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AAAS Underscores Importance of Diversity in Education and Science

“AAAS has long advocated the importance of bringing underrepresented minorities into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, both for the benefits diversity brings to the students and those with whom they interact but also as an important means of expanding the STEM workforce at a time when U.S. economic development and national security depend on maintaining U.S. preeminence in science and technology.

We are disappointed that the Departments of Justice and Education have rescinded the past administration’s guidance on how universities and colleges may use race in their admissions decisions in order to promote diversity.

In 2003, the Supreme Court of the United States recognized the body of scientific research on diversity as part of its deliberations involving admissions at the University of Michigan (*Grutter v. Bollinger*), concluding that ‘numerous studies show that student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals.’

The need to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in STEM fields is quite clear. Hispanics, blacks and American Indians/Alaska Natives combined represented 27% of the U.S. population over the age of 21 in 2015, but only 15% held their highest degree in a science or engineering field.

The science is clear. Upholding the importance of diversity in higher education and the ability of academic institutions to pursue opportunities that allow for diversity in their admissions is critical to our nation’s progress.”

– Rush Holt, chief executive officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

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