



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Senior Associate Deans, Admissions Leads, Directors, and Department Chairs

FROM: J. Christopher Clemens, Provost

CC: Charles Marshall, Vice Chancellor and General Counsel
Christi Hurt, Chancellor's Chief of Staff
Provost Working Group on Admissions

DATE: December 14, 2023

RE: Recruitment Guidance, including pathway, pipeline, and assured admission programs

UNC-Chapel Hill is proudly public, and we will continue to promote access to graduate and professional education.

Our admissions working group, comprised of members of the Provost's Office and the Graduate School and advised by the Office of University Counsel, continues its work to ensure that our admissions and related practices both serve the University's mission and meet its legal obligations following the U.S. Supreme Court ("SCOTUS")'s recent decision. We continue to appreciate the productive conversations and collegial spirit that have been a hallmark of our mutual work to navigate a fundamentally changed legal landscape.

We remain committed to expanding access to our excellent graduate and professional programs as we work with you to comply with the recent SCOTUS decision. For additional information and background about that decision and its implications for your program, please watch the 14-minute video, [Admissions After the Students for Fair Admissions Decision](#).

This memorandum provides general guidance for recruitment, which includes pathway and pipeline programs as well as assured admission programs. We will continue to consider financial aid and funding materials and will issue additional guidance regarding these issues in the new calendar year.

OUTREACH TO PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS TO UNC CHAPEL HILL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Outreach activities provide information to prospective applicants about our academic or pipeline programs and encourage them to apply.

Informational Activities

- Outreach activities may include digital and print communications, attending conferences to share information about degree and pipeline programs, holding open houses, meeting with specific groups of students, and other activities as part of a broad recruitment strategy where the purpose of the interaction is to encourage applicants to apply to Carolina.

- We encourage schools and departments to employ a broad strategy when engaging in these activities. It is permissible for schools and departments to engage in concentrated outreach efforts for specific populations of applicants as part of a more general effort to share information widely about our academic programs.
- These outreach strategies may include providing information through institutions, organizations, or agencies, including Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and high schools.

Additional Outreach Supports

- Current law permits fee waivers, financial sponsorship for campus visits, and similar supports to enhance access for financially disadvantaged students or to recruit exceptional applicants. However, these supports cannot be provided based on race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or other protected status, or as a proxy for these demographics.

YIELD ACTIVITIES FOR ADMITTED STUDENTS TO UNC CHAPEL HILL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Yield activities provide support for decision-making by admitted students (e.g., calls from faculty, department chairs, alumni or current students to encourage accepting an offer of admission).

Informational Activities

- It is acceptable to engage in outreach efforts to yield top admitted students and encourage them to matriculate.

Additional Supports

- Current law permits providing reasonable sponsorship for campus visits, or similar supports, to enhance likelihood of matriculation for top admitted students. However, these supports cannot be provided based on race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or other protected status, or as a proxy for these demographics.

PIPELINE AND PATHWAY PROGRAMS

Pipeline and pathway programs are designed to provide experience and guidance to support the success of students as they consider a degree program at Carolina or elsewhere. We encourage, value, and recognize the importance of pipeline and pathway programs. These programs are critical to our mission and can create access for low-income and under-resourced populations. Note, these programs may be internal to the University (e.g., accelerated bachelor's to master's programs) or via partnerships with other universities, including those within the UNC System, external agencies, or organizations.

Informational Activities

- Outreach activities may include digital and print communications, attending conferences to share information about pipeline programs, holding open houses, meeting with specific groups of students, and other activities as part of a broad recruitment strategy where the purpose of the interaction is to encourage applicants to apply to the program.
- We encourage units to employ a broad strategy when engaging in these activities. It is permissible for units to engage in concentrated outreach efforts for specific populations of applicants as part of a more general effort to share information widely about our academic programs.
- These outreach strategies may include providing information through institutions, organizations, or agencies, including HBCUs, MSIs, and high schools.

Additional Outreach Supports

- Current law permits fee waivers, financial sponsorship for campus visits, and similar supports to enhance access for financially disadvantaged students or recruit exceptional applicants. However, these supports cannot be provided based on race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or other protected status, or as a proxy for these demographics.

Admissions

- Pipeline and pathway programs must be open to all applicants, regardless of their race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or membership in another protected class. Curricular content that emphasizes specific population groups may be retained.
- Race/ethnicity cannot be collected or considered during the admissions process for pathway and pipeline programs – pathway and pipeline program directors and evaluators must follow the same application and application review guidance previously provided to degree programs, see guidance below. Race/ethnicity data may be collected only after all admissions decisions have been made, the cohort is finalized, and the program begins.

ASSURED ADMISSION PROGRAMS

Assured admission programs are designed to provide experience and guidance to support the success of students as they consider a degree program at Carolina or elsewhere. We encourage, value, and recognize the importance of assured admission programs. These programs are critical to our mission and can create access for low income and under resourced populations. Note, these programs may be internal to the University (e.g., accelerated bachelor's to master's programs) or via partnerships with other universities, including those within the UNC System, external agencies, or organizations.

Informational Activities

- Outreach activities may include digital and print communications, attending conferences to share information about assured admission programs, holding open houses, meeting with specific groups of students, and other activities as part of a broad recruitment strategy where the purpose of the interaction is to encourage applicants to apply to the program.
- We encourage units to employ a broad strategy when engaging in these activities. It is permissible for schools and departments to engage in concentrated outreach efforts for specific populations of applicants as part of a more general effort to share information widely about our academic programs.
- These outreach strategies may include providing information through institutions, organizations, or agencies, including HBCUs, MSIs, and high schools.

Additional Outreach Supports

- Current law permits fee waivers, financial sponsorship for campus visits, and similar supports to enhance access for financially disadvantaged students or recruit exceptional applicants. However, these supports cannot be provided based on race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or other protected status, or as a proxy for these demographics.

Admissions

- Assured admission programs must be open to all applicants, regardless of their race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or membership in another protected class. Curricular content that emphasizes specific population groups may be retained.

- Race/ethnicity cannot be collected or considered during the admissions process for assured admission programs – assured admission program directors and evaluators must follow the same application and application review guidance previously provided to degree programs, see guidance below. Race/ethnicity data may be collected only after all admissions decisions have been made, the cohort is finalized, and the program begins.

CONCLUSION

We hope you will use this [question form](#) to submit any questions or concerns to the working group as we continue our work. We encourage ongoing conversations and look forward to our continued collaboration as the University moves forward. Thank you for your continued collegiality – and patience – as we work through these complex issues together.

PREVIOUSLY SHARED GUIDANCE

Applications - General Guidance for All Programs

- Confirm that applicant race and ethnicity demographic data are not accessible by decision-makers in the admissions process at any stage of that process, including in systems such as Slate, national application systems, and Salesforce.
 - Decision-makers in the admissions process should not have access to race and ethnicity demographic data in application pdfs, reports and queries, impersonation/audit log functionality, and the Slate Reader.
- Race and ethnicity demographic data may not be requested in University-administered or University supplemental application materials for use as a factor in admissions decisions. If such demographic data is requested for a different purpose, the request should be accompanied by the following statement:
 - No applicant is required to provide racial or ethnic information in this application to UNC-Chapel Hill. UNC-Chapel Hill does not consider an applicant's race or ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions at any stage of the admissions process. Such data may be collected for research and reporting purposes, however, demographic data about an applicant's race or ethnicity is not made available during the admissions process to University employees who make admissions decisions.

Application Review Materials - General Guidance for All Programs

As academic programs adjust to the Court's decision, we make the following observations.

- All applications to a program should be considered using the same review process, regardless of an applicant's race or ethnicity. Applicants should not receive an additional or different review based on their race or ethnicity.
- Application reviews should credit qualities or attributes that are relevant to the academic discipline and available to every student, regardless of race or ethnicity, such as an applicant's skills, ability, and experience.
- Application reviews should not focus on an applicant's beliefs, value system, or identity.
- The term "diversity" must not be a proxy for race in the context of admissions. If race or ethnicity is revealed in any portion of an application or interview process, the reviewer may not credit an applicant's race – "race for race's sake."
- A program may not use prompts as a tool to solicit information about an individual's racial identity. A program cannot use any discussion or disclosure of an applicant's racial experiences to give any credit or advantage to the applicant's discussion of race merely based on the applicant's racial identity.
- An applicant's volunteered discussion of racial experiences may be considered as part of the application process, but only if such experience is connected to a separate, individual achievement, character trait, or other evaluation criteria that is available to all applicants and does not function as a proxy for race.

We also recommend that programs consider the following practices:

- We encourage each program to develop and maintain one or more documents to capture its admissions criteria and review process accurately.

- Rubrics are useful tools that capture a program’s admission criteria, facilitate alignment among application reviewers, and reduce bias when evaluating essays and interviews. We encourage the use of rubrics that include specific criteria that are relevant to the discipline and available to every applicant. Rubrics should not include categories or points for race or ethnicity. Instead, they should include metrics, qualities, or attributes relevant to the academic discipline and available to every student, regardless of race or ethnicity. The more clearly defined the metric, the easier the application is to review.
- Programs that use open text narratives as part of their rubric or evaluation process should ensure that narratives are honest, thoughtful, and substantiated by evidence in the student's application. Reviews should be factual and reflect substantial care and attention to the application.
- Programs may wish to reconsider their use of the term “holistic” to describe their admissions process. The Supreme Court did not prohibit holistic review. But it rejected holistic admissions processes that considered race as a factor, increasing the risk that “holistic” review will be associated with the unlawful consideration of race – even if that impression is inaccurate. We recommend use of the term “individualized” review instead.