Listen Up!: Recontextualizing Student Activism in the Wake of *Fisher v. University of Texas*

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Students are protesting the lack of cultural competency among faculty, staff and their peers... exposing acts of hate and bias on their campuses...

demanding increased enrollments because of their feelings of isolation on college campuses...

and demanding the hiring of more faculty from underrepresented minority groups.
After a student hunger strike and protests of the administration’s lack of responsiveness to student concerns, the Mizzou football team threatened a boycott, supported by their coaches.

Within 48 hours, the president and chancellor resigned. Mizzou is a cautionary tale about the need for ongoing administrative engagement with students in this new era of student activism. African American and graduate applications have each decreased by 19%.
Student activism at Ohio State
Looking ahead: Use the decision in *Fisher II* to respond to student activism.

Attaining the educational benefits of diversity is a constitutional and compelling government interest.

Enrolling a diverse student body and hiring diverse faculty has a positive impact on campus climate.

Demographics are a valuable gauge of a university’s ability to enroll underrepresented students.
A Gallup poll found that nearly 2/3 (65 percent) of those surveyed disagreed with the decision. Only 31 percent agreed with it.
Educational Benefits of Diversity

Diversity:
Breaks down racial stereotypes;
Promotes learning outcomes and cross-racial understanding;
Prepares students to better understand persons of different races, and to better engage in an increasingly diverse workforce and society;
Cultivates leaders “with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry.”

Holding ourselves accountable

Are we monitoring our diversity to ensure that it is producing those outcomes?
Are we willing to listen to our students when they tell us that our efforts are insufficient?
Do our definitions of merit impede not just access, but the ways in which underrepresented minority students are perceived by their peers and the faculty?

Are we listening to what our students are saying?
Do our actions show genuine responsiveness?