are more likely than their male counterparts to attend and graduate from public universities, the representation of all African American students at Public Ivy and other flagships remains distressingly low.

DISCUSSION

African American students confront systemic barriers that continue to hinder their access and success in higher education. African Americans attend a variety of higher education institutions—community colleges, for-profit institutions, small private colleges, and HBCUs (Iloh and Toldson 2013). We focus on four-year public universities because as a public good, they *should* benefit all the nation's students (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009). This societal ideal warrants closer empirical examination to determine whether public universities equitably serve African American undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

African American student access to highly selective, public institutions has been greatly limited. These institutions are sites of fierce contests over whether consideration of race in college admissions is constitutional. Legislation such as Proposition 209 and Proposal 2 and judicial decisions such as *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Hopwood v. The University of Texas Law School*, *Gratz v. Bollinger*, and *Grutter v. Bollinger* drove the retreat from race-conscious admission policies and procedures.[6] As a result, African American student enrollment and completion has suffered at these institutions (Solórzano and Yosso 2002). The focus has shifted from racial remedies to eradicate inequality and discrimination to concerns about the benefits of diversity for white people (Gurin et al. 2002). This paradigm shift requires critical examination in the context of political, historical, and socioeconomic factors routinely mobilized to block African American

6. *Hopwood v. The University of Texas Law School*, 78 F.3d 932 (5th Cir. 1996); *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 244 (2003).

educational gains. Anti–affirmative action legal challenges, state referendums, and attitudes are evidence of persistent antiblackness ideology. CRT helps frame and better understand societal obstacles to the African American struggle for equitable education.

Flagship Institutions

African American students continue to be largely excluded from the pursuit of degrees at prestigious, public, flagship institutions. The alarming few changes in the presence of African American students over time at these universities clearly demonstrates the persistence of racial inequities. Skeptics attempt to explain the continued underrepresentation as the result of demographic shifts and changing diversity. However, despite our laser focus on states with the largest African American populations, we found that consistently across the country African American participation in higher education was unreasonably low and not at all reflective of African American "critical mass." For example, African American students make up 32 percent of Georgia's population, yet represent only 7.6 percent of undergraduate students and 7.3 percent of graduate and professional students at the flagship campus. Our analyses revealed that while African American students increasingly attended lower-tier BSIs, African American rates of enrollment at public flagship institutions remained stagnant or declined. This necessitates careful recognition and systematic interrogation of the underlying social, economic, political, and historical factors persistently blocking African American opportunities in higher education.

The systematic exclusion of African American students from the most selective, public institutions confirms the reality of institutionalized racism, white supremacy, and antiblackness (Anderson 2015, 1988; Mustaffa 2017). Hostile campus climates characterized by racial micro- and macro-aggressions, hypersurveillance, stereotyping, invisibility, and gendered racism continue to marginalize African American students (Patton et al. 2016; Smith et al. 2016).

Efforts to overcome oppressive restrictions on African American students in higher education have been driven in part by a long history of court cases. Several states faced lawsuits after refusing to desegregate their higher education systems: *Adams v. Richardson*, *Geier v. University of Tennessee*, *Ayers v. Fordice*, and *Knight v. Alabama*.[7]

Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, affirmative action programs attempted to rectify the history of systemic inequitable access to higher education, contracts, and employment opportunities for African Americans and other disadvantaged groups. Affirmative action policies produced dramatic gains in African American college access and success. For instance, the University of California, Los Angeles's School of Medicine enrolled its first African American student in 1967; by 1969, African American students made up 5.6 percent of the student population (Karabel 1999). Despite the progress during the 1960s and early 1970s, however, the advances were short lived. The proportion of first-time, full-time freshmen enrollments peaked by the mid-1970s, and African American student enrollment in medical schools began to decline (Astin 1982). In short, efforts to redress past wrongs met massive, systematic and effective opposition calculated to preserve the status quo of African American exclusion.

Opponents of affirmative action relied on the narrative of reverse racism to argue it was unconstitutional discrimination against white people (Tatum 2017). A key point in the struggle over affirmative action was the Supreme Court's *Bakke* decision that race could only be used as a "plus factor" in admission decisions, and the use of quotas was prohibited. The *Bakke* decision weakened affirmative action because it restricted the intentional use of race in admission practices.

The ongoing resistance against affirmative action confirms a fundamental tenet of CRT, that racism—and its intersection with multiple forms of subordination—is a central component of American society, in law, policy, practice, and everyday experiences (Delgado and Stefancic 2012). The gains of the civil rights movement have warped into illusions of equal

7. *Geier v. University of Tennessee*, 597 F. 2d 1056 (1979); *Knight v. Alabama*, 469 F. Supp. 2d 1016 (2006).

opportunity in a purported postracist society. Alan Bakke's appeal to the Supreme Court was grounded in the false premise that he was more qualified than other applicants . . . or most certainly all applicants of color. His position exemplifies broader dominant narratives that frame individualism and meritocracy as neutral and colorblind measures of a person's worth and illustrates how these dominant narratives are in fact mechanisms used to defend persistent inequities (Crenshaw 2006).

High school grade point averages, standardized test scores, and course requirements are routinely used as race-neutral criteria for admissions decisions at public institutions, particularly flagships. However, research shows how racial inequities in K–12 schooling have a negative impact on African American students' academic trajectories (Ladson-Billings 1998), their performance on standardized tests (Steele and Aronson 1995), and their overall educational opportunities (Tatum 2017). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues that the ideology of colorblindness maintains racial hierarchies and "serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-civil rights era" (2018, 3). The colorblindness frame of abstract liberalism, where "whites can appear 'reasonable' and even 'moral,' while opposing almost all practical approaches to deal with de facto racial inequality" is a fearsome weapon in defense of the status quo (Bonilla-Silva 2018, 56). Plaintiffs, masked in the dominant narratives of "colorblindness," "neutrality," and "meritocracy," defend "the absolute right to exclude," through institutional policies and legislation enacting and protecting white supremacy through the law (Harris 1993, 1736; Omi and Winant 2014). We continue to see threads of these perspectives woven throughout cases such as *Gratz v. Bollinger*, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, and *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*. Colorblind ideology restricts how race is discussed and understood in higher education, even in states without current anti–affirmative action bans (Vue, Haslerig, and Allen 2017) and undermines the possibility of racial justice (Bonilla-Silva 2018).

The tepid efforts to desegregate higher education institutions are a form of antiblack racism in higher education. Nearly three decades ago, Derrick Bell described how "whites may agree in the abstract that blacks are citizens and are entitled to constitutional protection against racial discrimination, but few are willing to recognize that racial segregation is much more than a series of quaint customs that can be remedied effectively without altering the status of whites" (1980, 522). Abigail Fisher's petition to the Supreme Court represented entrenched resistance to African American students having greater access to flagship institutions, because there would necessarily be fewer guaranteed seats for white people. Hence, support for expanded African American access to flagship institutions depends on a convergence of interests (Bell 1980)—which ultimately privileges white interests. A contemporary example is the diversity rationale in higher education. In *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the Court accepted the argument that diversity was important for society (Gurin et al. 2002). Although a strategic compromise by proponents of affirmative action, the diversity rationale does little to ensure racial justice for African Americans and instead centers the benefits of diversity for whites (Bell 2003; McPherson 2015; Harris 1993). Undergirding critiques of the diversity paradigm is the question of cui bono (who benefits?).

Black-Serving Institutions

Although African American students are mostly denied admission into the ivory gates of flagship institutions, some institutions offer African American and other underrepresented students opportunities to attend and complete college. HBCUs, BSIs, and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) have demonstrated commitments to serve students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. In 2011, MSIs enrolled 3.6 million undergraduates, one-quarter of all U.S. undergraduates (Gasman and Conrad 2015). Advocates of MSIs highlight how these institutions offer alternatives for underrepresented students and contribute to the institutional diversity in the U.S. higher education system. For many students, the appeal of HBCUs and MSIs is their unique missions, supportive campus environments, faculty and staff diversity, and the richness of the culturally relevant curricula and offerings

(Allen 1992; Gasman, Nguyen, and Conrad 2015).

Many institutions in our sample serve students who are academically underprepared, first-generation, and low-income; for example, two-thirds to three-quarters of students at HBCUs are Pell Grant eligible. On average, 49 percent of the student population for BSIs are Pell Grant recipients. More specifically, Pell Grant awardees constituted 81 percent of full-time, first-time degree-seeking students at CUNY (City University of New York) Medgar Evers, 84 percent at Chicago State University, and 86 percent at CUNY City College. However, instruction at BSIs is disproportionately conducted by less-credentialed, non-tenure track faculty and these institutions tend to have lower graduation rates than at more selective institutions (Ehrenberg and Zhang 2005). For example, the rates for the 2009 cohort for full-time, first-time degree, and certificate-seeking undergraduates was 35 percent and 29 percent for African American undergraduates at California State University–Dominguez Hills. More startling were the African American rates of 16 percent at Cleveland State University, 12 percent at Wayne State University, 12 percent at Kean University, 11 percent at Chicago State University, 11 percent at CUNY Medgar Evers College, and 10 percent at the University of Houston–Downtown. Previous research reveals such dismal outcomes result from BSIs trying to do and serve more underprepared students, yet being provided fewer resources than the flagship institutions (Shapiro 2017). Negative racial climate is also a contributing factor.

Under existing tax codes, more selective, better-endowed institutions reap maximum benefits from taxpayers, but enroll and graduate the fewest number and lowest percentage of low-income students (Klor de Alva and Schneider 2015). Relative to research-intensive institutions that receive per student funding, ranging from $8,881 to $46,817, our sample of BSIs received a range of $5,567 to $19,630.[8] Although funding may seem racially neutral and merely context-bound, CRT's critiques of liberalism and multicultural and diversity paradigms highlight political contradictions (Dumas and ross 2016; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995). On one hand, the commitment of African American and minority-serving institutions to serve underrepresented students is celebrated and honored. On the other hand, the economic and material conditions of black-serving institutions vividly illustrate the state's disinvestment or refusal to invest in the education of African American people and other underserved communities. It is perplexing that these public institutions must struggle for fiscal support, resources, or survival when society claims to value diversity and equal opportunity (Griffin and Hurtado 2011). Gloria Ladson-Billings critiques the failures of liberalism, which benefits white interests and resists sweeping changes because of reliance on incrementalism (1998). Michael Omi and Howard Winant further confirm that this has been the brilliance and agility of the continually shifting historical "project" that maintains white supremacy (2014).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Originating as normal schools to train African American teachers to educate African American children in the South, HBCUs morphed into "separate but equal" colleges and universities that "legally" segregated African American students from southern public institutions viewed as the province of whites (Anderson 2015, 1988). The history of HBCUs is complex because white missionaries, the Freedmen's Bureau, African American missionaries, white industrial philanthropists, and of course African American communities each played significant roles in establishing African American colleges (Anderson 2015, 1988). CRT's interest convergence theory explains white missionary involvement in HBCUs less as misguided altruism, and more as determined efforts to maintain financial and organizational power over African American institutions (Bell 1980; Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009). Rampant white paternalism jus-

8. Core revenues per FTE enrollment, by source, for fiscal year 2015. The lowest for research-intensive institutions was $8,881 at Pennsylvania State University. However, state and local appropriations were not available, so this number may actually be higher.

tified their "God-given task to both 'civilize and educate'" African American people through a curriculum rooted in whiteness, emphasizing manual training and attempting to imbue "appropriate"—that is, white, middle class American—values of dress, speech, and activity (Allen and Jewell 2002, 243). The emphasis on vocational education promoted the labor market interests of white industrialists and farmers (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009), was rooted in white supremacists' notions of African American inferiority (Mustaffa 2017), and further underscored the centrality of racism. In the realm of higher education, both Northern (missionaries and philanthropists, for example) and Southern whites (such as government officials) sought to exclude African Americans from white institutions and to limit African American control over their own institutions (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009).

Desegregation pressures can threaten the missions of HBCUs, and from 1976 to 2015 we saw striking decreases in the percentage of African American students enrolling in HBCUs (Allen et al. 2007). Many feared that cases like *Adams v. Richardson* and *United States v. Fordice* would pressure HBCUs to change their missions, especially after K–12 public school desegregation closed so many African American schools and caused massive displacement of African American educators (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009; Anderson 1988).

HBCUs continue to enroll and graduate large numbers of African American students. These institutions "punch above their weight," representing only 3 percent of U.S. higher education institutions but graduating approximately 20 to 25 percent of African American baccalaureates in any given year (Allen and Jewell 2002). However, HBCUs are more often in precarious positions due to reduced federal funding and desegregation efforts that undermine their original mission (Harper, Patton, and Wooden 2009). Several HBCUs have closed and others are threatened by financial exigencies and racial stigmas that erode their viability. Given severely inequitable funding, James Minor argues that federal support could more accurately be described as "financial aid for HBCUs rather than purposeful investment" (2008, 32). HBCUs are routinely disadvantaged relative to HWIs in the same state system of public higher education; for example, in North Carolina, HWIs received nearly double the funding allocated to HBCUs on a per student basis (Minor 2008). To avoid further declines in overall African American college access and success, states must expand the capacity of HBCUs to help serve growing demand and diversity in higher education.

HBCUs pursue the uncertain path of supplementing budgets and funding shortfalls with tuition, grants, corporate partnerships, and private donations (Richardson and Harris 2004). This is tricky, however, because the increased influence of private interests may erode their mission (Giroux 2002). Heavy reliance on philanthropy also potentially opens the door to increased white control over them (Gasman and Tudico 2008). Disparities in federal and state funding signal undervaluing, or even targeted attacks on public HBCUs. HBCUs are spaces that center African American people, history, and knowledge in direct challenge to white supremacy. These institutions emerged from a complex, contradictory history to become an "engine in producing Black scholars, leaders for the Civil Rights movement, and research to highlight racist issues," as well as a place for black life-making (Mustaffa 2017, 719).

CRT legal scholars point to the perseverance of white supremacy and pervasive anti-black racism to explain why, despite the legal equality, African Americans have been able to realize only relatively modest gains (Harris 2015). African American students' low enrollment and completion rates at public, four-year universities drives home the harsh realities of racism. Systemic racism runs deep and wide in the DNA of higher education, forming symbiotic relationships with other institutions in U.S. society. For instance, the soaring mass incarceration rates for African American men and declines in the numbers of African American men college graduates are inextricably linked (Alexander 2012). Given these permanent, mutually reinforcing racial hierarchies, it is difficult to foresee a future when resistance to full African American participation in public higher education is eliminated (Bell 1992).

HOW FAR HAVE WE COME? BROAD STROKES

Our inquiry into African American student enrollment and completion at select public higher education institutions since the Kerner report centers three questions: How far have we come? What worked and did not work? What are the implications for the twenty-first century? Despite the report's call for expanded African American educational opportunity, college enrollments for both African American women and men have been persistently disadvantaged. Regarding the Public Ivies and flagships, African American enrollments have mostly remained stagnant, hovering near the same, very low levels apparent in 1976. African American enrollments on these prestigious campuses dropped precipitously after affirmative action programs were attacked and rolled back.

However, bright spots were also evident: African American student enrollment grew at several public flagships, several BSIs expanded the numbers of African American students, and HBCUs continued to produce a disproportionate share of the nation's African American college graduates. Nevertheless, the absence of significant, sustained growth in African American student enrollment and completion at public four-year universities that account for a significant proportion of U.S. college graduates is disturbing. Although public universities grew exponentially, and despite substantial growth in the numbers of African American high school graduates, no commensurate, overall increase in African Americans on these campuses followed.

What Has Worked?: Looking to the Courts

The question of what has worked defies a simple answer. The insidious perpetuation of antiblackness excludes "the very possibility of overcoming racism through discursive structures" (Harris 2015, 266). Backlash against affirmative action policies and a rash of court challenges retards progress. Efforts to destabilize and defeat affirmative action rely on the false narratives of colorblindness and liberalism (Tatum 2017). Beverly Tatum confirms the devastating consequences of Proposition 209 and Proposal 2 for African American enrollment at Public Ivy flagships in California and Michigan and points to the unsteady ground on which affirmative action stands (2017). Court challenges to affirmative action have already targeted Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for the next round of attacks on African American educational opportunity. True to form, these cases are falsely framed as equal justice investigations of "intentional race-based discrimination in college and university admissions" (Savage 2017, para. 2).

The Future: Implications for the Twenty-First Century

African American student enrollment, college degree attainment, and economic advancement continue to be undermined by antiblack perspectives, institutional biases, racial discrimination, and white privilege. A complex set of factors—institutional and individual, historical and contemporary, brutal and silky smooth, governmental and civil society, intentional and unconscious, economic and cultural, mysterious and predictable—combine to create and maintain African American student disadvantages in U.S. higher education. Beyond coincidence, these factors intersect by design to ultimately preserve and reinforce white supremacy and racial hierarchy.

Moving forward, antiblackness must be forcefully contested in higher education and across society. Lionel McPherson positions higher education as "deeply implicated in the history and legacy of antiblack racial injustice. This is the basis of the distinctive moral responsibility these institutions have to be concerned about substantive equality of opportunity with respect to blacks in particular" (2015, 125–26). Higher education is a space of both opportunity and oppression (Solórzano and Yosso 2002), requiring resistance, as with campus activism; and where we also find "Black life-making" (Mustaffa 2017).

Higher education and racial inequality intersect with wealth; African Americans are three times more likely than whites to be low income and twice as likely to be under or unemployed and to hold significantly less wealth. Prohibitively high college costs (Sissoko and Shiau 2005), especially at public four-year insti-

tutions (Ma et al. 2017), the declining purchase power of Pell Grants (King and Bannon 2002), and limited federal subsidies combine to disproportionately restrict African American student college enrollment and graduation. Racial inequality in wealth, health, and higher education is no mystery. Instead, "It is the result of the same historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological patterns that have perpetuated Black subjugation and oppression since Blacks arrived on these shores in 1619" (Allen 1992, 41–42).

Beyond higher education policies and practices that force African Americans into the lowest-tier institutions, restrict college access, impede college success, and limit returns from earned degrees, is a larger antiblack social, political, economic, historical, and cultural context. The surveillance and disgraceful mass incarceration of African Americans is clear evidence of antiblackness and systematic efforts to dominate and control African Americans. These attitudes and practices are reflected over the long time line of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, "Southern Political Strategies," and the "War on Drugs" (Alexander 2012; Browne 2015; Tatum 2017). Education is directly implicated in African American subjugation, and the logic in the madness that grafts discriminatory educational policy and practices onto the socioeconomic and political-historical disempowerment of African American communities is indisputable. The ultimate result—if not goal—is to inexorably divert African Americans from the higher education pipeline.

The American Dream ethos touts education as the great equalizer, a way for African American students to break the vicious cycle of poverty and achieve success in life. We reject this narrative for its failures to contend with racism, intersectional oppression, and colorblind rhetoric (Bonilla-Silva 2018; Patton 2016). Patton further debunks this myth as a source of meritocratic discourse which "attaches nobility to higher education without examining its contributions to the inequality it purports to disrupt" (2016, 318). Instead African American students continue to be denied educational opportunities and to be forced down pathways leading to poverty, drugs, prison, premature death, and defeat. Unless and until these changes are made, the United States will continue to be a society described in the Kerner report as "separate and unequal."

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