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programs. Another type of academic unit, the research center or institute, can be used to encourage interdisciplinary research while minimizing the risk of organizational rigidity that might result from the formation of a new department. At such a center, faculty and other researchers from a variety of disciplines bring their alternative perspectives and methods to bear on specific issues or problems. As with interdisciplinary instructional programs, faculty members of research centers are likely to retain their primary academic appointments in their disciplinary departments. Research centers may also provide faculty with expert help in applying for grants and managing contracts with funding agencies.

The core teaching, learning, and research functions of colleges and universities are carried out by faculty organized into disciplinary departments and other academic units. To be successful, any efforts to reform the functions or processes of colleges or universities must consider how the departments will participate in the reform effort. In addition, new departments and academic units will need to be created in order to accommodate the continuing expansion and proliferation of knowledge throughout the coming decades.

—Carol L. Colbeck

See also: Academic Administration; Curricular Innovation; Curriculum; Disciplinary Associations, Humanities; Disciplinary Associations, Sciences; Faculty Recruitment; Faculty Roles; General Education; Rankings, Academic Program

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Desegregation in Higher Education

The journey to desegregating higher education has been long and challenging, spanning generations of debates, court cases, and compliance initiatives. Proponents of desegregation have been sharply critical of statewide efforts to eliminate the vestiges of segregation. Still, meaningful steps toward dismantling segregated statewide systems of higher education have been made in the 1990s. Guided by the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *United States v. Fordice* ruling in 1992, many states and institutions, notably in the South, continue to explore policies and practices to eliminate dualism and promote equality among public colleges and universities. A blueprint has begun to emerge to guide states toward meaningful reform, leading them to re-vision their roles and responsibilities for providing an equitable and desegregated statewide system of higher education in the twenty-first century.

The Legacy of Segregation

Present forms of racial division in U.S. higher education stem from a long-standing history of inequality and segregation in the United States. The slave labor system established during the Colonial and antebellum periods denied blacks basic privileges, including education. Especially because an educated society of blacks posed a threat to the slave economy, states, both northern and southern, blocked black access to all forms of education. Even though slavery was abolished in most northern states following the Revolutionary War, black access to public schools remained illegal in both the North and South.

The Civil War marked an end to slavery nationwide, but higher education opportunities remained limited for blacks. Southern states were particularly slow to extend to blacks the rights of



James Meredith escorted by federal marshals into the all-white University of Mississippi, 1962. (Hulton/Archive)

citizenship, including access to colleges and universities. Despite expanded educational opportunities created by the historic land-grant legislation of 1862, the first Morrill Act, it would not be until the passage of the second Morrill Act in 1890 that benefits of higher education would be extended to blacks. The Morrill Act of 1890 in-

duced states to provide blacks with higher education opportunities because it expressly denied federal funds to colleges "where a distinction of race or color is made in the admission of students." The legislation allowed for the establishment of dual colleges, white and black, so long as the funds were equitably divided. The right to op-

erate this dual system was challenged, but it was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling of 1896, and shortly thereafter, citizens from the North and South began the task of creating segregated systems. Rooted in the "separate but equal" precedent set forth by *Plessy*, nineteen states would establish segregated systems of higher education by the end of the century.

Federal Impetus toward Desegregation

The statewide dual systems established in the late 1800s remained undisturbed until 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision that "separate but equal" educational facilities were unconstitutional. Although the desegregation mandate included the dismantling of segregated higher education systems, the mandate was largely ignored. Efforts to desegregate higher education would have to wait until the 1960s, when guidance from both the legislative and executive branches of the federal government began to move higher education, albeit gradually, toward desegregation.

President Lyndon B. Johnson played an important role in advancing desegregation efforts in the 1960s. Perhaps most significant, he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was designed to end discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities. Especially relevant to higher education, Title VI of the act restricted federal funding to schools and colleges that discriminated on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. Using his executive powers, Johnson charged the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) with the responsibility of enforcing state compliance with the Title VI standards for admission.

Following its mandate, HEW eventually found ten states to be in violation of Title VI and requested these states to develop plans to address desegregation. But as had been the situation following the *Brown* case, orders to desegregate were ignored and not enforced. Citing HEW's failure to enforce Title VI, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund filed suit in 1970, charging

that federal funds continued to be granted to institutions in violation of the law. In the 1972 federal court ruling in the *Adams v. Richardson* case, Judge John Pratt from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia found in favor of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. This decision, in turn, survived an appeals court review with an addendum that compliance measures be designed in a way that protected black institutions within state systems of higher education.

Subsequently, HEW responded by obtaining state plans for desegregation, but in 1977, Judge Pratt ruled that the plans were ineffective. To eliminate the effects of de facto and de jure segregation, Pratt required state plans to address unnecessary program duplication and to expand undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs at black institutions. In addition, institutions were to desegregate by diversifying students, faculty, and staff at historically black and white institutions.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, some states made progress in their desegregation efforts, and by 1985, the federal government determined that fourteen states were officially desegregated. At the same time, however, other states continued to struggle to comply with Pratt's orders. Arkansas and Georgia, among others, struggled to make significant progress in attracting black students to attend white colleges. Moreover, attempts to recruit black faculty in white institutions fell short more often than not. Perhaps most significant, program duplication and inequality was apparent in many states, including North Carolina and Louisiana.

Despite the fact that at least some progress was being made in most states, Judge Pratt expressed frustration with the slow pace and dismissed *Adams* by refusing to hear further arguments. The issue would resurface in the early 1990s with a landmark case that would shape present efforts to desegregate higher education: *United States v. Fordice* (1992).

Mandate for Reform: United States v. Fordice (1992)

Although many states complied with Pratt's orders, others, including Mississippi, argued that

nondiscriminatory practices, as identified in *Brown*, were sufficient to meet federal standards for desegregation. Not convinced that this standard was just and adequate, Jake Ayers and other black citizens from Mississippi filed a suit in 1975 demanding a more equitable state system of higher education (*Ayers v. Fordice*, settled in 1995). Pointing out the disparity of education between historically white institutions and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), the plaintiffs called for increased funding for the state's three HBCUs. Over a twelve-year span, Mississippi responded by adopting institutional mission statements that the state considered racially neutral and articulated differing purposes of the eight public institutions in the system. Although admissions policies no longer explicitly discriminated by race, each of the institutions remained segregated: Historically black institutions remained predominantly black and white institutions remained white.

The district court finally heard the Ayers case in 1987, and although the court raised issues of discriminatory admissions policies, funding inequities, and program duplication within the state system, it ruled that the state's legal duty of desegregation did not extend to these areas. Instead, the court declared that states were only responsible for creating policies that were racially neutral, were developed in good faith, and did not contribute to making the institutions racially "identifiable." This interpretation of the law was upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Not satisfied with the outcome, the federal government, through the U.S. Department of Justice, joined the plaintiffs and brought the case to the U.S. Supreme Court in what became known as *United States v. Fordice*. In 1992, the Supreme Court ruled that the lower courts had misinterpreted the law and had failed to apply the correct legal standard for Mississippi's system of higher education. The Court noted that existing policies perpetuated segregation even though racial neutrality was expressed in institutional missions and programs. Simply put, the Court claimed that a number of factors essentially predetermined an individual's choice of institution,

and that this predetermination was based on race. The Court concluded, "[I]f policies traceable to the *de jure* system are still in force and have discriminatory effects, those policies too must be reformed to the extent practicable and consistent with sound educational practices." Stated another way, the *Fordice* decision sought to eliminate policies and practices that made institutions racially identifiable and thus wittingly or unwittingly steered students to attend a particular college based on their race.

Relying on the findings introduced in the district court, the Supreme Court pointed to multiple practices in Mississippi that perpetuated the segregation of the eight public institutions. Although a number of indiscretions were identified, the Court focused on four policy areas that needed to be addressed to eliminate the vestiges of *de jure* segregation: admissions standards, program duplication, institutional mission assignments, and the continued operation of eight separate universities.

Specifically, the Court pointed to evidence suggesting that admissions policies still reflected the intent to keep black students out of predominantly white universities. Despite the racially neutral language adopted by the white institutions, selectivity and other factors contributed to the perpetuation of a dual higher education system. Beyond admissions, duplication of programs was evident, because white and black institutions ran similar programs despite close geographic proximity. The Court also noted that the flagship programs were all at the white institutions and that the missions of black colleges were more regional in scope. These observations raised the question of the necessity of operating eight public universities.

Although the Court did not provide guidelines about how to address these issues, the *Fordice* case provided critical steps toward desegregation because it set a legal standard for evaluating whether a state has addressed its duty to dismantle *de jure* segregation in its higher education systems. In doing so, the *Fordice* opinion made clear that racial neutrality and good-faith efforts are not enough to adequately address the remnants of segregation that exist in colleges and universities.

1987
Racing
U.S. 5th Cir.

In response to the *Fordice* ruling, many states, including Mississippi, have explored various policies and practices in order to comply with the standards set forth in the decision. Although progress has been made, states continue to struggle with compliance and face a number of complex issues in their efforts to dismantle formerly de jure systems of higher education.

After Fordice: A Period of Exploring Policies and Practices to Eliminate Vestiges of Segregation

In Mississippi, Maryland, and nine other targeted states, the effort to eliminate vestiges of segregation have focused to a considerable extent on improving education at HBCUs. An example of such an attempt is in Texas, where state officials are focusing their efforts on improving Prairie View A&M and Texas Southern University, the state's two historically black institutions. Plans include directing resources to improve facilities on the campuses, bringing faculty salaries into alignment with those at predominantly white institutions, and adding high-quality master's and doctoral programs. These practices are being copied throughout the South as a measurable means to comply with the *Fordice* standard.

Although this strategy is widespread among the remaining segregated systems, critics of this approach argue that such efforts do not necessarily promote desegregation as expressed in *Fordice*. These critics contend that if attempts at improvement are focused disproportionately on black colleges, the effect could be simply a slide back to the "separate but equal" arrangement as defined by *Plessy* a century ago. Still, most observers concede that enhancement of the HBCUs is essential to level the playing field and to encourage students of all races to attend historically black institutions.

In fact, improving the conditions and programs of HBCUs is regarded by many as an important way to attract white students to black institutions. In Mississippi, for example, state lawmakers are persuaded that increasing white attendance at their HBCUs is central to their desegregation efforts, and they have diverted state resources to advance this agenda. In 2000, Mississippi lawmakers sent a clear signal to higher edu-

cation officials by rerouting requests for facility improvement funds toward efforts to recruit whites. Georgia has extended this model in its attempts to funnel money into HBCUs to increase enrollment of Asian, Hispanic, and white students. There is opposition to this strategy among some black college officials who believe that resources are best spent improving facilities and programs in black institutions without catering to whites or other well-represented races in higher education.

In another strategy, some higher education officials have sought to loosen admissions standards at selective white institutions. Proponents of this policy argue that increasing access to traditionally white institutions is the best way to create opportunities for blacks and other underrepresented groups. Texas has followed this advice by signing a resolution promising that the state will do a better job of recruiting and retaining black and Hispanic students at all the state's colleges and universities. In Mississippi, representatives of the black citizens from the *Ayers* case submitted a plan proposing new admissions policies aimed at making more students eligible to attend historically black and historically white colleges. Submitted in September 2000, the plan also suggests adding academic programs at the three HBCUs and equalizing faculty salaries at black and white institutions.

In the politically charged environment following *Fordice*, some Mississippi legislators have advocated closing or even merging black colleges with neighboring white institutions as a way to accomplish desegregation. Proponents argue that the measure would also promote cost savings within the system. However, most members of the black community continue to call this option an inappropriate remedy, pointing out the irony of closing the very institutions that sustained blacks during segregation as a way to combat the vestiges of segregation. Many black scholars and activists, such as Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, argue for the importance of black institutions as environments that preserve black culture and provide shelter, networks, and comfort for blacks.

Elimination of program duplication has also been an important strategy aimed at achieving compliance with *Fordice*. Maryland is one state that is addressing program duplication, and not without controversy. The OCR has been involved with redirecting the placement of academic programs in Maryland and is requiring more state support for program infrastructure needs at Maryland's HBCUs. Critics argue that the close monitoring of programs limits academic choice and undermines attempts to promote access. Still, with guidance from OCR, Maryland's higher education leaders are moving forward with plans to streamline programs, including those at the campuses of the University of Baltimore and Towson State University.

Relying on these strategies, states have experienced some successes and failures in attempts to eliminate de jure desegregation. In Mississippi, for example, a higher percentage of black students, who constitute a higher proportion of students in the system, are enrolling in traditionally white institutions. A record number of black students enrolled at the University of Mississippi in fall 2000, and black students now make up more than 12 percent of its student body. Similar strides have been made at Mississippi State University, where, in 2000, black students represented 16.9 percent of the student body, up 2.4 percent from five years earlier.

On the other hand, two of the three HBCUs in Mississippi have become less diverse in recent years. The percentage of white students at Alcorn State University dropped 1.3 percent from 1994 to 1999, and 0.2 percent at Jackson State University during the same period. Maryland and other states report similar struggles with diversifying their historically black institutions.

Adding to these struggles are racial disputes and the politics of desegregation. For example, claims of racial discrimination in Louisiana have plagued efforts to assemble a leadership team at a new community college in Baton Rouge aimed at remedying desegregation. In Mississippi, the proposal to expand the Gulf Coast campus of the University of Southern Mississippi has fueled great controversy, with black critics arguing that funds to be used for expan-

sion would be better spent improving the state's three HBCUs.

An Emerging Template for Desegregation

Although states are still experimenting with policies and practices to eliminate the vestiges of de jure segregation, a template has gradually emerged to guide their efforts. Informed by a myriad of experts and the successes of desegregated statewide systems, this template is anchored in two points: (1) addressing dualism, increasing the other-race presence in historically black colleges and traditionally white institutions, and (2) addressing unequalness, addressing disparities in funding, programs, and facilities between white and black campuses. Within these overlapping concepts lie three main initiatives for reform: increasing black presence at traditionally white institutions, increasing white enrollment at HBCUs, and addressing disparities between white and black institutions by enhancing HBCUs' missions, programs, and facilities.

Much of the activity surrounding increased access for blacks in white institutions lies in the policy of affirmative action. Affirmative action initiatives have taken a variety of forms inside and outside the walls of the academy. On the inside, such policies seek to promote access by ameliorating economic or academic disadvantage, which would proportionately benefit blacks as a whole. Outside the institution, efforts continue to be made to diversify boards of trustees, state coordinating boards, and planning commissions. It is argued that a diverse governing body is in the best position to help institutions meet goals for recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of black students.

Encouraging white enrollment in HBCUs has emerged as another important strategy to eliminate vestiges of segregation. This strategy addresses both dualism and unequalness. White enrollment in HBCUs provides a white presence in a black-dominated culture, serving to advance desegregation and to leverage additional support for HBCUs. This leveraging occurs because states are forced to increase funding to upgrade HBCUs in order to attract white enrollment. Accomplishing multiple goals, this initiative is also tied

to the objectives of eliminating disparities between white and black institutions by enhancing HBCUs' missions, programs, and facilities.

In 1997, Clifton Conrad, Ellen Brier, and John Braxton conducted a study aimed at identifying the factors that contribute to the matriculation of white students in public HBCUs and offered policy solutions consonant with their findings. The authors found that white students are attracted to HBCUs that offer programs in high-demand fields, especially at the graduate level, and are not duplicated at proximate historically white institutions. Since the majority of whites who attend HBCUs are nontraditional students, their matriculation is also linked to the presence of alternative delivery systems such as evening and weekend courses. Nontraditional students gravitate to the convenience of earning a degree locally versus traveling a distance to attend a traditionally white institution. Supporting the literature on student matriculation, the authors identified quality and reputation as important factors determining a white student's decision to attend an HBCU.

In sum, the research on white matriculation speaks to the importance of strengthening the institutional identity and uniqueness of HBCUs as a way to eliminate unequalness and promote desegregation. To achieve these goals, the missions, programs, and facilities of HBCUs clearly must be enhanced. Specifically, states need to ensure that a significant number of high-demand, high-quality programs exist at the HBCUs, especially at the master's and doctoral level. Moreover, addressing program duplication is also important in combating dualism and inequity. Missions at all public institutions need to be sharpened so that duplication of programs between historically white institutions and historically black institutions is resolved and so that programs are redesigned to strengthen the uniqueness and programmatic identities of HBCUs. Such initiatives will bolster the status of HBCUs, helping to elevate their programs to the level of those at white institutions. The effect will be to attract a more diverse body of students to the HBCUs.

Beyond program improvement, the enhancement of their facilities is critical to overall efforts

to forward HBCUs. A safe campus that is technologically advanced is poised to meet academic challenges and attract students of all races. Of course, these and other improvements are predicated on having strong state funding to achieve these ends. Put simply, for colleges and universities of the twenty-first century to be equitable and integrated, the commitment of states under federal guidance must continue.

Progress has been made, but the long journey to desegregate higher education is not over. Following this template for segregation, together these policies and practices promise to eliminate the vestiges of segregation. As this encyclopedia goes to press, the relatives of Jake Ayers await a final settlement in Mississippi. The next chapter of desegregation has yet to be written. The journey continues.

—David J. Weerts and Clifton F. Conrad

See also: Affirmative Action; African Americans in Higher Education; Federal Legal Issues; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; State Legal Issues

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