Jonathan Rauch:

Hello everyone. Good morning, it is such an honor to be with you as well as your heroic attendance at this ungodly hour. I rarely roll out of bed before about noon. We have an amazing panel but before I introduce them, I just wanted to thank Michael for the privilege of having me here today. And to say that I've spent... I guess we met four or five years ago, to watch the dynamism with which he has led ACTA into one of the nation's leading organizations to reform higher education and to do that constructively, not just by tearing down but through for example, the debate programs which you're about to hear about. And this room is also full of people who are doing remarkable work. You guys are the instructors of all of us, but Doug Sprei, who's here, who's with ACTA staff has been such a dynamo in organizing what is now a burgeoning national college debate movement. Manu Meel, who you'll be hearing from, who I think I saw in the back is organizing students around the country.

Stuart Taylor, who I also saw has launched what's now become a national network of college alumni for free speech, bringing a whole new voice, a grassroots voice. So my role having said all that is to introduce our panel and get out of the way in alphabetical order. Dorian Abbott to my immediate left, is an associate professor of geophysics at University of Chicago where he's been since 2009, I think. He's a recipient of ACTA's Hero of Intellectual Freedom Award. He has the dubious distinction of having had a scientific lecture, not a political lecture but a scientific lecture canceled at MIT on unrelated purely political grounds, which I thought at the time was a new milestone in academic suppression of scholarship and cancel culture. He has proposed an alternative framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion, which he calls merit, fairness and equality, which we'll be speaking about. And he has two degrees from Harvard but no one's perfect. John Chisholm has four decades of experience as an entrepreneur, CEO and investor. Founded and served as chairman and CEO of Decisive Technology, which is now a part of Google Company you all have heard of today. He heads John Chisholm Ventures, a San Francisco based entrepreneurship advisory and investment firm. He's the author of the book, Unleash Your Inner Company, more immediately relevant for today's Proceeding. He's a trustee of the Santa Fe Institute, served for six years as an MIT trustee and was president and chair of the Worldwide MIT Alumni Association. One of the things that we'll be talking about is his concept of holistic diversity and inclusion. Amna Khalid is associate professor in the department of history at Carleton College, specializing in modern South Asian history and history of medicine. Growing up under a series of military dictatorships in Pakistan, Amna has a strong interest in issues relating to censorship and free expression.

Her essays and commentaries on academic freedom, intellectual diversity and free expression have appeared in outlets such as Chronicle of Higher Education, the Conversation Inside Higher Ed, New Republic. She hosts a podcast and accompanying blog called Banished, which explores censorship in the past and present. And she has argued that diversity, equity, and inclusion should be done by education not by training. And has made a very compelling case for the profound difference between those two concepts. Finally, last certainly but not least, someone that you've all heard of, Glenn C. Loury, the Merton P. Stoltz Professor of Economics at Brown University and a Paulson Fellow of the Manhattan Institute. A globally known economic theorist. Glen has published and lectured throughout the world. He's also among America's leading critics writing on racial inequality. His awards and honors are far too numerous to list here. For example, distinguished Fellow of the American Economics Association, member of the American Philosophical Society Council and Foreign Relations, Economic Electric Society, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, one could go on.

He's also the host of the wonderful podcast of which I'm a regular audience member. The Glenn Show in which John McWhorter often appears. His only flaw as a human being is that he has not yet had me on his show to talk about my book, but that's a remediable flaw. I thought we'd just start out asking the same question to each of these people for a very brief answer, just a table setting question. That

question's going to be this, when we talk about diversity, equity, inclusion on college campuses today before we get to what it has been in the past, what it should be in the future, what are we talking about right now? When you talk about DEI or diversity as practiced on academic campuses today, how would you characterize that? Let's just start with Dorian.

Dorian Abbot:

Well, I guess primarily the way you see it on a college campus is through a large administrative structure of DEI agents, that sort of suck up tens to a hundred million dollars at a given institution. And that sort of promoting a certain perspective on how to deal with issues of equality between different races, sexes, and sexual preferences.

Jonathan Rauch:

Good, thank you. So two elements that I heard there was bureaucratic and ideological.

John Chisholm:

Diversity and inclusion first of all are good things. Diverse lived experiences and points of view strengthen our thinking, strengthen any debate, have the potential to reverse long held prejudices and reduce polarization. So we should welcome diversity inclusion it seems to me. The problem is how they are currently practiced and implemented on campuses today. They focus very narrowly on just a small set of the many attributes that make us unique as individuals, primarily race and gender. Almost always just identity and personal characteristics rather than intellectual and cognitive and a myriad of other dimensions that we can talk about, which I call in total holistic diversity.

Jonathan Rauch:

So another element there to remember as we talk is it's identity focused.

John Chisholm:

Yes.

Jonathan Rauch:

It's focused on identity groups as opposed to individual's. Amna, how about you? What are we talking about?

Amna Khalid:

Well, I just want to start by saying I concur with everything that's been said till now so I shan't repeat it. But I think how it's being practiced on college campuses today, I characterize it as a fuss. And I'd say it's a box checking exercise primarily for PR purposes.

Jonathan Rauch:

Interesting. So we had yet another element there, which is it's ritualistic. Glenn.

Glenn Loury:

Well, the obvious thing to say is it's about identity groups, race, gender, sexual orientation and so forth. I think it's also about ideology decidedly left critical theoretical, and I think it's about power. It's about control.

Jonathan Rauch:

Power.

Glenn Loury:

Control over the narrative, control over the curriculum, over pedagogy. I agree with Amna, it's about covering dairy air, it's about optics. It's about presenting the right image, the right message, and sadly I think some of our young people are used as props in that theatrical presentation.

Jonathan Rauch:

Well, thank you. It's excellent. I think we got the four or five major elements that we're talking about here. Let's pursue Dorian's path for just a few minutes. Let's talk about the notion of diversity as a goal. What's its value? What's its limitations? Anyone volunteer? Glenn, do you want to start on that?

Glenn Loury:

Value and limitations, well, I agree with the holistic observation here that we get these young people, they're 18, 19, 20 years old coming to college. They are Black or Latino or gay or whatever. That's not all of what they are. In fact, that's the least of what they are. And instead of inviting them to get out of their identitarian silos and grow and discover who they might be yet in the fullness of their education, we double down on the identities that they bring to the table and in a way patronize them by putting back to them exactly what it is that they are telling us about themselves. So a missed opportunity to challenge the young people to think more broadly about their lives and about their role in society.

Jonathan Rauch:

How do you feel about the concept of diversity? Is there a baby in that bathwater as an academic goal?

Amna Khalid:

Can I come in here?

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah, please.

Amna Khalid:

I think diversity should be an academic goal but not demographic diversity, not reduced to the idea that we have people who just look different. The core aim as higher education or the core aim should be and has been intellectual diversity. And the reason that demographic diversity becomes relevant to that is because usually if you look different and you think of yourself as being of a particular identity group, what tends to happen is that you think differently. Now, this is a very kind of flat way of looking at it, but the whole idea behind demographic diversity in higher education is that it will allow for intellectual diversity and that should be our core mission. However, I think we've been derailed and we're just beginning to focus on people who think the same but look different. And therefore real diversity is being undermined.

Dorian Abbot:

I'll just tell a little story. So about 10 years ago... So I teach in geophysics department with a lot of climate scientists and I teach a class on global warming. And about 10 years ago I invited a scientist from Georgia Tech named Judith Curry, who's considered a climate skeptic to come give a lecture in our department. And it went really well. She gave her talk, we asked questions, we took her to dinner, we had a good experience. And I actually learned two interesting technical details that I didn't know about from her lecture. And so I guess that's what I would say is good diversity.

Jonathan Rauch:

Does anyone disagree about the concept that diversity, say geographic, socioeconomic, and ethnic has a value, John?

John Chisholm:

Well, this is a perfect tee up for a key point, which is that by unduly focusing on diversity on a few dimensions as we do, we actually under-represent our people along other dimensions. And one example of that is the MIT undergraduate student body. Of course, our DEI programs focus primarily on physical and identity dimensions. What are some of the ones that we disregard? Well, one of the dimensions we don't look at at all is geography. And if you sort the 50 US states by those that are most versus least represented in the MIT undergraduate student body, the bottom 25 are represented at only one third the rate per capita for those states of the top 25. Now, that may not seem like a big deal. Well, it is a big deal because the students from those states are different not just geographically, but.

John Chisholm:

Are different not just geographically, but culturally, economically, politically, as well as geographically. They tend to be rural states, they tend to be lower income states, and they tend to be center-right states. We don't do any outreach to those folks at all, and yet they represent about half of the US population. In fact, it's pretty easy to show they are more underrepresented in the MIT alumni undergraduate student body than our racial minorities, and yet they have absolutely no constituency or visibility in our DEI programs and initiatives at all, they are completely invisible. So those are some thoughts.

Jonathan Rauch:

Well, let's...

Dorian Abbot:

Can I take your bait?

Jonathan Rauch:

Sure. I didn't realize I baited you.

Dorian Abbot:

Yeah. When we hire a faculty member at University of Chicago, the only thing I care about is their research, basically. I don't care whether they're gay, straight, man, woman, whatever race. It doesn't matter. So I think, to me, a lot of those issues, I would definitely de-emphasize those issues and I would say...

Jonathan Rauch:

In faculty hiring, but let me be devil's advocate for a minute and impersonate a DEI person. That may be true of faculty, but aren't universities supposed to offer students experiences of, yes, diverse points of view, and yes, there should be more geographic diversity, but don't we have a reality that this country has had a profoundly racist past and that we've struggled to bring minorities into the mainstream? And isn't there educational value in selecting for minority status?

Dorian Abbot:

You're not being devilish enough. So I think...

Jonathan Rauch:

I'm trying to steelman that, then.

Dorian Abbot:

The DEI staff would disagree on the faculty hire. They would.

Jonathan Rauch:

Sure, but let's go to students. I think students is the harder case, right?

Dorian Abbot:

Yeah.

Jonathan Rauch:

That's where there's an educational case for recognizing ethnic diversity as a consideration in admissions and promotion, no? Does [inaudible]

Dorian Abbot:

Well, maybe someone else would.

Jonathan Rauch:

Anybody?

John Chisholm:

The physical and identity dimensions or attributes are one small handful of all of the dimensions that make us unique as individuals. Think about intellectual and cognitive diversity, there's short term versus long term time horizons. There's abstract versus concrete thinking. There's relationship versus transactional orientations in dealing with other people. There's introversion, extroversion, I could go on and on. Well, we don't focus on these at all. Let me talk about the third category of a group, which are related attributes. I call it one's extended phenotype, borrowing the language of biologist Richard Dawkins, a household income, a zip code, civic organizations joined, even sartorial and tonsorial preferences. There are millions of dimensions of diversity.

One of the benefits of considering all of these dimensions is that we can actually achieve greater academic excellence because with more dimensions of diversity, we have a larger pool to choose from. And a larger pool means that we can choose an even better set of candidates. My friend Scott Page,

professor at University of Michigan and Santa Fe Institute external professor, which is how I know him, in his book The Difference points out that it is cognitive and intellectual diversity that makes teams, work groups, and boards better decision makers. Physical and identity diversity only to the limited extent that it indicates cognitive and intellectual diversity.

Glenn Loury:

I don't know if there's something here because it's not a zero-one issue if you talk about racial representation in elite colleges and universities. You would have diversity if you simply admitted without racial preferences, you just wouldn't have population parity. There would be 5% or 4% of the student body who were African American if you selected into the elite academy based only on academic qualifications instead of 8% or 12%. I'm an economist, I think about cost and benefits at the margin. I think about whether or not we go for more or go for less of the thing. We could do with less and still have diversity. At what cost are we purchasing 8% or 10% representation of African Americans? And there's a standard deviation difference in the SAT score presented by students whom we're admitting across racial groups, I would say at considerable costs. So we can think about this as reform at the margin as opposed to abolition.

Jonathan Rauch:

Is there a right or wrong amount of ending admission standards and criteria?

Glenn Loury:

Well, if you're asking me, I'd say yeah. And the right amount is zero.

Dorian Abbot:

Yeah.

Jonathan Rauch:

Zero?

Dorian Abbot:

I agree. Yeah.

Jonathan Rauch:

So would you favor completely race-blind admissions, Glenn? Yeah?

Glenn Loury:

Yeah. I mean, I wouldn't fall on my sword about a subjective vetting process that allowed for some consideration of different kinds of life experiences and that had a racial aspect to it. But as I say, the magnitude of what we're doing now, I mean, look at the data that are put out about admissions practices at Harvard in the context of this lawsuit. There are huge differences in the academic preparation of the students across racial groups in these elite environments and I think the cost of that is very high. But the constitutional question of whether the 14th amendment prohibits the use of race in any way, shape, or form is not one that I'm really qualified to address.

Jonathan Rauch:

Dorian, you would go race-blind?

Dorian Abbot:

Yeah. I wanted to make one more point about that, though. That when you take into account lots of non-academic considerations, it enables a large expensive bureaucracy and it also enables the bureaucracy to play games like picking people that they want and obfuscating what they're actually doing. And so what I would advocate is some sort of quantitative metric and algorithm that you can tune to get the desired outcome, whatever this number, this percentage of students graduate or whatever. And then you check it afterwards, longitudinal test to see if it's working. And then you run your algorithm with every applicant, you rake everyone, you say, "Open source, here's the code, here's the algorithm," and then you have a threshold and just everyone above the threshold gets in and you get rid of all of the jerry-riggering and crazy business.

Jonathan Rauch:

So effectively race-blind. Let me ask the same thing of the two of you. I know, John, you wanted to come in, but Amna, why don't you go first and we'll hear from John?

Amna Khalid:

I'm just reacting to what Dorian said. Can you explain that to me again? I'm not sure I fully agree. And you and I disagree on many things, so I'd like to...

Dorian Abbot:

Well, let's say... Okay, so first you would define your objective. Your objective might be the highest income for our graduates. Your objective might be the highest percentage that graduate. Then you find a test that you think predicts your objective, it could be just an IQ test, could be the SAT, could be bespoke, could be a combination of IQ tests and a psychological test that incorporates different vectors of psychological experience. And then what you do is you would have everyone do the test, feed that into the algorithm, and then make a ranking, and then accept the people above the ranking.

And then you would periodically reevaluate the test. And you could do A/B testing where some of the population is given test A and some is B and you see which one predicts best. But the important point is you don't have a whole staff doing all this stuff and you do it in a quantitative and open source way so everyone knows how the evaluation is happening. And also that you do longitudinal studies to see if your test is actually predicting the thing that you wanted to predict. But what goes into the test could be lots of things. It doesn't have to be just the SAT, it could involve psychological eigenvectors like disagreeableness, agreeableness or whatever, all these things that psychologists...

Amna Khalid:

It's an interesting proposal and I think one worthy of consideration, but my gut right now militates against it, not because I disagree with you in terms of the amount of stuff that is going into creating this DEI edifice, but I actually... Yeah, let me just say my gut right now militates against it. I think this kind of algorithmic solution will fundamentally undermine the kind of diversity that we want because it's only privileging a certain way of looking at things. And yeah, I'll leave it there.

Glenn Loury:

Let me...

Jonathan Rauch:

John and...

Dorian Abbot:

May I? [inaudible]

John Chisholm:

So I think we need to bear in mind the impact on the individual of unduly focusing on physical and identity attributes of diversity. I came out late in my mid thirties. Prior to that, if I were selected or elected or promoted to a position, I knew that it was due to what I had contributed or accomplished rather than to the fact that I'm gay. Now that I'm out, I can't always be sure. No one should be subject to that situation. To avoid undermining the very people that we aim to help, we have to use lots of dimensions of diversity with a light touch rather than a few dimensions of diversity with a sledgehammer, which is what we're currently doing.

Jonathan Rauch:

Glenn, thank you for your patience.

Glenn Loury:

Oh, no, not at all. And I think I'll just let that stand. I was going to comment on the algorithm point.

Jonathan Rauch:

Well, you're an economist.

Glenn Loury:

And Roland Fryer and I have a paper called Color-Blind Affirmative Action that's published in The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization a few years ago in which we show that if you're after racial preference diversity but you're enjoined from explicitly using race, you can nevertheless by adjusting the relative weight that you put on different non-racial characteristics, approximate your racial representation goal, but at the cost of undermining the quality of your selection process. So for example, if you have family income and mother and father's occupation and residential location and so on like that, along with SAT Q and SAT verbal and high school grades and letters of recommendation, the formula has weights and you can get a score just as you suggest by finding out what the weights would should be. And you can adjust those weights if you like, in order to indirectly prefer the group because the distribution of non-racial characteristics looks different in the different racial populations, this kind of idea. So algorithms are not necessarily the solution to the problem is what I'm saying.

Dorian Abbot:

Yeah, but that essential part of my proposal is that you define your objective. So if my objective is increasing the salary of graduates or increasing the graduate rate, that doesn't have anything to do with... And so you have to be open about the objective you've defined and you have to openly test it and allow people to see that you're correlated with the objective. On the other hand, I'm totally fine if it's acceptable in a legal framework if they say, "We're shooting for this percentage of people in these racial categories." If that's what we're going to do, I'd just like to see it open and I could download the code and see how they're doing it.

Jonathan Rauch:

Well, that's effectively what I think Harvard is saying in the case before the Supreme Court. They're saying, "Look, we want a campus that looks more like America than it otherwise would". That's the legitimate goal. They're hiding the ball in terms of how they're doing it. But Glenn, I'm guessing that if the Supreme Court rules against race-conscious admissions, which I think they probably will, that universities will just do exactly what you said, which is find a bunch of proxies and continue on their way.

Glenn Loury:

At the cost of weakening the quality of their selective process. I mean, they will not be getting "the best academically qualified students," even though they will be legally consistent with the constraint that they not explicitly use a racial preference. No free lunch.

Jonathan Rauch:

John.

John Chisholm:

Certainly there's benefit to exposing students to diverse viewpoints and lived experiences. Both MIT and Harvard are in just about the bluest of the blue states, Massachusetts. And if they're really serious about that, they should overly focus on getting representation from what I call the other half, the rural lower income and center-right states, because those are the most underrepresented segments of the US population especially in...

Jonathan Rauch:

Would you rule out race as part of the package? Argue it's unconstitutional, illegitimate, or are you simply saying race plus other things?

John Chisholm:

My inclination is to use lots of dimensions.

Jonathan Rauch:

Including race?

John Chisholm:

Including race.

Jonathan Rauch:

And once you do that, you're in Glenn's box where colleges will find ways to privilege race?

John Chisholm:

That is absolutely a hazard. Let me offer a vision of how college admissions might be done 10 years from now, optimistically. I don't actually think a lot of colleges will be doing this, but this is how they ought to be doing it and those with the best AI technology perhaps will be toying with it. But when you're dealing with hundreds or thousands of dimensions of diversity, you have to use AI because there's no way a

human can keep track of all of those dimensions. And also the way we do it today is we consider each individual as their application comes up. It's the wrong way to do it.

You'd like to consider the entire pool of applicants and see if out of the 20 or 30,000 applications that MIT gets, what subset of those... We make about 1500 offers to graduating seniors each year for a freshman class of just over a thousand. You'd like to find the subset of that which is most qualified, most prepared, perseverant, passionate about math and science or whatever they're doing, as well as providing diverse views in lived experiences and so forth. Well, it's going to take AI to look at all the different possible combinations of those candidates and choose the subset that is as qualified as possible and diverse as possible.

Jonathan Rauch:

Amna, what do you think of that?

Amna Khalid:

So I'm going to be really old school and not revert to technology, which I think is, again, an interesting proposal. But there's some basic and simple things we can do to solve this issue. One is stop legacy, two is stop admitting on sports, that will instantaneously address issues of diversity. So instead of funding these big bureaucracies of DEI, if we're truly and genuinely serious about increasing diversity on campus, these are two very simple things that we can do which will have a huge impact without thinking about all these different metrics of diversity individually and trying to balance them out. I think those are some solutions there too. I would say we need to take the money that is going towards DEI stuff and the over-expanding administrative bloat that is happening in higher education and put it towards faculty and faculty development.

Because the issues that we want to address as a society are inequality, one of the big issues, whatever lines it's falling across, and that's not going to happen through training, it's not going to happen through your bureaucracies. It's going to happen by changing hearts and minds and that, the faculty is in the business of doing. We do it, we do it well. This is where that should be going. Instead, what we're finding is faculty lines are being cut and administrative lines are growing exponentially. So to my mind, this is not a difficult problem to address. There's simple solutions, we just have to be willing to put our money where our mouth is.

Jonathan Rauch:

Well, thank you. And thank you Dorian for being willing to let me switch the subjects since that's a good segue to where I want to go next, which is the DEI's effect on scholarship. But before I do, I just want to ask the room a question. Let's just take a poll of the room. I'm going to state this question as fiercely and divisively as I can. So I'm going to say here... The question's going to be, "Raise your hand if you think that race does have a place as a criterion in college admissions." And then I'm going to say, "Raise your hand if you think race should have no place as a criterion in college admissions." Okay? Race should have some place or it should have no place. Raise your hand if you think race... By the way, I'm going to stay out of this because I don't know. Raise your hand if you think race should have some place in college admissions. That looks like about half the room, would you say, Michael?

And so raise your hand if you think race should have no place. Well, that's the other half of the room. Isn't that interesting? So we're divided here. And I have to say, I feel strongly both ways. I mean, my father was a victim of the Jewish quotas in the forties and fifties, and the college admissions officers in those days said, "Well, we can't have 40% Jews at Columbia." I mean, that's just not right. Let's talk

about scholarship and whether we're seeing distortion of scholarship, both in terms of hiring and in terms of the work that's being published, promoted. Jonathan Haidt, who all of you know or know of, is a prominent social psychologist, recently resigned from a scholarly organization because it began requiring diversity statements of papers that were submitted for conferences and he saw that as a fundamental threat to academic integrity. Does anyone want to talk about some of what we're seeing on the academic side in terms of research agendas, hiring, promotion? Are we seeing significant distortions or just occasional mischief?

Dorian Abbot:

Huge distortions. So I'm in the sciences and a lot of people thought, "How can you mock around with the sciences?" But we've had talks in our department like Feminist Anticolonial Perspective on Geology, that's the title of the talk. So it's like science is supposed to be universalist and it's supposed to be communal. And so it's part of this trend of something like a perspective statement. You have to say, "I'm coming at the science from this perspective," but the problem is that's anti-scientific. And so yeah, there's a rot that's affecting the scientific...

Jonathan Rauch:

Does it affect the direction of the work and the research itself?

Dorian Abbot:

Yes.

Jonathan Rauch:

Or is it something you staple on the back of the proposal?

Dorian Abbot:

In this case, it's the whole context of the research itself. We only will even consider certain conclusions because we're coming at it from a feminist anticolonial perspective.

Jonathan Rauch:

Okay. So how does that operationalize for an exoplanetary biologist?

Dorian Abbot:

Well, so for exoplanetary biology, I haven't seen this, but I've seen this for geology. And so it's someone working... I mean, basically that what they'll say is the western culture is fundamentally extractive and it goes into different cultures and takes away geology and so we're going to go to the culture and we're going to ask them what they think about this rock and use their way of knowing instead of western scientific ways of knowing. That's what it means.

Jonathan Rauch:

So it's not just humanities and social sciences.

Dorian Abbot:

Yes.

Jonathan Rauch:

We're seeing impacts in the hard sciences.

Dorian Abbot:

I have seen, yes.

Jonathan Rauch:

Glenn, in economics or any of the fields that you look at, have you seen?

Glenn Loury:

Well, I think the thing that comes to mind is genetics, IQ, race, the taboo subjects that people like Charles Murray get into trouble for investigating, where questions about the causal structures that generate big differences in social outcomes, the kinds of questions that can be asked are constrained. That's not economics per se, although it does have some... If I want to put IQ on the right hand side of a wage regression where I'm trying to explain variation, the population of earnings, and I attribute some of that to cognitive ability, that can be controversial.

Jonathan Rauch:

Have you or anyone on the panel experienced pressure from DEI bureaucrats or activists in terms of your work, your research agenda, your grant proposals? Dorian, we've heard from you. We'll come back, but I just want to make sure I'm not missing any stories.

Dorian Abbot:

No, not personally.

Amna Khalid:

I haven't personally experienced it, but I know that my institution along with many others are now considering having these mandatory DEI statements as part of your tenure and promotion packages. And I think those will impact how people do research and what areas to focus on.

Jonathan Rauch:

How?

Amna Khalid:

I think it will make it more ideological because people who are seen to be doing anti-racism, and by anti-racism, I mean anti-racism Inc. Which is a very particular way of doing anti-racism and people who are doing...

Jonathan Rauch:

It's a meme right there.

Amna Khalid:

And people who are doing DEI in the mold of the dominant framework are the ones who are going to be privileged and seen as worthy of tenure and promotion. So I do think that it's going to impact, it's going

to come indirectly, but it's going to come through there. And I also think we've seen this in the case of the UC hiring where they eliminated applicants on the basis of DEI metrics prior to even considering their credentials. And this was huge. It was a big deal. And I think if that's the line we're going down, then if you were a graduate student trying to get ahead in life, the rational choice to make would be to study the things that are going to help you get further and get a job. And if that's one of the criteria, you will begin to gear and shape your research in a fashion that speaks to that. So I think it's indirect, but it's going to happen.

Jonathan Rauch:

John?

John Chisholm:

Jonathan, I just note that your question touches on the intersection of DEI and free speech, and in this case, compelled speech, which we don't hear as much about but which is just as bad or worse as lack of free speech.

Jonathan Rauch:

So I'll devil's advocate again for a minute on that point. Thank you, John. It's man named Brian Soucek, who's a law professor in the UC system and openly gay. And he makes the case that people are way too wound up about diversity, equity, and inclusion statements and that it's all in how you do them and if they're done by academic departments and not by the general counsel's office, that an important part of pedagogy is welcoming your diverse students in a statement that just says, "Look, as a pedagogue, as a teacher, here's how I intend to serve this student population," is no different than a statement saying, "Here's how I intend to emphasize writing in my course," or a lot of other pedagogical things. So he says it's in the implementation and people are way too hysterical about this.

Glenn Loury:

But suppose you don't want to serve your diversity objectives. Suppose you're simply interested in your discipline, in your study. Suppose you reject the whole political enterprise of acknowledging the concerns of your diverse population. I mean, that's a political position that a person could take. It is going to now be disqualifying to be appointed to the faculty? You're asking for a loyalty oath to be affirmed and a person may not in good conscience choose to affirm it. It shouldn't be a criterion of employment in my opinion.

John Chisholm:

Jonathan, the way your friend described it is the way it should be. The way that Glenn described it is the way it actually is, and I think that's the problem.

Jonathan Rauch:

Dorian, you agree with that?

Dorian Abbot:

Well, I actually wanted to make a... I'm still interested in your last topic. Can I make it? I wanted to bring up another.

Jonathan Rauch:

The dimensions?

Dorian Abbot:

No, I wanted to bring up a point of interference by the DEI bureaucracy.

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah, by all means.

Dorian Abbot:

So my teaching...

Jonathan Rauch:

I'm still looking forward to hearing how an exoplanetary biologist...

Dorian Abbot:

Let me give you a good example.

Jonathan Rauch:

I did hear of a case of someone doing astrophysics who had a grant rejected and told that, "No, you'll have to add a DEI statement to this grant."

John Chisholm:

Yeah.

Dorian Abbot:

Oh, that happens all the time. That's super common. Yeah, that's totally standard. I thought you were looking for case... So let me give you an example. So I teach a course on global warming and it involves radiative transfer. There's something called black body radiation. And so I had an administrator tell me that I can't use the word black body radiation and it's reflective of a postmodern focus on language as opposed to the actual issues. But getting back to Amna's point, what I'm thinking is, if we're going to try to help students from disadvantaged background, shouldn't we spend the money instead of on the DEI administrator on some sort of tutor that's going to help people learn black body radiation better instead of someone saying, "Don't use the word black body radiation."? So, that's it.

Amna Khalid:

I'd like to say something else, Jonathan, may I?

Jonathan Rauch:

Please.

Amna Khalid:

So one of the reasons we're concerned with DEI on this panel is because we're concerned about the impact that this is...

Amna Khalid:

Panel is because we are concerned about the impact that this is having on academic freedom and on student experience of learning and on their ability to speak and share ideas freely. Am I correct in assuming that?

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah.

Amna Khalid:

So we're seeing it as a threat to that enterprise of education. There is another huge threat to the enterprise of education that I think we need to be talking about, which is legislative and it's coming in the form of anti-CRT bills. Now let me just be very clear, I'm no big fan of whatever CRT is considered to be CRT light, which is, I'm not going to get into that debate. But what I am going to say is that we are, after a culture of education, we are after a culture of academic freedom. You don't create it by legislation. That is not the way to do it. That is censorship and that needs to be resisted. This is done through education. It's a long process and it's a slow process. There's no quick fix to it.

Jonathan Rauch:

You used the word education. That's something I was hoping to get to because I'm so intrigued by your distinction between diversity training and diversity education. I don't think I'd seen anyone else make that point. And once you did, a light bulb went off. Do you mind just explaining a bit why you think that's an important distinction to make and how to implement it?

Amna Khalid:

Right. So I think when we think about diversity training, which many campuses are doing, or anti-racism training, we're basically talking about trainers and consultants coming in and encroaching on what we are actually in the business of doing. We need to contend with hard ideas. Education is a transformative enterprise and these are things that we are constantly engaged with in the classroom. Teaching students, you can't come and do a box-checking exercise and say, " Here, you're trained now to deal with some of the most complex and trenchant problems in our society." If they were that simple, they would've been solved a long time ago.

So training is not the answer to DEI in the real sense of DEI, it is education. And I think, again, we are doing this completely wrongheadedly, there is no room for training in higher education. Absolutely no room for that kind of training in higher education. I'm militantly against it. I think the way to do it is in the classroom, it is in these kinds of academic environments where we're having conversations and having hard conversations because there are no easy ways to have these conversations. These are tough, these are fraught and they need to be, but we need spaces to have them, not be told what to do.

Jonathan Rauch:

One of the issues that the idea of training raises is it does become this box-checking exercise. You know, bring in the trainer, you have the two hour session and then you're done. You haven't actually solved any problems. John, were you trying to get in?

John Chisholm:

When I was on the MIT Corporation, our board of trustees, a number of us asked for the trustees to be able to sit through a DEI training class and it never happened. And I think if there are any trustees in this room, something you could ask of your university leadership is we'd like to sit in and it would accomplish two things. One, maybe we'd learn something about DEI and two, we'd get to find out what the university is currently offering. And so-

Jonathan Rauch:

Why didn't it happen?

John Chisholm:

I don't want to think it was because they didn't want us to see, firsthand, what was being taught or trained, but it may have been. And I don't think it helped build confidence in our board that it didn't happen. I don't know the details, maybe it was purely logistical, but it was over an extended period of time and it just never happened.

Jonathan Rauch:

So raise your hand out there if you have been through a diversity training program. Keep your hand up if you thought it was a bad or negative or counterproductive experience. That's a majority I think, right? Most people have been through something and most of those people think it was not a good experience. Is that what I saw? Yeah. Interesting. Well, we're about to come to you and involve all of you in the conversation. I'll ask another question up here first, but think about the things you want to ask. If I'm allowed to do this, Michael? I would say that current students go to the front of the line. We'd love to hear from those of you, who are actually in university environments, about your experiences and especially about our blind spots up here.

I just wanted to raise another topic before we go to the audience, which is bureaucratization. Which is a theme that's come up sideways in our talk so far. But there's a difference between diversity in the classroom as a focus of education, for example, or as outreach that admissions officers might perform, versus having entire structures of administrators and bureaucrats who have a diversity portfolio. And I just wanted to ask if any of you can reflect on the specific impact of institutionalizing and bureaucratizing diversity at your universities or in your lives?

Glenn Loury:

Well, at Brown, a few months ago, I was amused, frankly, to look at the university newspaper and learn that an assistant provost was being appointed for the graduate school to oversee the interest of diverse graduate students across departments at the university as they were coming into study. And I thought, so we have humanities, we have the sciences, we have the social sciences, we have many, many hundreds, maybe thousands of new PhD students who are coming to study and they're going to be met, those who are in underrepresented minority groups, by a designated administrative officer meant to hold their hands and shepherd them into the community? "Why would we be doing that?", I thought. Why would we look upon the pedagogic challenge in that way? And I am reporting here merely that the reach of this, the tentacles of the administrative structure is very, very deep.

Jonathan Rauch:

You said you were amused by that. Are there any menacing or mischievous consequences or is this just kind of a way to-

Glenn Loury:

No, it was just reported. It was being celebrated and reported and there was a photograph of the woman of color, the young woman of color who was going to be doing this job and God bless her. I didn't have anything particularly against her one way or the other, but it seemed to me to be almost a parody of the structure. It was without second thought, without any critical observation. It was just simply, "We're advancing the ball here, we have yet another officer of the administration designated to the goal." I smile.

Jonathan Rauch:

You're a man of great forbearance. John, are trustees in a position to ride herd over this kind of administrative imperialism?

John Chisholm:

I think most are unwilling to weigh in very heavily. Here's something really interesting. Out of the 70 or 75 members of the MIT Corporation, even many of them are deeply closeted, their views on DEI and other subjects. If members of The Corporation are closeted, imagine what it's like to be a fresh person or a assistant professor or a postdoc. Much harder. So I do think there are things we can do. I mentioned one already, which is asking to see what the DEI program is and to sit through it.

Here's something else. I don't think very many boards of trustees these days focus on overhead. And yet, academic overhead is been rising incessantly. And what you might do is ask your university leadership for a metric of overhead, however they want to define it, but one that is flexible enough to be sustainable for at least, say, three to five years. And then ask for a report each quarter, or however often you have a board meeting, of what the current overhead factor is. It'll be some ratio between overall expenses and the cost of actually teaching a student. And we can quibble about what goes into the overhead versus the base. Great, whatever you choose as most reasonable, just stick with that over a period of several years and then monitor, manage and track that metric and see how it's rising.

I have a feeling that at most universities over the last two or three years, it's gone up considerably thanks to programs like DEI. At MIT we announced, in 2020, the hiring of six associate deans of DEI, all of whom report to our chief diversity officer. Of course each of those six associate deans, throughout all the schools and college of MIT, have staff who support them as well. So, again, what doesn't get measured, doesn't get managed or looked at and this is one important thing that we should all be looking at and tracking.

Dorian Abbot:

So I tried to play that game the opposite way at U Chicago, where I tried to get them to appoint academic freedom deputy deans and associate deans.

Jonathan Rauch:

How did that go?

Dorian Abbot:

I figured if they're going to have a meeting at the table and there's one guy making the DEI point, there should be someone else making the academic freedom point and they basically told me to go get stuffed.

John Chisholm:

Well on that point, another thing you can do is either form or encourage your fellow alumni to form a Free Speech Alliance as Michael talked about in his opening remarks and as we've done at MIT. The MIT Free Speech Alliance, the website is mitfreespeech.org, if you'd like to get ideas and inspiration for your university, has grown as fast as any alumni organization I can think of over the last year. We had a great advantage, we had a crisis, namely Dorian was disinvited from MIT. That was the big catalyst that led to our group. I think we've been influential. The group has now about 700 members and it's large enough and has enough funding that it has to be seriously taken into consideration by our official MIT Alumni Association. You can do the same.

The out result of Dorian being disinvited from MIT led to such a media torrent and an alumni torrent of the worst press MIT has sustained in decades. I can't remember the last time that The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times agreed on anything, but both of them agreed it was wrong for MIT to disinvite Dorian. Anyway, that led our president, Rafael Reif, to appoint a free expression working group who, just last month, released their report to assess what MIT's policy should be on free speech. And it is as full-throated defense of free speech and expression on campus as I think you could hope for or expect. So, you can do the same on your campus, if you have a crisis like this, like we had, don't let it go to waste. Use that as an opportunity.

Jonathan Rauch:

And if there is anyone interested in setting up an alumni for free speech chapter, the man who can help you with that is in the back of this room right now. Stuart Taylor, who is the founder of what has now become a burgeoning national network of alumni free speech groups. They have a kit that they can send you on how to get set up, how to get C3 status, legal representation. It's all there in the box if people will do the work.

John Chisholm:

Jonathan, one other thing you can ask for is ask your leadership, "Do we support the Chicago principles?" How many people here are familiar with the Chicago principles? Okay, great. Virtually all of us. I won't take time to explain it, but that's a baby first step any university can take. About 80 universities have formally signed up to do that. Of course, the real proof of the pudding is not so much the adoption in the first place, but the consistent adherence to those principles.

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah, we've seen that Georgetown. Amna, before we go to questions, I just wanted to make sure if you had anything to add to this institutional part of the conversation.

Amna Khalid:

I just want to say that I think there's a slow creep happening. You asked about how this bureaucracy is growing and how it's impacting us. And my institution, for instance, is now going to appoint a chief diversity officer, but we're not going to call them "chief", because chief has issues. So they're now called the Vice President of diversity and we've had assurances from our president that there will be no

interference in the curriculum. But these things slip in sideways, now I just read, part of the DEI plan is to have an equity audit of the curriculum. I don't know what that means. And lo and behold, I can imagine someone, like the lady you mentioned, at some point coming to a professor and saying, "Well, this student felt uncomfortable in your class and they're a minority student and you need to make them feel comfortable."

I'm not in the business of comfort. I'm in the business of making you uncomfortable. And that the issue is, I'll take my specialty, I teach Modern South Asian History, I can imagine a moment where a student who has right wing BJP leanings, in my class, having an issue with how I'm teaching the history of India and deciding that the problem is that I am biased because I am from Pakistan, which is totally not the case. I'm as critical of Pakistan as of what's happening in India right now. But it becomes an issue where we're now talking identities, my identity as a Pakistani and the student's identity as an Indian, who is feeling offended. But that is part of what we have to do to understand the kinds of processes and political processes that I'm teaching my students about the history of. And I'm very concerned that this is very gradually going to start coming into the classroom.

I do believe that the DEI bureaucracy and student life in particular is teaching an alternative curriculum on campus. So I am face to face with my students for however many minutes a week in the classroom, but they are in the residence halls with all the RA training and they are in student life activities. And over there they're being told about things like trigger warnings and bias and bias response teams and sensitivity training. It's a really hard job to fight against that, as faculty, when this entire edifice of DEI bureaucracy is playing a different tune on campus, that you have no access to.

Jonathan Rauch:

I'll mention another group that's working on that. You've all heard of it, The Academic Freedom Alliance, organized out of Princeton. Now doing some good work trying to defend academic freedom in this context. But so much more needs to be done. Well let's go to all of you. Students go to the front of the line. Do we have a mic or are people just talking loud? We have two mics. Yeah. So who have something to say or a story to recount? As long as it's short, it does not have to be a question. Let's go to the gentleman in the eyeglasses with the beard.

Speaker 1:

So you've talked almost-

Jonathan Rauch:

Are you a student?

Speaker 1:

Yes.

Jonathan Rauch:

Where at?

Speaker 1:

I'm a junior at Hampden-Sydney College, in Virginia. You've talked almost exclusively about DEI arising from the administration of colleges. Could you talk a little bit about potential solutions and problems if

the groundswell for DEI comes from the professors from departments within the faculty and how that might be combated outside of administration policies?

Dorian Abbot:

Well, I just want to say it's an insightful question. So I'm on the Council of the Faculty Senate at U Chicago and I'm very glad we have a president who's sort of like the adult in the room. That's all I want to say on that.

Jonathan Rauch:

Anyone else?

John Chisholm:

I'm sure most people here loathe the idea of having to serve on a DEI committee. But I would encourage you to jump at the opportunity if you have a chance to do so and ask the tough questions. Why are we focused on just such a few, narrow set of diversity attributes? What about all the other attributes? The cognitive and the intellectual and related and so forth. And you have the intellectual and moral high ground, you have the broad focus, they have the narrow focus. You can ask these tough questions. So join the committee and have fun with it.

Jonathan Rauch:

Anyone else on this?

Amna Khalid:

Yeah, I'd like to say something. I think, well, I always want to say something, so that's part-

Jonathan Rauch:

That's okay.

Amna Khalid:

I think you're right, there is a push coming from certain faculty on campuses as well and there is a problem with that. But I think here I really want to take my creed to task. Tenured faculty, in particular, have done a very poor job of creating disagreement in faculty meetings and speaking about these things. And the burden lies with us as tenured faculty. We can't leave it to contingent faculty to do it. They're far more vulnerable. But I think we need to have more frank and open conversations in our faculty meetings about how we disagree on these issues. But most people don't. They just sit there quietly. They just want to go back to their offices and do their research or do their 18th century document reading, which I am highly in favor of. And it's precisely that kind of academic freedom that I want us to be able to protect. But we need to speak up.

Jonathan Rauch:

It does make a difference, often just one or two voices in the room saying, " Hey, wait a minute, this reading list is all Ibram X. Kendi, maybe we should have some other, maybe should have Glenn Loury on this reading list." That kind of thing can make them think and realize that there are other constituencies. Let's go to another student if we have one before we go to the non-students. Oh wow, we have a bunch

of students. This is great. We never even have to talk to the non-students. Let's go. Oh wow, that whole table has their hands up. Let's go to the gentleman with his hand high, right by the mic, conveniently.

Zachary Mackenzie:

All right, so I have a specific question for John Colston. John Chrisholm, sorry.

Jonathan Rauch:

Your name and school?

Zachary Mackenzie:

I'm Zachary Mackenzie. I am a super senior at Christopher Newport University. So anyways, my question is for John, and I thought it was really fascinating when you mentioned the concept of using AI to properly rate all of the applicants and whatnot for college universities. The first thing that came to my mind was the movie, I, Robot, where you got Will Smith, who has this prejudice against robots and his prejudice ends up, it's from an experience of when, let's see, he was in a car accident, that was another girl that was in the car accident and he had a higher level of survival in comparison to the girl's, so the robot saved him and not the girl. Could that same philosophy be applied to the admissions as a potential flaw for AI being used?

John Chisholm:

It was Zach, right?

Zachary Mackenzie:

Yes, I get that.

John Chisholm:

Help me understand the analogy you're making between that situation and admissions, Zach?

Zachary Mackenzie:

So essentially it would be, like in the example, the robot took the humanity out of it. Will Smith would've rather had the girl survive even though she had a lower chance of survival according to the robot who was measuring every single thing possible quicker than a human could.

John Chisholm:

Okay. The question is, what is our objective in selecting and composing an undergraduate student body? Right?

Zachary Mackenzie:

Yeah.

John Chisholm:

And I think, what are we trying to optimize? And there are lots of things we're trying to optimize, multiple things, but the good news is we have decades of data and at MIT we have 145,000 alumni. We have some data about how engaged they are with MIT, about how successful they've been academically

or economically. You choose. So that's one set of objectives. And then another set is we want genuine, cognitive and intellectual diversity so that we can learn from each other. We have no idea, the way we do it now, whether we've already achieved enough diversity or optimal diversity. Maybe we're reducing diversity by having these, as I've said, focusing on a few dimensions.

So set whatever criteria you want, I have a hunch that if you consider a pyramid in multiple dimensions, not just two or three but hundreds, but think of it in two or three because that's all we can conceive of, that there's a group of the best candidates up at the very top and who are maybe more diverse than the current set that we're taking, who may be less diverse and less qualified. What a crime that would be, especially since it's costing us all this money to do this. Here's a thought, just focus on qualifications to be admitted and then measure how diverse that is, at some point we're going to have to do that if we want to do this rigorously and rather than just sort of arbitrarily we're doing it now and start creating some baselines and then try to improve and optimize.

Jonathan Rauch:

I will say to Zach, that I'm guessing AI will be part of the conversation. And your point about the downsides of AI, the implicit biases for instance, the fact that it can be a black box and no one can really know what it's doing, those would be very much part of the conversation. Let's go-

John Chisholm:

If I may. The Algorithmic Justice League focuses on the kind of issue you're talking about and I think their work is legitimate and deserves to be incorporated in our use of AI.

Zachary Mackenzie:

So quick follow up, again, I see what you're doing with the being as objective as humanly possible, using AI as a tool for that. Is how much subjective, meeting the individual and whatnot. How much of that would still take place with the system that you're proposing?

John Chisholm:

You're saying?

Zachary Mackenzie:

The humanitarian factor behind, you have the whole system... Forgive me if I'm not describing it the best. But you have this whole rating system and whatnot that's out there. You would have to have a certain individual meet these people individually and then have a subjective interpretation at that point of how this person is and whatnot. How much of that is still taking place?

Jonathan Rauch:

So is AI all the way or AI for first cut and then humans in the loop or what? And briefly, because we've got a lot of students-

John Chisholm:

I imagine it'll be a process that we'll evolve to over time.

Zachary Mackenzie:

Okay.

Jonathan Rauch:

More students, gentlemen in the white shirt, maybe we should take two or three students and just lob them all at us and we'll do two or three. Why don't we do this? And I think there were two over in that direction. I see the gentleman in the red tie next and then the gentleman in the beard over there. Okay, sir?

Speaker 2:

I'm J.P., I go to American University, the most liberal school in America and I've taken many DEI courses, so it's awesome. It makes me feel that I'm evil and then I'm like, "Maybe I'll just embrace it. I'm evil." Anyways, my question is to a Professor Khalid, I noticed that you said that you were anti-CRT bills and for students like me, especially because you mentioned that you grew up in Pakistan. I grew up in Venezuela, right? So I know how censorship works and all that. And I think it's concerning that we keep appealing to this neutral, liberal order when there's a rapacious progressivism taking over.

Speaker 2:

... there's a rapacious progressivism taking over of all our institutions. And just as there's an ethos and certain ideas that must permeate our institutions for us to keep progressing as an American nation, there's also a body. And I feel that we're reaching a point in which ideas are being inculcated into our students, that education always has a factor of indoctrination into it, because you must learn some things concretely to then grasp other things. There's no scarcity in information, so you know how it works.

So my question is when the body is changing and when we are reaching a point in which, my opinion, we're going to change so much and we're not going to have the people that are inclined to defend those liberties that allow you guys to speak up. Without the people that defend free speech, there's no free speech. And that's why when people talk about, oh, socialism or whatever, why is socialism still prevalent in Latin America? Maybe it is because it's the most unequal continent in the world, and when the playground exists for the ideologues to succeed, they succeed. So how are we going to win without pushing back with at least some force?

Jonathan Rauch:

Good. We'll take a couple more while Amna, you think of your response, I'm going to summarize that question as don't we need to teach some values in higher education in order to defend the liberties we care about. Sir? Yes.

Speaker 3:

Thank you. And let me just start by saying I broke the rules a tad. I graduated in May, so technically not a current student, but I graduated from Yale. My name is Jeff, I'm working at Fire now. And my question is along the lines of the causal thread of administration creating the structure of DEI initiatives that we have now.

I think it originates much more so from the students and from a broader culture than it does a top down model. And I think the top down model perpetuates what the students already come to college thinking. At least that's my insight. So my final year at school, I was a freshman counselor, so I went through all the trainings again at the beginning with my group of freshmen. In all honesty, I think if I surveyed them

after doing the DEI trainings, pretty much every hand would go up saying that that was good, that was effective, I liked that. So I have to say, I think our room is kind of biased against DEI trainings as compared to the average student body. So I guess the essence of my question really is how can we go about changing a culture of DEI training if it's coming from the students, if the students come into college thinking that this is the type of system that we should use, these are the ideas that we have, and by adhering to this student consumer based model, the administration is merely perpetuating the problem and not causing it. And any kind of pushback against that is usually met with hostility by students.

Jonathan Rauch:

Excellent. We'll summarize that as what about demand driven DEI. Before the microphone leaves you, just a quick question. Did you feel that the DEI training that students were getting and approving of was in some way bad? Or did you think it was essentially benign? Did you have a problem with it?

Speaker 3:

I think at first, especially as a freshman, I was pretty neutral toward it. It didn't really matter either way. But by the time, even my senior year, we had to redo the training in the spring. So we did it in the fall and then the spring again. And I brought it up at one of our meetings with the counselors. There were maybe a dozen of us. I was the only one that had any kind of pushback to it. Everyone else was kind of questioning why I would feel that way and if it's so straightforward.

Jonathan Rauch:

You felt it was politicized?

Speaker 3:

I did think it was politicized to some extent. I especially felt that it was telling the right way to do something. It was compelled speech in a way, where this is the correct way to handle a situation like this versus an integrated approach, an educational approach. It was a mandate, an indoctrination in a way of this is the correct way to handle diversity.

Jonathan Rauch:

That's very helpful. Thank you. Let's go to the gentleman with the beard in the back and then we'll see what our panel has to say.

Speaker 4:

Okay. Can you hear me?

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah.

Speaker 4:

Okay, good. My name is Harry Hayden. I am a junior at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia. Just a little bit about my background. I work 10 hours a week in our senior office of admission, so I can speak a little bit about that. But this is a question for Dr. Abbot, particularly revolving around algorithmic method for admitting students. I find that wildly interesting. I think it's a great idea.

A couple things or a couple little points that I would like perhaps a little bit more elaboration on. As someone who spends a lot of time in the admission office and isn't there for the final closed door discussions about whether a student gets in or not, I know a lot of the factors that go into that discussion and that debate, and a lot of it revolves around the potential for growth and the potential of a student.

One thing about an algorithmic method that I don't know if it'll be able to encapsulate is seeing someone's grades who started off poor in high school, and then by the time that they were graduating, they were taking AP classes and really pushing themselves. Then the one thing that I really, really love about that is the proposed open public goals of such a system. And I think that no matter what algorithm or debate goes into college admission, that should be in the forefront in public for people applying to that school to know. So just a little bit more elaboration on those couple points, and I think that'll be fantastic.

Jonathan Rauch:

Good. Well, thank you. We have three comment questions for anyone who wants to take them on, but one was directed directly to you, Amna, which is what about pushing back and values?

Amna Khalid:

I think that the Academy works. I think that the Academy leans left. Yes, I think most of the professorate leans left and is, I wouldn't say progressive, but yeah, leans left. Yes. But I do not think that we are broken. I think we do a fairly good job of educating our students and teaching them critical thinking skills. Now indoctrination, and I'm coming to that in a second, I think there are a few, but I don't think they're the majority. And I think this is a political move to focus expressly on a minority of faculty and create a political problem which then allows for state censorship, which is always bad.

Trust me, I come from a place of having lived it. State censorship is never, ever the solution. I think if you want to do something about it, there are other ways of doing it. And also indoctrination, there was a study recently about college students and seeing how far their views changed, their political views changed over a period of time through college. And what was found was that not much. So the evidence suggests that we're not sitting there indoctrinating our students, the majority of us. We're doing a fairly good job. And I think we need to focus on the real problems. This is more of a constructed problem. I'm not saying there aren't issues, there are campus climate issues, but those are not in the classroom and they're not mainly with faculty, they're amongst students. The peer pressure they feel about not being able to speak out, is my response to that.

Dorian Abbot:

Algorithms.

Amna Khalid:

[inaudible].

Dorian Abbot:

I like transferring this back into mathematical frame, where I'm more comfortable. So trajectory, the mathematical word for that is derivative. A difference equation is an approximation of derivative. So your inputs could be mean high school GPA and difference between GPA in senior year and freshman year. And you could see which one is a better predictor of outcome, or what weighting there should be

between them. So that's all easy to incorporate. And then in terms of the students at Yale, the students at Yale, the freshman at Yale believe whatever they think they need to believe to get into Yale. And so I think that's what's going on there. Simple.

Jonathan Rauch:

Any other thoughts on-

Glenn Loury:

Yeah, let me offer something. Yeah, because I've stimulated by teach values. I've had this conversation with Jonathan Height on more than one occasion, to distinguish between the procedural claim, the form should be open to all points of view, we have to have viewpoint diversity, and the substantive claim that some views are actually correct or more nearly correct than our other views.

So for example, I think capitalism trumps socialism and I think history demonstrates that. That's my particular view. I'm prepared to defend it at length. But that is not a question of process. That's a question of substance. We actually spoke the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America at the beginning of this proceeding. Try that in a faculty meeting at any university. Now what's my point? My point is that the substantive claim America is a great nation worthy of your loyalty is disputed across the board within many of these academic venues. That's worth fighting about.

They're wrong. I mean, I'm saying there's right and wrong around some of these issues, and we don't want to paper over the substantive correctness of certain positions on behalf of the idea that every voice has to be heard. Let's fight it out.

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah, I think the substance of the... Thank you. The substance of the critique here is that values are being taught by the left on campus every day in the class, outside the class, in all sorts of ways, and shouldn't liberal values be doing the same? I'll exceed the boundaries of my remit as moderator just to say that I think the answer is yes, but it should be not telling people what to think, but better informing students about things like what the First Amendment says, for example. And I'm very happy that Purdue and University of South Florida and other places are now including some instruction in the fundamentals of liberal values in the First Amendment in orientation. A lot of students just don't know that stuff. Anything else on student driven?

Amna Khalid:

Yeah, I actually wrote an article on that, precisely that. And speaking to students and saying, "You're asking for the wrong thing." And again, this is not the problem. Students don't know, I'm not blaming them, but I'm trying to say, look, most of the students who are asking for these kinds of trainings are also the students who are critiquing neo-liberalism, and they're critiquing capitalism, all of that. And I was trying to point out that these demands for trainings and being satisfied with these trainings is the most neo-liberal approach that you could take towards an issue that actually requires banging heads together in a classroom.

So I'm happy to talk at length about this, but I'll just say that there is a problem, and this is a problem again where we have taught students that you can run to administrators and they'll solve your problem. These are issues we need to educate them about. And that's exactly why we have this problem where they're running to administrators. I'd like to just add on to my comment that was addressed, the question that was addressed to me. I think instead of coming up with legislation that is going to tell you

what to think, how about you say, let's have legislation about the faculty to senior admin ratio on campuses. Because much of the indoctrination that you're talking about isn't with the faculty, it's with the administration, and it's the alternative curriculum on campuses. That's the problem.

Dorian Abbot:

Can I ask Amna a question about the legislation? Something that I was thinking about when you brought that up, I mean, would you be opposed to legislation saying you could only take federal money if you adopt the Calvin Report and the Chicago principles at your university, for example?

Amna Khalid:

No. Well, actually, let me think about that.

Dorian Abbot:

Not saying no CRT-

Jonathan Rauch:

Someone in the room liked that idea. Let's reserve that for a different occasion since we've got three minutes left. And I just want to go back to the floor. We have heard only from students. Thank you so much for your participation. I think we have time for one non-student question, and I would prefer a female. I'm doing diversity. Look, you see, oh, I thought we were ending at a quarter of 11. Okay. How much time do we have?

Speaker 5:

[inaudible] just another 12 minutes or so.

Speaker 6:

Hi, I'm Jenna Robinson and I'm president of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal and also on the board of the UNC Alumni Free Speech Alliance. And wanted to talk more about that values issue, because I think that universities are teaching values in what they choose as their general education curriculum. That is them telegraphing what they think is important for students to learn. And in most areas in the general education curriculum, they've said, "We don't have values, as long as you take history, we don't care which classes you take." But the one place where they are very prescriptive is that you have to take diversity courses. And all of those diversity courses are saying the same thing.

They're not taking a broad brush view of diversity, including intellectual diversity. They have the identitarian diversity courses mandated as part of the general education curriculum. So I think that they are teaching values, not only in the alternative curriculum, but in the actual classes that are mandated for you to take in order to graduate. And so I'd like someone to address the ways in which universities are telegraphing values in the curriculum that they tell students they must take.

Jonathan Rauch:

Floor's open.

Amna Khalid:

Open to us or open-

Jonathan Rauch:

Open to you. Yeah.

Amna Khalid:

Oh.

Dorian Abbot:

Well, I think it's a good point, that's all I want to say.

Amna Khalid:

I mean, I'm just thinking about the curriculum at my institution, we have not yet mandated courses in diversity. We're mandating trainings, but we're not mandating courses in diversity. And I don't know what these diversity courses look like. I can imagine what they look like. And I am not in favor of mandating those kinds of courses as part of your general education. I think we need to go back to basics mandate that you need to take X number of courses in history, you need to take X number of courses in anthro, and in sociology and economics, and then you will begin to see students will come to these questions with more sophistication than any diversity course of the sort that I'm imagining can do.

So yes, I have a problem with those kind of things being mandated, but honestly I don't know how far that is happening yet on college campuses. And I just know that there are a lot of my colleagues who are doing a great job in their classrooms not teaching those kinds of values. We're mostly engaged in teaching students how to think, not what to think. I think for the vast majority of the professoriate, we're doing a good job.

Dorian Abbot:

So can I add something about that? So we have a core class at U Chicago called Power, and it's basically a history from Foucault's perspective. And so it's not exactly a diversity course, but it is a course where the college is saying... It's not a Western Civ course, let's just say.

Jonathan Rauch:

Is it required?

Dorian Abbot:

Yes. Although there's always a little wiggle. You can take this or that, but it's one of the main courses in a required bunch.

Jonathan Rauch:

So if it's not the only course, I could make a case for that, right? Or teach Marx, teach the [inaudible].

Dorian Abbot:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So I don't have a full understanding of what the options are, but I know that most of the students take Power, and I don't think there's an option of Western Civ instead.

Jonathan Rauch:

Yeah, so much of this, it's situational. It's hard to comment unless you know what the course is and whether it's required or not required and that sort of thing.

Speaker 7:

[inaudible] that's a common core social science class [inaudible] there are multiple choices, mostly [inaudible].

Speaker 8:

For mine many years ago in their classes like that, and that was Hobbs, Locke, Plato, Aristotle, et cetera. So you do have a choice within which common core social science. Western Civ, and I was a history major, came in my second year. It's not offered in the way it once was because they can't find professors who can teach Western Civ from Aristotle till today. So they just don't offer it.

Jonathan Rauch:

There's some siren action. I didn't hear you, which university?

Speaker 8:

The University of Chicago.

Jonathan Rauch:

Thank you. Introduce yourself, by the way.

Speaker 8:

Larry Berlin, and I'm an alumni of the University of Chicago.

Jonathan Rauch:

Good. thank you. Sir. Yes.

Speaker 9:

I have a question for Professor Loury. But first off, I want to thank you [inaudible].

Speaker 8:

Introduce yourself.

Speaker 9:

I'm John Alcorn. I am a Shelby Cullom Davis Endowment professor at Trinity College in Connecticut. I teach formal organizations, including a seminar about higher education. I have a question. First, I want to thank you for many insights and equanimity. Professor Khalid, you didn't manage to make me feel uncomfortable. It was...

Amna Khalid:

You're not in my classroom.

Speaker 9:

Professor Loury, a question for you. Two words. Disparate impact. Is the answer don't try and fix it downstream, the problems are upstream? Or don't worry about disparate impact, what really matters is quality, a good match in a particular university? Because trusty Chisholm, you mentioned the value of diversity and you used the term exposure, but I have observed is that you get diversity on paper, statistical diversity, and then you don't get integration, you don't even get interaction. Because supposed beneficiaries of diversity self sort into separate majors.

And Professor Khalid, you rightly said, athletics is a problem because it really is never enough for coach, and yet where I teach, the only place where there's spontaneous integration in every facet of life is on the football team where they freely choose to room with one another. So we've got a complicated beast. And so my question is disparate impact.

Glenn Loury:

Okay, there's a lot there. I mean, just straightforwardly you've got some criteria that you're using to make some selection decision. If you use the criteria straightforwardly, the consequence will be an underrepresentation of some desired population, let's say too few Blacks. So the criteria have a disparate impact on the designated group and the criteria therefore suspect.

Now, the criteria well may be correlated with things that you're interested in, like academic performance after admission. Maybe the SAT is predictive of how kids are going to do in difficult intellectual work after admission. And yet its use has a disparate impact on this category, let's say African American. So you eschew the use of the SAT. And yet the SAT really was associated with post admissions performance. So when you eschew its use and you admit the African American students in greater numbers than otherwise would've been the case, you create a population of students who ex post facto predictably will on average perform less well in virtue of the fact that you've ignored the signal that was telling you that they were not as well prepared.

This is not a good thing. This is not equality. This is not an environment in which a candid assessment of student performance is going to be permitted. And we have anecdotal evidence to that effect, when professors at law schools have spoken out about the underperformance of their students they've had a ton of bricks fall on them and so forth. So that's one thing.

The other thing that I'd say is about segregation. So I'll tell an anecdote. I teach a seminar called Free Inquiry in the Modern World. We read Plato and Hobbs and Milton and-

Jonathan Rauch:

Rauch.

Glenn Loury:

And Mill, so on. And we're getting there. We're getting the Rauch. And I'm going to have you on the podcast if you're still willing to come, Jonathan.

Anyway, here's what I'm saying, the anecdote, So I'm in class one, they're the 20 students. They happen all to be white. Just happens to be that way. I ask about Afro-American studies, I just ask. It came up in the context of the discussion. And it turns out that none of my students, although they were interested in some of the substantive offerings in our Africana Studies, as we call it, department at Brown, were enrolled in any of those classes. I said, "Why not?"

We're discouraged because the African American students in those classes feel that if white students are in the room and then a controversial racial question comes up, they have to explain to the white students about what the reality of race is. And my students interested in Africana studies substantively

were themselves not feeling welcome in the classroom of the Black Studies program at Brown University.

I was stunned by that, but I thought how ironic, in virtue of the fact that I thought we were having diversity and inclusion, and yet we create this environment. And by the way, Jonathan, when Don Tomasi invited you to a big speech that you gave under his directorship at Brown about your book, that room in Solomon Hall was absolutely packed. And I searched up and down to try to find Black faces without success, how could it be? A thousand people are assembled to hear about this great piece of intellectual work at Brown, which is 10 or 12% Black enrollment, but there weren't any Black students in that room. Diversity?

Jonathan Rauch:

It's a constant problem. I don't know what to do about it. I speak on a lot of campuses on free speech and the constitution of knowledge and there are rarely minority faces in the room. It's a real issue. Well, we will call a halt here. I was seriously considering going on for another hour in order to deplatform April and [inaudible] because they will outshine us. But this has been a fantastic panel. It's been a special success for me because I scored an invitation to the Glenn Show. Thank you, all.