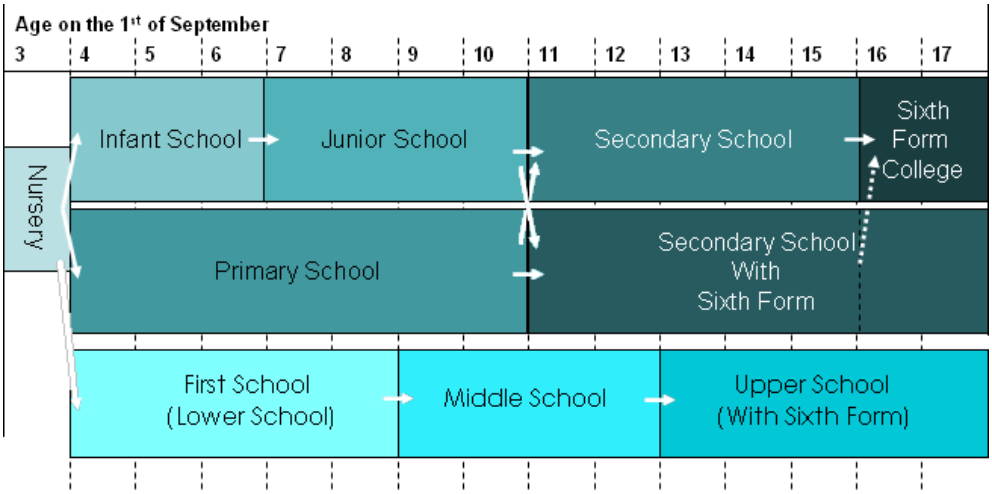
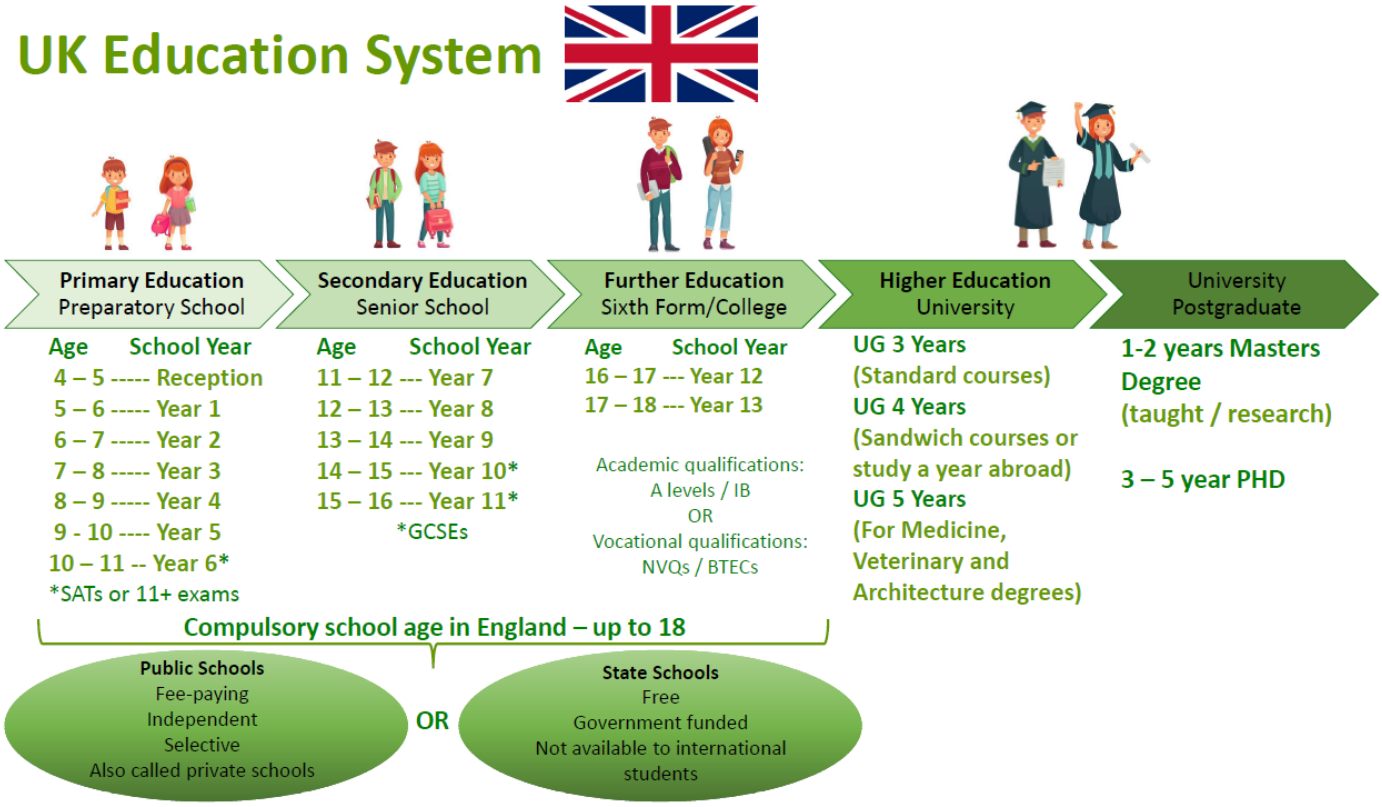
The Basics – U.K. – Check the following words

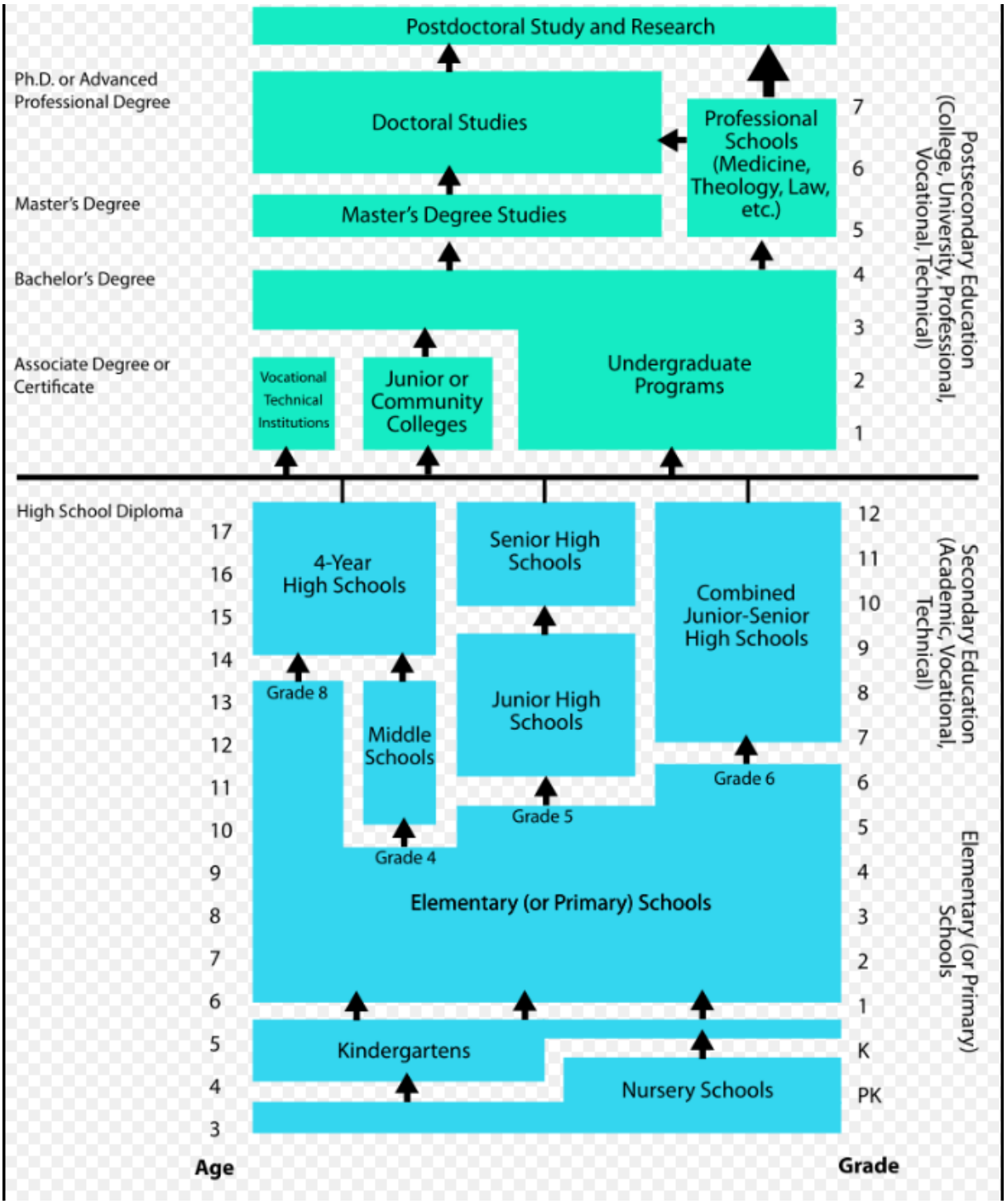
https://www.expatica.com/uk/education/children-education/the-uk-education-system-106601/

GCSE
A levels
LEAs = Local Education Authorities
State schools / free schools & academies
Grammar schools
Public schools = independent, fee-paying schools
The Russel Group
UCAS





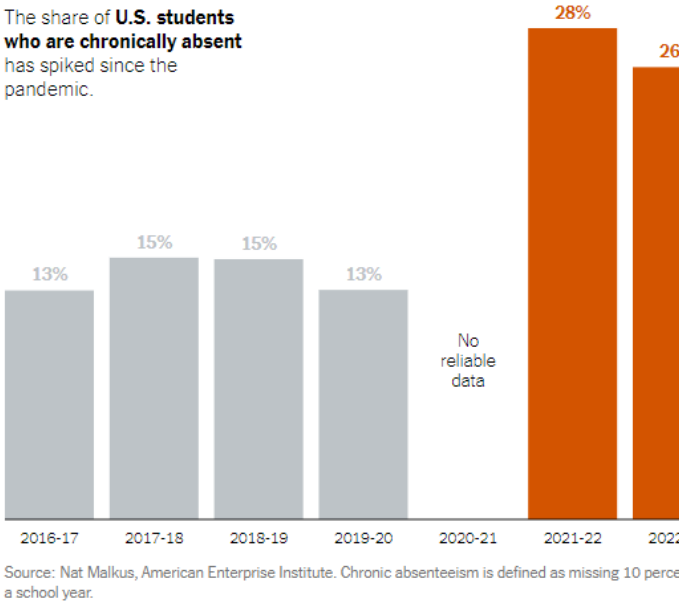
Charter schools
Student loan forgiveness
The admission process
SAT
Affirmative action
The Ivy League
Community colleges
School boards
Book bans



Document 1 - **Why School Absences Have 'Exploded' Almost Everywhere**

The pandemic changed families' lives and the culture of education: "Our relationship with school became optional."

By Sarah Mervosh and Francesca Paris, ***The New York Times,*** March 29, 2024



In Anchorage, affluent families set off on ski trips and other lengthy vacations, with the assumption that their children can keep up with schoolwork online.

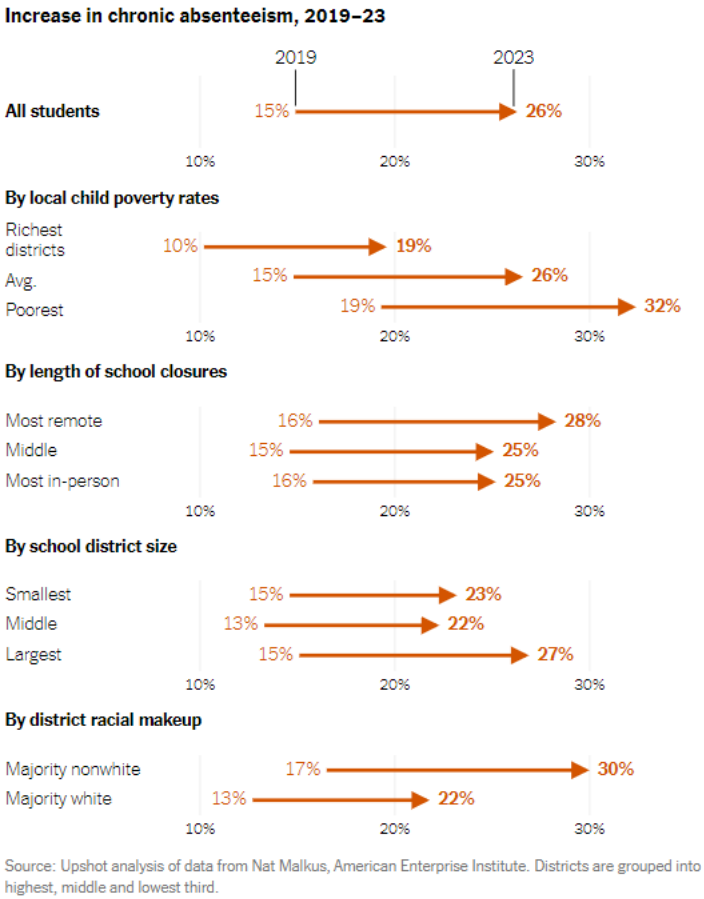
In a working-class pocket of Michigan, school administrators have tried almost everything, including pajama day, to boost student attendance.

And across the country, students with heightened anxiety are opting to stay home rather than face the classroom.

In the four years since the pandemic closed schools, U.S. education has struggled to recover on a number of fronts, from learning loss, to enrollment, to student behavior.

But perhaps no issue has been as stubborn and pervasive as a sharp increase in student absenteeism, a problem that cuts across demographics and has continued long after schools reopened.

Nationally, an estimated 26 percent of public school students were considered chronically absent last school year, up from 15 percent before the pandemic, according to the most recent data, from 40 states and Washington, D.C., compiled by the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. Chronic absence is typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days, for any reason.



The increases have occurred in districts big and small, and across income and race. For districts in wealthier areas, chronic absenteeism rates have about doubled, to 19 percent in the 2022-23 school year from 10 percent before the pandemic, a New York Times analysis of the data found.

Poor communities, which started with elevated rates of student absenteeism, are facing an even bigger crisis: Around 32 percent of students in the poorest districts were chronically absent in the 2022-23 school year, up from 19 percent before the pandemic.

Even districts that reopened quickly during the pandemic, in fall 2020, have seen vast increases.

"The problem got worse for everybody in the same proportional way," said Nat Malkus, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, who collected and studied the data.

The trends suggest that something fundamental has shifted in American childhood and the culture of school, in ways that may be long lasting. What was once a deeply ingrained habit — wake up, catch the bus, report to class — is now something far more tenuous.

"Our relationship with school became optional," said Katie Rosanbalm, a psychologist and associate research professor with the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University.

The habit of daily attendance — and many families' trust — was severed when schools shuttered in spring 2020. Even after schools reopened, things hardly snapped back to normal. Districts offered remote options, required Covid-19 quarantines and relaxed policies around attendance and grading.

Today, student absenteeism is a leading factor hindering the nation's recovery from pandemic learning losses, educational experts say. Students can't learn if they aren't in school. And a rotating cast of absent classmates can negatively affect the achievement of even students who do show up, because teachers must slow down and adjust their approach to keep everyone on track.

"If we don't address the absenteeism, then all is naught," said Adam Clark, the superintendent of Mt. Diablo Unified, a socioeconomically and racially diverse district of 29,000 students in Northern California, where he said absenteeism has "exploded" to about 25 percent of students. That's up from 12 percent before the pandemic.

You can read the full article HERE

AUDIO – Document 2

K-12 students learned a lot last year, but they're still missing too much school

NPR, FEBRUARY 9, 2024 - HEARD ON ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

Audio document and more explanations here https://www.npr.org/2024/02/09/1228441120/covid-schools-students-learning

Cost of College – Student Debt.

Document 3 - Is going to university worth it? VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnZN-FDKYwE&ab_channel=TheEconomist

Was your degree really worth it?

Crunching the puny financial benefits of many university courses

The Economist, Apr 3rd 2023

Is university worth it? That question once seemed a no-brainer*. For decades young adults in rich countries have flocked to higher education. Governments have touted college as a boon* for social mobility and economic growth. Yet as fees rise and graduate earnings* stagnate, disillusionment is growing. A poll published by the *Wall Street Journal* on March 31st suggests a crisis of confidence has worsened: 56% of Americans now believe a degree is no longer worth the time and money spent on it.

For an average undergraduate*, at least, this is not consistent with the facts. In most places, for most learners, the financial returns to higher education remain extremely healthy. Yet undertaking a degree has become riskier. **The rewards for the best performers are increasing, but a troublingly high share of students see negative returns from their studies.**

New data sets, such as tax records, are illuminating this dispersion like never before. They can track how much students taking specific courses, at specific institutions, earn in later life. In time that detail will help students avoid the worst pay-offs and seize the best. **Choice of**

subject and timely graduation matter hugely; choice of institution somewhat less so. It could also be useful to governments tempted to crack down on "low-value degrees".

A boom in graduate earnings began in the 1980s in the rich world. **Back then the difference between the salaries of people who gain at least a bachelor's degree and those who do not—commonly called the "college-wage premium"*—began to soar**. In the 1970s an American with a university education was earning on average 35% more than a high-school graduate. By 2021 that advantage had risen to 66%.

The Economist

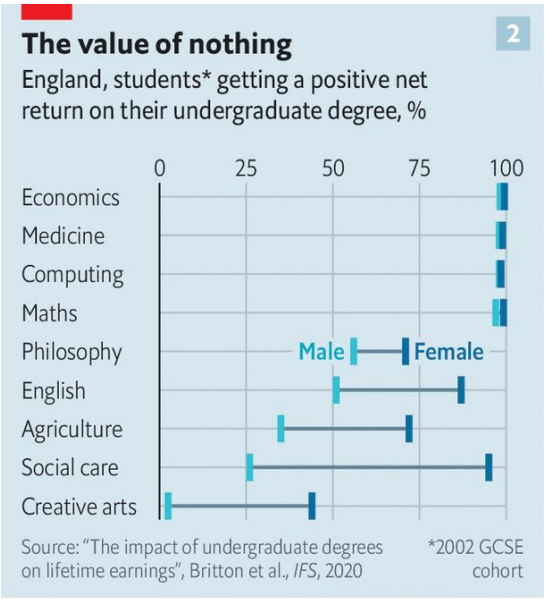
Recently the wage premium in many countries has either stagnated or begun to fall. And in places that actually charge students for their degrees, costs have gone up (see chart 1). Tuition in England has soared from nothing in the late 1990s to £9,250 ($11,000) a year, the highest in the rich world. In America, the out-of-pocket fee paid by an average bachelor's-degree student increased from $2,300 a year in the 1970s to some $8,000 in 2018, in real terms, according to Jaison Abel and Richard Deitz at the New York Federal Reserve. (Students at public universities often pay much less; those at private non-profits can pay a lot more.)

Yet the average degree remains valuable. In 2019 Mr Abel and Mr Deitz roughly estimated the annual financial return on the money that a typical American invests in a bachelor's degree. They conclude that the typical rate of return for a bachelor's degree is around 14%. That has dropped from a peak of 16% in the early 2000s. But it is still a princely sum. And it is well above the 8-9% that American graduates were recouping in the 1970s, before graduate wages, and tuition fees, began to soar. (…)

The average hides a very wide range of outcomes, however. (…) The disaggregated data reveal that a high share of students graduate with degrees that are not worth their cost.

In England 25% of male graduates and 15% of female ones will take home less money over their careers than peers who do not get a degree, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), a research outfit. America has less comprehensive data but has begun publishing the share of students at thousands of institutions who do not manage to earn more than the average high-school graduate early on. Six years after enrolment, 27% of students at a typical four-year university fail to do so, calculate researchers at Georgetown University in Washington, dc. In the long tail, comprising the worst 30% of America's two- and four-year institutions, more than half of people who enroll lag this benchmark.

Dropping out* without any qualification is an obvious way to make a big loss. Taking longer than usual to graduate also destroys value (because it eats up years that might otherwise have been spent earning full-time). Both these outcomes are common. Across the rich world less than 40% of people studying for undergraduate degrees complete their courses in the expected number of years. About one-quarter still have no qualifications three years after that.



The Economist

Choosing the right subject is crucial to boosting earning power. Negative returns are likeliest for Britons who study creative arts (less than 10% of men

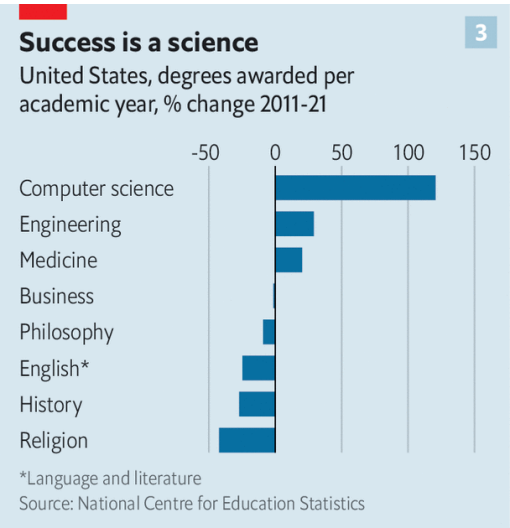
make a positive return), social care and agriculture (see chart 2). **By far the best-earning degrees in America are in engineering, computer science and business.** Negative returns seem especially likely for music and the visual arts. Using America's available data to guess lifetime earnings by programme is a stretch. But Preston Cooper at freopp, a think-tank, ventures that more than a quarter of bachelor's-degree* programmes in America will lead to negative returns for most enrolled students.

What you study generally matters more than where you do it. That comes with caveats: the worst colleges and universities provide students with little value, whatever they teach. But **on average people who enroll in America's public universities get a better return over their lifetimes than students who go to its more prestigious private non-profit ones, reckon the Georgetown researchers. High fees at the non-profits is one of the reasons why.**

Earnings data in Britain call into question the assumption that bright youngsters will necessarily benefit from being pushed towards very selective institutions, says Jack Britton of the IFS. In order to beat fierce competition for places, some youngsters apply for whatever subject seems easiest, even if it is not one that usually brings a high return. Parents fixated on getting their offspring into Oxford or Cambridge, regardless of subject, should take note. **But there is also evidence that tackling a high-earning course for the sake of it can backfire. Norwegian research finds that students whose true desire is to study humanities, but who end up studying science, earn less after ten years than they probably otherwise would have.** (…)

Marks and markets

What are the implications of all this analysis? Already there are signs that the higher-education market is evolving. **People are already searching out better returns of their own accord at different educational stages.** In America the number of degrees conferred annually in English and in history fell by around one-third between 2011 and 2021. The number of degrees in computer science more than doubled in that time (see chart 3). Others are skipping college altogether. The number of people enrolling has fallen every year since 2011.



The Economist

Institutions are also shifting by culling humanities. In February the trustees of Marymount University in Virginia voted to abolish majors in nine subjects including English, history, philosophy and theology. Calvin University in Michigan and Howard University in Washington, DC are among those which have abandoned classics. And archaeology's future at the University of Sheffield in Britain looks precarious.

Employers are adapting, too. Firms are becoming a bit less likely to demand that job applicants have degrees, according to analysis by Joseph Fuller of Harvard Business School, and others. Tight labour markets and a desire for more diverse workers help explain why. A few years ago some 80% of the jobs that IBM, a tech giant, advertised in America required a degree, says Kelli Jordan, one of its vice-presidents. Now it is about half. "A degree does not have to be the only indicator of skills that someone may have," explains Ms Jordan. (…)

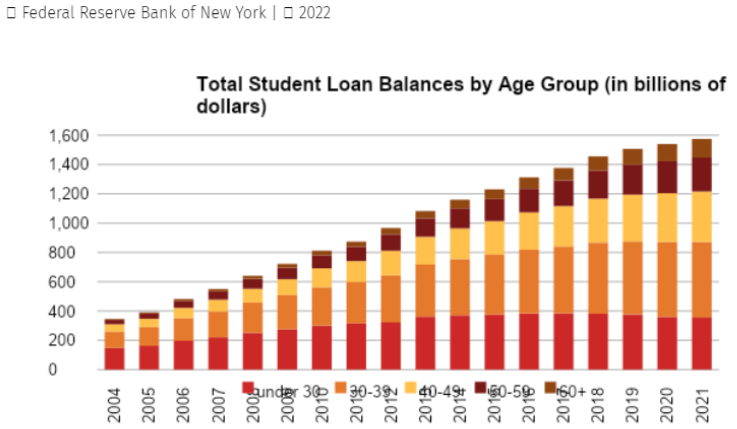
To many, a growing focus on the financial returns to higher education is crude. Graduates in public service are bound to earn less than those on Wall Street. Many disciplines are worth studying for their own sake. Yet students frequently tell pollsters that improving their earning power is a priority. Good returns are vital to the poorest learners, for whom the financial burden of degrees is highest. Today bad degrees are surprisingly common. A combination of better information, market forces and smarter policy can reduce their prevalence.

Document 4 - The Toll of Student Debt in the U.S.

By Ella Koeze and Karl Russell, *The New York Times*, Aug. 26, 2022

The amount of student debt held in America is roughly equal to the size of the economy of Brazil or Australia. More than 45 million people collectively owe $1.6 trillion, according to U.S. government data.

That figure has skyrocketed over the last half-century as the cost of higher education has continued to rise. The growth in cost has substantially been more than the increase in most other household expenses.



The rising cost of college has come at a time when students receive less government support, placing a greater burden on students and families to take out loans in order to fund their education.

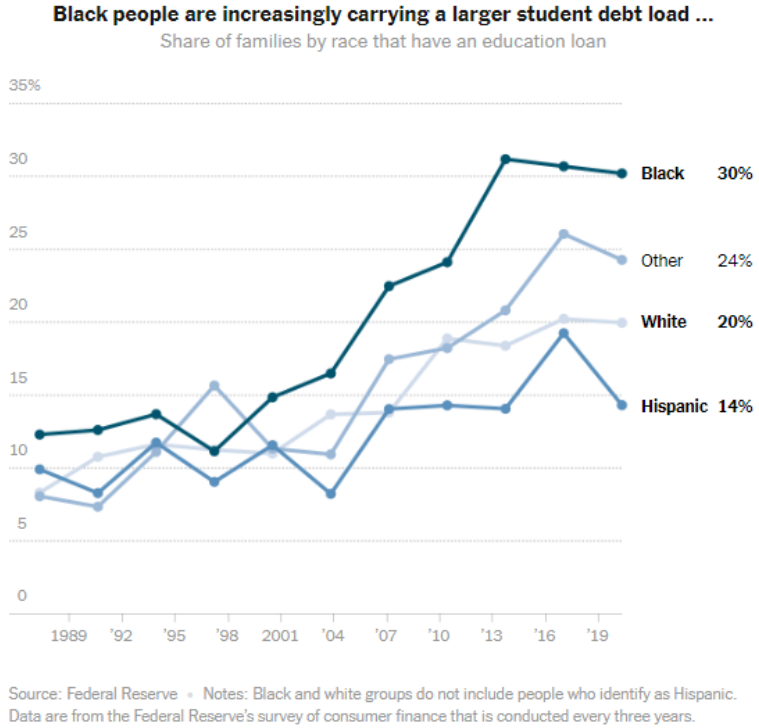
Funding from states in particular has steadily declined, accounting for roughly 60 percent of spending on higher education just before the pandemic, according to an analysis by the Urban Institute, down from around 70 percent in the 1970s.

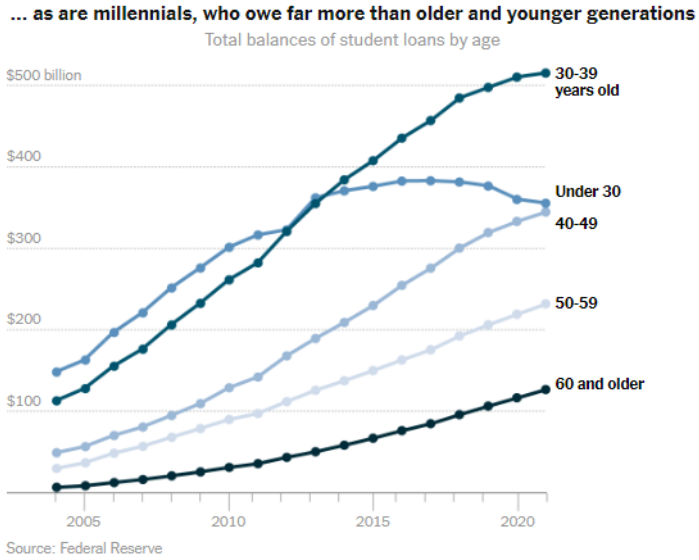
To address the growing crisis, President Biden announced a plan on Wednesday to wipe out significant amounts of student debt for millions of people. It was a step toward making good on a campaign promise to alleviate, as Mr. Biden has said, an unsustainable problem that has saddled generations of Americans.

“The burden is so heavy that even if you graduate,” he said, “you may not have access to the middle-class life that the college degree once provided.”

The typical undergraduate student with loans now finishes school with nearly $25,000 in debt, an Education Department analysis shows.

Student debt, however, has a widely disparate impact on different populations.

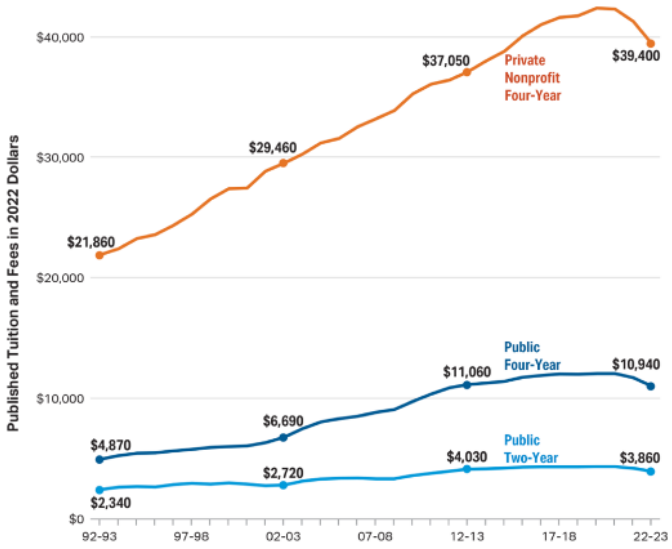




As student debt has grown in recent years, people's ability to repay it has declined.

Average College Tuition and Fees

□ College Board report "Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2022" | □ October 21, 2022



Document 5 - **A Sign That Tuition Is Too High: Some Colleges Are Slashing It in Half**

Anemona HARTOCOLLIS | *The New York Times* | December 14, 2022

NEW LONDON, N.H. — Over the last two years, applications at Colby-Sawyer College, a small, quaint assemblage of red brick buildings surrounded by three mountains, fell about 10 percent, hurt by the pandemic and by competition from less expensive public colleges across the Northeast.

Against that backdrop, Colby-Sawyer made what looks like a radical decision. It slashed the official price of tuition for the 2023-24 school year to $17,500, from about $46,000, a drop of 62 percent. Its published tuition is now only slightly higher than the cost of attending regional public universities.

Colby-Sawyer has joined a growing number of small, private colleges in what's called the tuition reset, which overhauls prices to reflect what most students actually pay after discounting through need-based and merit financial aid.

The reset is part marketing move and part reality check. It is frank recognition among some lesser-known colleges that their prices are something of a feint. They are high in part to mimic the price tag of the most elite

colleges and universities — suggesting that this is an education worth paying for — but, in reality, the prices are not based in fact. At Colby-Sawyer, every student gets a discount.

"I don't want to call it a game, because it's not a game," said Susan D. Stuebner, the president of Colby-Sawyer. "But this phenomenon in higher education of a high sticker price, high discount is so confusing to families." Many potential applicants, she said, balked at the sticker price, and did not investigate further.

Many private colleges are feeling pressure to fill their classes. They are competing for a dwindling number of college-age students, and face a growing skepticism about whether the degree — and its debt — is worth it.

Nearly a third of parents and students believe that a college education is overpriced compared with its value, according to a recent Sallie Mae and Ipsos study. The same study found that 81 percent of families had crossed a school off their list at some point because of its high cost.

"The conversation nationally has really become, why is the price of college so high?" Dr. Stuebner said. "How many families are we not in conversation with because they see the sticker price and say, 'Not for me'?"

The resistance to tuition increases is a reversal from 20 years ago, when some colleges found that raising prices goosed applications, known as the Chivas Regal effect, as families equated price with quality. Families also liked the prestige of receiving scholarships. Colleges got into the habit of raising prices every year, and then using financial or merit aid to discount the price for students who could not afford full fare, or for high achievers and athletes whom they wanted to recruit.

There is no definitive list of colleges that have pared back tuition. And it can be hard for even the most sophisticated consumer to distinguish between a marketing ploy and a real tuition reduction. Often, it is a combination. […]

Fairleigh Dickinson, which has two campuses in New Jersey, announced a tuition cut of about 25 percent, effective last year. Its president, Christopher A. Capuano, explained in an opinion essay in *The Star-Ledger* that the university was reacting in part to a decline in enrollment during the pandemic and to concerns over student loan debt. But marketing also played a role.

"Unfortunately, many students don't realize that the tuition they pay will likely be far lower than the published rate when researching the price of college and are deterred from even applying," he wrote.

Public universities are also getting into the act. Vermont State University set its in-state tuition at $9,999, an average drop of 15 percent for colleges in the system, and it cut prices for out-of-state students by 33 percent. Many state university systems have frozen tuition, including in New York, Virginia, Nebraska, Wisconsin, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Purdue University has held tuition and fees flat since 2012.

At private colleges, most students do not pay the list price. In a study from the National Association of College and University Business Officers, 359 private nonprofit colleges and universities reported that a vast majority — 82.5 percent — of undergraduates received grant aid in the 2021-22 school year. On average, the awards were the highest ever, covering 60.7 percent of published tuition and fees.

At Colby-Sawyer, the discounts reduced the average tuition to about $12,700 from $46,364, according to the college. With room, board and fees, the total list price of attending has now dropped to about $36,000, from $63,500, according to the college.

"We're bringing the published tuition much closer to reality," said Dan Parish, the head of college advancement at Colby-Sawyer. […]

Analysts say tuition resets are unlikely to extend to the smaller subset of more competitive schools, ones with robust endowments and bigger applicant pools. Colleges like Amherst and Swarthmore can cover the full cost of attendance for low-income students, and they rely on wealthy families willing to pay full freight to help fill the gap.

"What you see is a gigantic dichotomy between the very elite schools" — both public and private — "and the other schools, which are accepting almost every student that applied and hoping they can get enough of them to say yes," said Lucie Lapovsky, a consultant on tuition resets, who worked with Colby-Sawyer.

Selective schools that aspire to be at the very top will likely not reset tuition. "Skidmore College is not going to do this, and they don't need to," said Sandy Baum, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute who studies higher education and finance. "Mount Holyoke has too much of a reputation to do that." […]

Colby-Sawyer faces some risk in cutting tuition, said Ms. Lapovsky. Families may look down on the new price — the dreaded Chivas Regal effect. Or they may want the bragging rights that accompany a large scholarship, which a lower tuition renders mathematically impossible.

But the bitter truth, she added, is that "colleges are unable to fill up their classes at the price they're charging." ●

Document 6 - **New York medical school eliminates tuition after $1bn gift**

BBC News, 26 February 2024

A New York City medical school will offer students free tuition following a $1bn donation from the 93-year-old widow of a major Wall Street investor.

The gift to Albert Einstein College of Medicine came from Dr Ruth Gottesman, a former professor at the Bronx school. It is one of the largest ever donations made to a US school and is the largest ever made to a medical school.
The Bronx, New York City's poorest borough, is ranked as the unhealthiest of New York state's 62 counties.
In a statement, university dean Dr Yaron Yomer said that the "transformational" gift "radically revolutionises our ability to continue attracting students who are committed to our mission, not just those who can afford it".
Tuition at the school is nearly $59,000 (£46,500) each year, leaving students with substantial debt.
The statement from Einstein noted students in their final year will be reimbursed for their spring 2024 tuition, and from August, all students, including those who are currently enrolled, will receive free tuition.
The donation "will free up and lift our students, enabling them to pursue projects and ideas that might otherwise be prohibitive", Dr Yomer added.
Dr Gottesman, now 93, began working at the school in 1968. She studied learning disabilities, ran literacy programmes and developed widely used screening and evaluation protocols.
Her late husband, David "Sandy" Gottesman, founded a prominent investment house and was an early investor in Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffet's multinational conglomerate. He died in September 2022 at the age of 96.
Dr Gottesman said in a statement that the doctors who train at Einstein go on to "provide the finest healthcare to communities here in the Bronx and all over the world".
"I am very thankful to my late husband, Sandy, for leaving these funds in my care, and I feel blessed to be given the great privilege of making this gift to such a worthy cause," she added.
About 50% of Einstein's first-year students are from New York, and approximately 60% are women. Statistics published by the school show that about 48% of its medical students are white, while 29% are Asian, 11% are Hispanic and 5% are black.
In an interview with the New York Times, she recalled that her late husband had left her a "whole portfolio of Berkshire Hathaway stock" when he died with the instructions to "do whatever you think is right with it".
"I wanted to fund students at Einstein so that they would receive free tuition," Dr Gottesman said she immediately realised. "There was enough money to do that in perpetuity."
She added that she occasionally wonders what her husband would have thought of the donation.
"I hope he's smiling and not frowning," she said. "He gave me the opportunity to do this, and I think he would be happy - I hope so."

Document 7 - **Higher Ed Charitable Giving Up by Double Digits**

Donations to higher ed institutions rose by 12.5 percent last fiscal year—the largest increase in over two decades. Experts say philanthropy is stepping up to fill other funding gaps.

By Liam Knox, **Insider Higher Education**, February 2023

Philanthropic giving to higher education increased by 12.5 percent last fiscal year to a total of $59.5 billion, the highest year-over-year increase since 2000, according to the latest Voluntary Support of Education survey from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. In fiscal 2021, giving rose 7 percent, and the previous year it declined slightly, by less than 1 percent.

The contributions went mostly to restricted endowments*, primarily to fund scholarships*, and to "operations with restrictions on use"—usually research projects. Together, those areas accounted for nearly 80 percent of total giving. **Sixty-one percent of charitable donations to higher ed came from organizations, 22 percent came from alumni and 16 percent came from individuals who were not alumni*.**

CASE president and CEO Sue Cunningham said the upward trend was a sign that commitment to higher education from alumni and philanthropists alike remains strong, even as institutions face an increasingly tough array of challenges—from the looming demographic cliff and post-pandemic enrollment dips to growing skepticism about the value of higher ed and its increasingly fraught place in political discourse.

"It's incredibly good news, the impact these philanthropic resources flowing into institutions will have at a time when other revenue streams are being squeezed more and more," she said. (…)

Amir Pasic, dean of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University, said the survey results were "very encouraging," especially as philanthropic giving becomes more vital to a broader array of institutions. "Double-digit growth is not the norm, so this is a really strong year for giving," he said. "It's become, from any institution's perspective, an important source of revenue at the margin and will continue to be the engine supporting innovations and breakthroughs on things that we need as we struggle with all kinds of challenges, from demographics to polarization to workforce preparation."

Look Who's Giving

It's not just higher education; philanthropic giving to all sectors has been trending upward in recent years. Total charitable gifts in the U.S. hit a record-breaking $485 billion in calendar year 2021, according to the latest report from the Giving USA Foundation and the Lilly Family School.

While philanthropic foundations have dominated the boost in giving to higher education, increased contributions from alumni have also played a big part. Last year was the second in a row in which alumni giving increased by double digits, according to VSE survey data from fiscal 2021.

Pasic said alumni gifts are a relatively small slice of the overall giving pie, and that growth in that area has been "pretty anemic" for decades, but he's seen an upward trend over the past few years that he hopes continues. "It's speculation, but I think the existential experience we went through with the pandemic may have focused people on the salience of institutions that have been important in their lives," he said.

Cunningham and Kaplan said part of the increase may also be due to a new generation of alumni aging into cohorts with more disposable income, and thus they are more likely to donate. Tied to this, they said, are efforts by alumni relations offices to adapt their fundraising efforts to the sensibilities and technologies of the new generation. (…)

Community Colleges Still Lagging

While giving in general was up 12.5 percent, donations to two-year institutions* fell by more than 15 percent from fiscal 2021, a decline that Pasic said was both surprising and discouraging.

"There's been more attention to the fact that most of our populace experiences higher education through two-year institutions, more of an emphasis on fundraising there and donor attention to how important they are for social mobility and community health," Pasic said. "Maybe it'll take a little bit longer for the numbers to reflect that, but it's disappointing to see that decline."

Kaplan said much of the decrease was likely a result of a drop-off from the unusually successful fundraising year for community colleges in fiscal 2021, when billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott gifted $2.73 billion to 286 institutions serving underrepresented students—most of which were two-year colleges.

Regardless, community colleges often have less capacity to manage donor relations and much smaller institutional advancement offices, Cunningham said, making it more difficult to sustain the kind of regular gift commitments that more well-resourced four-year institutions receive. **However, Kaplan said that as community colleges and smaller regional institutions turn increasingly to philanthropy to fill in the gaps from steadily declining enrollment and stagnating state support, they're bound to build out their institutional advancement offices accordingly.**

"I remember a time when public colleges didn't use to raise nearly as much money from philanthropic sources because they didn't have to; it wasn't part of their business model," Kaplan said. "Now if you look at the top gift-receiving schools, half of them are public … That's going to happen to community colleges, too. It's just a matter of time and effort."

Document 8 - **What to Know About Biden's New Student Debt Relief Plan**

The proposal would affect nearly 30 million people and would target groups that have had hardships in repaying their loans.

By Erica L. Green The New York Times, April 8, 2024

President Biden released details on Monday of his new student loan debt forgiveness plan for nearly 30 million borrowers.

The proposal still needs to be finalized and will have to withstand expected legal challenges, like the ones that doomed Mr. Biden's first attempt to wipe out student debt on a large scale last year.

Biden administration officials said they could begin handing out some of the debt relief — including the canceling of up to $20,000 in interest — as soon as this fall if the new effort moves forward after the required, monthslong comment period.

Here's what is known so far about the program:

Who would benefit from the new plan?

The plan would reduce payments for 25 million borrowers and erase all debt for more than four million Americans. Altogether, 10 million borrowers would see debt relief of $5,000 or more, officials said.

The groups affected include:

— Borrowers whose loan balances have ballooned because of interest would have up to $20,000 of their interest balance canceled. The plan would waive the entire interest balance for borrowers considered "low- and middle-income" who are enrolled in the administration's income-driven repayment plans.

The interest forgiveness would be a one-time benefit, but would be the largest relief valve in the plan. The administration estimates that of the 25 million borrowers that could see relief under this waiver, 23 million would see their entire interest balance wiped out.

— Borrowers who are eligible for, but have not yet applied for, loan forgiveness under existing programs like Public Service Loan Forgiveness or the administration's new repayment program, called SAVE, would have their debts automatically canceled.

— Borrowers with undergraduate student debt who started repaying their loans more than 20 years ago, and graduate students who started paying their debt 25 or more years ago, would have their debts canceled.

— Borrowers who enrolled in programs or colleges that lost federal funding because they cheated or defrauded students would have their debts waived. Students who attended institutions or programs that left them with mounds of debt but bleak earning or job prospects would also be eligible for relief.

— Borrowers who are experiencing "hardship" paying back their loans because of medical or child care costs would also be eligible for some type of relief. The administration has not yet determined how these borrowers would be identified, but is considering automatic forgiveness for those at risk of defaulting.

How is this different from the last plan?

Mr. Biden initially tried to grant $400 billion in debt relief for 40 million borrowers by using the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003, or HEROES Act, which the administration argued allowed the government to waive student debt during a national emergency like the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Supreme Court blocked that move, saying that Mr. Biden had exceeded his authority.

The new plan would forgive some or all loan debt for nearly 30 million borrowers under the Higher Education Act, the federal law that regulates student loan and grant programs. By targeting specific groups of borrowers — instead of offering broad loan forgiveness — the administration believes it can act within the narrower confines of that law.

The Biden administration said lawyers for the White House and the Education Department studied last year's Supreme Court ruling and designed the new program to make sure it did not violate the principles laid out by the justices.

Still, there could be questions about whether the borrowers under the latest plan would be considered "limited," as the Supreme Court said the Higher Education Act requires, or whether the administration again overstepped its authority.

What's the timeline?

The new plan still needs to be published in the Federal Register, which then will start a monthslong public comment period. Administration officials have said they hoped some of the provisions would begin going into effect in "early fall."

That could leave the debt relief plan unresolved as voters go to the polls in November to choose between Mr. Biden and former President Donald J. Trump.

But Biden campaign officials hope the latest effort will help rally voters who were sorely disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision last year.

Document 9 - **Affirmative action is under attack. How did we get here?**

A very useful interactive timeline here https://wapo.st/3W1faIQ

By Julian Mark, Taylor Telford and Emma Kumer

The Washington Post, March 9 2024

Since the Supreme Court ruled race-based college admissions unconstitutional last June, affirmative action in all forms has come under attack.

Conservative activists have filed dozens of complaints against Fortune 500 companies alleging discrimination against White people. Long-standing federal programs created to benefit minority-owned businesses find themselves on shaky ground; on Tuesday, a Texas federal judge ordered that a 55-year-old agency must serve all races. And the resignation of Harvard's first Black president amid allegations of plagiarism and antisemitism on campus has been claimed as a victory by critics intent on dismantling diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs in academia and the private sector. Such policies divided Americans long before President John F. Kennedy popularized the term in 1961, when he urged defense contractors to "take affirmative action" to hire workers "without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." Even as these policies have fueled upward mobility for women and minority groups, they have faced intense backlash. Here's a look at the history of affirmative action and the moments that have **advanced** and **repelled** it.

Document 10 - **Les Etats-Unis, au-delà de la discrimination positive**

Mise en place dans les années 1960 pour corriger les inégalités raciales aux Etats-Unis, la politique de discrimination positive pour l'accès aux universités a été annulée le 29 juin par la Cour suprême. « Le Monde » a réuni deux intellectuels américains qui développent des points de vue opposés sur cette thématique cruciale.

Par Valentine Faure , 07 juillet 2023

OLIVIA DANGLA

Il y a près de soixante ans, le président des Etats-Unis Lyndon B. Johnson résumait dans un discours historique prononcé en 1965 à l'université noire Howard (Washington, DC) l'esprit de ce que l'on commençait à appeler *affirmative action* (« discrimination positive », en français) : un ensemble de mesures, dont les quotas, visant à assurer l'accès des Afro-Américains, libérés l'année précédente des lois de la ségrégation, à l'emploi et à l'éducation supérieure. *« On ne peut pas prendre une personne qui, pendant des années, a été entravée par des chaînes, la libérer, l'amener sur la ligne de départ d'une course et lui dire : "Vous êtes libre de concourir avec tous les autres", tout en continuant à croire que l'on a été complètement juste »*, expliquait alors le président démocrate. Depuis lors, des politiques de préférences raciales dans les universités ont été pratiquées, selon des modalités diverses. Or, le 29 juin, la Cour suprême américaine a mis fin à ces pratiques de discrimination positive. A une majorité de six voix contre trois, les juges ont considéré que l'*affirmative action* contrevenait au 14e amendement de la Constitution américaine, qui garantit une protection égale à tous devant la loi.

Pour faire le bilan de l'*affirmative action*, encore faudrait-il s'accorder sur ce qu'était son objectif. Car, après avoir été conçue comme une forme de réparation due aux descendants d'esclaves, l'*affirmative action* a été reformulée en 1978 – après un arrêt de la Cour suprême qui mettait fin aux quotas – comme la garantie d'une *« diversité »* qui serait bénéfique au corps étudiant dans son ensemble. Mais de quelle diversité parle-t-on ? La réponse s'est complexifiée avec le temps. La société américaine a radicalement changé. Les minorités qui composent la population américaine d'aujourd'hui n'ont plus rien à voir avec ce qu'elles étaient dans les années 1960. Un demi-siècle après sa mise en place, les Noirs qui bénéficient des mesures de discrimination positive ne sont plus, en grande partie, des descendants d'esclaves, mais des enfants d'immigrés volontaires d'Afrique et des Caraïbes, arrivés après 1965. Ils ne sont plus, en majorité, issus des classes populaires. Les Asiatiques, sous-représentés dans les universités d'élite au regard de leurs performances scolaires, sont venus encore compliquer la question morale posée par la discrimination positive. A plusieurs reprises, certains ont porté plainte – comme l'ont fait aussi des étudiants blancs – contre des universités qui leur avaient refusé l'admission, au motif qu'elles privilégiaient à leurs dépens des candidats noirs ou hispaniques aux résultats moins bons. La discrimination positive se serait, en quelque sorte, retournée contre eux. Ils ont cette fois eu gain de cause.

Persistance des inégalités

Le débat, féroce depuis son instauration, est focalisé sur la question raciale, et éclipse même cette « discrimination positive pour les riches » que sont les admissions facilitées pour les enfants des anciens étudiants et les athlètes. C'est que palpite en son cœur le 14e amendement, et, à travers lui, le feu encore brûlant de l'histoire. La juge démocrate à la Cour suprême Ketanji Brown Jackson a souligné que cet amendement capital n'a jamais été *colorblind*, « aveugle à la race » : il a été adopté en 1868 pour élever les anciens esclaves au même rang que les citoyens blancs. Empêcher les Noirs de bénéficier de l'*affirmative action* en son nom serait donc, selon elle, un contresens au regard de l'esprit de la Constitution. D'autant que la population afro-américaine pâtit encore largement des conséquences des politiques qui lui furent imposées pendant les années de la ségrégation (1877-1964).
Pour autant, que dit la persistance de ces inégalités de l'efficacité de l'*affirmative action* ?

Fin de la discrimination positive aux Etats-Unis : « Les politiques de préférences raciales n'ont pas contribué à une plus grande diversité des étudiants sur le plan économique »

La Cour suprême américaine a mis fin à une politique qui, depuis les années 1960, favorisait les minorités raciales et notamment les Noirs à l'entrée des universités. Le philosophe ***Michael Sandel,*** *professeur à Harvard, regrette cette décision et invite, dans un entretien au « Monde », à approfondir le débat autour de la notion de mérite.*

Propos recueillis par Valentine Faure

Michael Sandel est philosophe et professeur à Harvard (Massachusetts). Son cours, « Justice », qu'il enseigne depuis plus de vingt ans, est l'un des plus populaires de l'université et fut le premier à être disponible en ligne. Il a été vu des millions de fois. Il est l'auteur de nombreux livres de philosophie politique et morale, parmi lesquels *Ce que l'argent ne saurait acheter : les limites morales du marché* (Seuil, 2014) et *La Tyrannie du mérite* (Albin Michel, 2020). Il revient sur les implications de la décision rendue le 29 juin par la Cour suprême américaine metttant fin à la discrimination positive pour les minorités raciales dans l'accès à certaines universités d'élite.

Que pensez-vous de la décision de mettre fin à l'« affirmative action » et des arguments échangés par les magistrats ?

Je regrette que la Cour suprême ait invalidé la discrimination positive. Il s'agit d'une décision importante. Les universités s'inquiètent, à juste titre me semble-t-il, que cette décision entraîne une diminution du nombre d'étudiants noirs et hispaniques admis. C'est ce qui s'est produit dans les neuf Etats ayant interdit la discrimination positive par voie législative depuis les années 1990 *[la Californie fut le premier, en 1996]*, bien avant cet avis de la Cour suprême : le nombre d'étudiants issus de minorités sous-représentées a diminué dans les années qui ont suivi.
Je crois cependant que les effets de cet arrêt ne seront pas aussi radicaux que certains le craignent, la Cour n'empêchant pas les universités d'atteindre la diversité raciale et ethnique par d'autres moyens. Elle a même ouvert une brèche potentiellement très importante à la fin de l'avis, en spécifiant que les essais autobiographiques que les candidats soumettent dans leur dossier d'admission pourraient décrire la façon dont, en raison de leur race, ils ont été confrontés à des obstacles particuliers ou à la discrimination. Cela reflète la philosophie individualiste de la majorité conservatrice de la Cour : il s'agit de promouvoir une évaluation des qualités individuelles de chaque personne, basée sur les efforts que chacun produit pour surmonter les défis auxquels il est confronté, sans présumer de spécificités liées à l'appartenance à un groupe.

Lorsqu'elle a été mise en place, l'« affirmative action » avait-elle été pensée comme explicitement temporaire ?

Elle était implicitement conçue comme une tentative temporaire de remédier aux effets persistants de la discrimination et de l'injustice. En 2003, par l'arrêt Grutter vs Bollinger, la Cour l'a maintenue une fois de plus, mais l'une des magistrates a écrit que *« les politiques d'admission fondées sur la race devaient être limitées dans le temps »*. Elle a souligné que vingt-cinq ans s'étaient écoulés depuis l'arrêt de 1978 et que l'on pouvait s'attendre à ce que, dans vingt-cinq ans – c'est-à-dire en 2028 –, elles ne soient plus nécessaires. C'est la seule fois où l'opinion de la Cour a lié l'*affirmative action* à une notion d'expiration.

Les partisans de l'abandon de la discrimination positive soutiennent que la société a beaucoup changé depuis l'époque de sa mise en place. Mais cette mesure a-t-elle pour autant atteint ses objectifs ?

Etonnamment, l'argument selon lequel l'*affirmative action* était nécessaire en 1978, peut-être encore 2003,

mais que ce n'est peut-être plus le cas aujourd'hui, n'a pas été avancé. Cette politique a-t-elle atteint ses objectifs ? Oui et non, me semble-t-il. Oui, dans le sens où parvenir à une certaine diversité raciale et ethnique au sein du corps étudiant a contribué à l'amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement, en élargissant l'éventail des expériences et des discours auxquels les étudiants de toutes origines sont confrontés. Cela a enrichi les discussions en classe, la vie extrascolaire, la capacité des étudiants à apprendre les uns des autres. Cela a également permis à de nombreux étudiants issus de minorités sous-représentées d'occuper des postes à responsabilité dans la société en général.
Toutefois, les politiques de préférences raciales n'ont pas contribué à une plus grande diversité des étudiants sur le plan économique. Elles n'ont pas augmenté de manière substantielle la présence d'étudiants issus de familles à faibles revenus, ou dont les parents ne sont pas diplômés. L'inclusion d'un plus grand nombre d'étudiants issus de groupes ethniques et raciaux sous-représentés a été une bonne chose. Mais, si la finalité était d'améliorer les chances des personnes issues de milieux économiquement défavorisés, l'*affirmative action* n'a pas atteint ses objectifs.

Que pensez-vous du discours selon lequel les étudiants blancs et asiatiques ont pâti de la discrimination positive ?

Deux questions se posent. Premièrement, les plaignants qui ont porté l'affaire examinée par la Cour suprême ne l'ont pas fait au nom des étudiants blancs, mais en celui des étudiants américains d'origine asiatique. C'était une décision délibérée, avec un but politique : les affaires précédentes avaient été intentées au nom de l'injustice envers les candidats blancs, et les plaignants avaient perdu. La tactique a donc été changée. L'effet statistique de l'octroi d'une préférence à un groupe racial ou ethnique particulier est de diminuer le nombre d'étudiants qui n'appartiennent pas à cette catégorie. De ce point de vue, il y a donc un impact. La question est de savoir si, d'un point de vue constitutionnel et moral, cela est justifiable ou non. Ce qui nous ramène à la question de principe plus large de savoir s'il est légitime de donner un avantage à des groupes sous-représentés qui ont été historiquement discriminés.

N'y a-t-il pas une forme de confusion autour de l'objectif même de la discrimination positive ? S'agit-il de proposer une « réparation » ou d'accroître la « diversité » ?

C'est vrai : la logique de la « diversité » est la seule justification que la Cour suprême a admise en 1978 *[lorsqu'elle a interdit les quotas]* : la race est un des facteurs qui contribuent à une « diversité » du corps étudiant et de l'expérience éducative, bénéfique pour tous. Ce faisant, la Cour a rejeté la fonction de réparation des injustices et discriminations passées et persistantes contre les Afro-Américains – bien que, d'un point de vue moral, ce soit l'argument le plus puissant. C'est regrettable : le débat public sur l'*affirmative action* s'en est trouvé rétréci, parce qu'il ne tient officiellement plus compte de l'impulsion initiale de la discrimination positive.
Prenons un exemple concret. Une de mes étudiantes vient d'une famille de la classe moyenne supérieure au Nigeria. Elle se pose elle-même la question : aide-t-elle Harvard à atteindre les impératifs de diversité raciale ? Fait-elle partie des bénéficiaires prévus par ces politiques ? Son interrogation est légitime, si l'on part du principe qu'une partie de l'objectif de la diversité est d'accroître l'accès des étudiants issus de familles à faibles revenus, ou dont les parents ne sont pas diplômés. Mais cela n'a jamais fait partie des buts explicites de la discrimination positive.

Il existe d'autres politiques préférentielles qui semblent moins faire débat : le favoritisme dont bénéficient les athlètes, et les enfants d'anciens diplômés (les « legacy admissions », ou admissions héritées) et des généreux donateurs. Elles ont pourtant beaucoup plus d'impact sur la composition socio-économique du corps étudiant que l'« affirmative action » n'en a jamais eu…

Certains parlent de discrimination positive pour les riches, car ces formes de préférences sont à l'avantage des étudiants issus de milieux privilégiés. Les jeunes qui pratiquent à un haut niveau des sports comme la crosse, le golf, le water-polo, le squash, sont généralement issus de familles aisées. Il est vrai que ces politiques d'admission sont moins controversées, du moins jusqu'à présent. Cependant, maintenant que la Cour suprême a interdit les préférences raciales, il sera sans doute beaucoup plus difficile de justifier les faveurs en matière d'admission héritée *[une plainte en ce sens*

Pourquoi le débat public est-il à ce point centré sur les institutions d'élite, qui concernent une frange si restreinte de la population ?

Il est vrai que ce débat entraîne une forme de distorsion dans les discussions, la majorité des étudiants aux Etats-Unis ne se dirigeant pas vers les universités d'élite hautement sélectives au cœur de la controverse : la plupart fréquentent des établissements qui acceptent la plupart des candidats, et où le débat sur la sélection ne se pose donc pas. Cela questionne le rôle joué par les institutions prestigieuses de l'enseignement supérieur dans la société américaine. Dans mon livre *La Tyrannie du mérite [Albin Michel, 2021]*, je soutiens que cela fait partie du problème. Nous avons transformé l'enseignement supérieur en une machine à trier des candidats pour une société méritocratique axée sur le marché. Ce qui, à mon avis, fausse leur mission en les

détournant des valeurs et des objectifs que les universités devraient servir : cultiver l'amour de l'apprentissage, s'engager dans la recherche et la réflexion. Au lieu de cela, elles sont entièrement liées au réseautage, au diplôme. Le débat acharné sur la discrimination positive prend place dans ce contexte. Or, pour dépasser la polarisation politique de notre époque, nous devons nous pencher plus largement sur le sujet du mérite.

Au-delà des motivations politiques des juges, cette décision ne s'inscrit-elle pas dans un contexte plus vaste de redéfinition des critères d'évaluation des compétences et des capacités de chacun ?

Oui, nous commençons à assister à un débat sur ce que doivent être les paramètres du mérite. Un grand nombre d'universités rejettent le SAT *[*scholastic assessment test, *une épreuve standardisée exigée à l'entrée à l'université]* comme facteur d'admission : bien qu'il semble constituer un moyen objectif de sélectionner les postulants, que la plupart des gens considèrent comme le plus juste, il est fortement corrélé à la classe sociale et à l'origine raciale. Dans certains des Etats qui ont interdit l'*affirmative action*, notamment en Californie et au Texas, des moyens ont été trouvés pour améliorer l'admission des minorités sous-représentées sans mobiliser explicitement la race. Le Texas a, par exemple, établi une politique permettant l'admission à l'université des élèves placés dans les meilleurs 10 % de leur classe. Les écoles publiques du Texas sont si divisées racialement que cette mesure a eu l'effet mécanique de promouvoir la diversité. Il s'agit d'une suggestion parmi d'autres, comme la prise en compte du code postal d'origine : ce n'est pas un substitut parfait aux procédures d'admission basées sur la race, mais, dans de nombreux cas, elle a un effet similaire en raison des schémas résidentiels fortement ségrégués selon l'origine ethnique. Avant la remise en question de la discrimination positive par la Cour suprême, une réflexion sur les critères d'évaluation du mérite existait donc déjà, et je pense qu'il s'agit là d'un débat bienvenu.

You can read this interview translated in English here: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2023/07/08/michael-sandel-affirmative-action-did-not-contribute-to-greater-economic-diversity-among-students_6046766_23.html

Fin de la discrimination positive aux Etats-Unis : « Il était temps de revoir notre conception de ce qu'est un désavantage »

Dans un entretien au « Monde », le professeur de linguistique et chroniqueur **John McWhorter** salue la décision de la Cour suprême américaine de supprimer le dispositif qui favorisait, depuis les années 1960, les minorités raciales pour l'accès à l'université. Elle met un terme, selon lui, à un abaissement des normes dévalorisant pour la communauté afro-américaine.

Propos recueillis par Valentine Faure , Publié le 07 juillet 2023

John McWhorter est professeur de linguistique à l'université Columbia à New York, spécialiste des langues créoles, des sociolectes et de l'anglais « noir ». Il est l'auteur de nombreux ouvrages de linguistique, et plus récemment de *Woke Racism : How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black America* (« Racisme woke : comment une nouvelle religion a trahi l'Amérique noire », Swift Press, 2022, non traduit), dans lequel il critique ce qu'il nomme la *« troisième vague antiraciste »*, qu'il juge infantilisante envers les Noirs. Il est également chroniqueur au *New York Times*.

Cet intellectuel afro-américain revient sur les implications de la décision rendue le 29 juin par la Cour suprême des Etats-Unis mettant fin à la discrimination positive pour les minorités raciales dans l'accès à certaines universités d'élite.

Que pensez-vous de la décision de la Cour suprême ?

C'est une décision formidable, qui est perçue comme bien plus grave qu'elle ne l'est vraiment. Il s'agissait d'arbitrer si une université peut ou non tenir compte de la race pour sélectionner ses candidats. Mais ce dont il s'agit réellement, c'est de savoir si les étudiants noirs et latinos doivent être admis selon des critères moins ambitieux que les autres.

Dans l'Amérique des années 1960, l'*affirmative action* avait un sens car la plupart des Noirs étaient pauvres et le racisme était beaucoup plus manifeste. De ce fait, être Noir était un désavantage, même si vous étiez riche.

Ce n'est plus le cas aujourd'hui, en grande partie parce que la discrimination positive a fonctionné. Il convient donc de statuer pour savoir pendant combien de temps on considère que le fait d'être Noir justifie l'abaissement des normes d'admission dans les universités d'élite. Certains pensent qu'il faut agir ainsi jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus de racisme ou d'inégalités du tout. La Cour suprême en a décidé autrement. C'est une bonne chose, d'autant que les magistrats n'ont pas

dit que les discriminations rencontrées par certains candidats ne pouvaient pas être prises en considération. Ce qu'on ne peut plus prendre en compte, c'est la couleur de la peau seule en tant que telle.

Considérez-vous que cette décision s'inscrit dans le droit-fil de la décision de la Cour suprême supprimant le droit fédéral à l'avortement ?

Non, c'est très différent. La décision sur l'avortement n'était pas en phase avec l'opinion de la plupart des Américains, au contraire de celle sur la discrimination positive. Et l'un des points les plus gênants pour ceux qui critiquent cette décision, c'est qu'une majorité de personnes censées bénéficier de l'*affirmative action* y sont opposées *[selon un sondage Pew, 59 % des Noirs et 74 % des Américains dans leur ensemble pensent que la race et l'origine ethnique ne devraient pas être prises en considération dans les décisions d'admission]*.

Serions-nous trop ignorants pour comprendre ce qui serait bon pour nous ? De nombreux éditoriaux écrits par des Noirs de la classe moyenne, bénéficiaires de la discrimination positive mise en place lorsque nous étions enfants, prétendent qu'être Noir et être défavorisé, c'est encore exactement la même chose.

Mais pour quelqu'un comme moi, la discrimination positive n'a plus aucun sens. Pour mes enfants encore moins. Je ne partage pas du tout l'inclination droitière de la Cour suprême, et peut-être les motivations de cette décision ne sont-elles pas les bonnes, mais il était temps de revoir notre conception de ce qu'est un désavantage.

Vous estimez que les dommages collatéraux sur l'ensemble des Afro-Américains l'emportent aujourd'hui sur les avantages accordés à quelques étudiants admis dans des institutions de très haut niveau grâce à la discrimination positive…

C'est difficile à mesurer. Mais il me semble que, lorsqu'on décide qu'un groupe – les Noirs – n'a pas besoin d'avoir des résultats aussi élevés que les autres pour être admis dans un établissement, on lui signifie qu'il ne peut pas être soumis à une concurrence sérieuse. Posons-nous plutôt la question suivante : qu'est-ce qui justifie l'abaissement des normes ? C'est une sorte de chimiothérapie que l'on peut supporter vingt-cinq ou trente ans, mais pas indéfiniment, parce qu'elle crée trop d'effets secondaires. Il ne s'agit en effet pas seulement de savoir qui bénéficie de certaines ressources, postes ou opportunités, c'est aussi une question de perception.

Les politiques de préférences raciales se répercutent inévitablement sur les étudiants noirs, et sur les Noirs dans leur ensemble. Aussi injuste que cela puisse être, les admissions héritées *[à Harvard, elles représentent 43 % des admis, qui sont Blancs à 70 %]* ne se répercutent pas de la même manière sur les étudiants blancs ou la population blanche, au sens large. Elles constituent pourtant plus ou moins des mesures de discrimination positive pour les Blancs, et sont une honte pour le système universitaire.

Je pense qu'il est grand temps d'étendre la discrimination positive aux personnes défavorisées de toutes races ou ethnies, d'autant plus que, dans l'ensemble, l'Amérique noire en bénéficierait encore de manière substantielle.

La magistrate de la Cour suprême Sonia Sotomayor a écrit que cette décision allait à rebours de décennies de progrès et aurait un « impact dévastateur ». Que lui répondez-vous ?

Toute cette rhétorique apocalyptique sur l'idée que nous allons revenir aux années 1960 relève de la performance artistique. J'enseignais à l'université de Berkeley lorsque la Californie a interdit les préférences raciales dans les années 1990. Tout le monde disait que nous allions retourner en 1960. Trente ans plus tard, le verdict est clair : cela ne s'est pas produit. Le nombre d'élèves noirs et latinos a d'abord fortement diminué, c'est vrai. Puis les écoles ont trouvé d'autres moyens d'intégrer des personnes de couleur, et les chiffres ont fini par remonter. Cette *« reségrégation »* n'a jamais eu lieu.

Où se trouve la preuve que le maintien des préférences raciales dans les processus d'admission des universités les plus sélectives du pays est le seul, le meilleur, ou même un moyen raisonnablement efficace de rectifier ces inégalités ?

Dans certains cas, il est évident que certains étudiants de couleur recevront et profiteront d'opportunités qu'ils n'auraient pas eues autrement. Mais la persistance de l'écart de richesse entre Blancs et Noirs après des générations d'*affirmative action* suggère que, d'une certaine manière, nous avons raté quelque chose. Les politiques de préférences raciales ne peuvent plus résoudre les inégalités qui subsistent.

Cette question est à la fois hypocrite et confuse. Pourquoi pratiquer la discrimination positive ? Pour rattraper le passé ? C'est une chose. Parce que la diversité est essentielle à l'éducation ? Franchement, tout le monde sait que c'est un argument très faible que même les Noirs présents sur les campus ne partagent pas. La *« diversité »* est devenue l'une de ces idées qui nous donnent bonne conscience. Mais personne ne veut représenter sa race à l'école. Pour ma part, je ne veux pas que le responsable des admissions prenne en compte la *« diversité »* de mes enfants.

Les deux cas examinés par la Cour suprême concernent Harvard et l'université de Caroline du Nord. Pourquoi ces écoles d'élite dominent-elles un débat qui concerne la population dans son ensemble ?

On peut en effet se demander pourquoi c'est si important : le débat sur la discrimination positive est axé autour des écoles dans lesquelles seule une poignée de jeunes Noirs sont admis chaque année. A lire la plupart des articles, on dirait que, si vous n'allez pas à Harvard ou dans l'une des trente autres institutions prestigieuses, vous n'avez aucune chance de réussir. Soit vous allez à Yale, soit en prison. Il semble absolument crucial d'y être admis pour obtenir un emploi de banquier d'affaires.

Je pense que les personnes qui dirigent les très nombreuses autres universités de ce pays *[il en existe près de 4 000 aux Etats-Unis]* seraient surprises de constater que les possibilités sont si limitées pour leurs étudiants. Tout cela, encore une fois, relève de postures hypocrites.

Que pensez-vous de cette ouverture que les magistrats ont laissée dans leur avis en spécifiant que les candidats pourraient toujours parler, dans les essais autobiographiques qu'ils soumettent dans leur dossier d'admission, de l'impact que leur race a pu avoir dans leur vie ?

Cela trahit un certain manque de cohérence. Prendre en compte l'impact de la race pour des étudiants ayant souffert de discrimination est une bonne chose. Mais cela laisse une brèche ouverte : pourquoi les Noirs de la classe moyenne ou supérieure s'en priveraient-ils ? Ce qui va se passer, c'est que les postulants vont évidemment mettre l'accent sur l'adversité qu'ils ont rencontrée en raison de leur race, même s'ils ont grandi dans une belle maison de banlieue avec quatre chambres. Les responsables des admissions seront donc amenés à comparer les dossiers des différents candidats, et il sera démontré qu'une fois de plus les enfants noirs sont admis en raison de leur couleur plutôt que de leurs qualifications individuelles. Et nous devrons recommencer, à nouveau.

Read in English here : https://www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2023/07/08/john-mcwhorter-on-affirmative-action-it-was-time-to-revise-our-idea-of-what-disadvantage-is_6046764_23.html

Document 11 - **The Real College Admissions Scandal**

By Nicholas Kristof, Opinion Columnist, ***The New York Times***, July 26, 2023

YAMHILL, Ore. — Before I make an argument about affirmative action, let me tell you how I was a beneficiary of it.

I wasn't a student of color, but I grew up on a farm and attended a small, rural high school where there wasn't much math and nobody had ever applied to an Ivy League college. My grades and scores were strong but not extraordinary. But I did have one thing going for me. Elite colleges were looking for farm kids from low-income areas to provide diversity. So a school that I had never visited, Harvard, took an enormous risk and accepted me, and I became a token country bumpkin to round out a class of polished overachievers. In time, Harvard gave me a wonderful education, transformed my life and set me on a path to becoming a columnist — which is why you're stuck reading this. Yes, indeed: Providing paths to a better education can be life-changing.

So how do we do that for others? I wish the Supreme Court had ruled differently on affirmative action for race, but unfortunately it blocked that path for diversity. My fear is that we will all throw up our hands and sit around blaming the court, rather than actually working to overhaul a disgracefully unequal education system.

In fact, there are still ways to broaden educational opportunity. But they may require us liberals to look in the mirror and acknowledge the role of our own institutions in perpetuating inequality.

Elite universities are bastions of left-of-center ideas, yet advantage four groups that are already privileged: children of graduates, recruited athletes for sports like rowing and fencing, children of faculty members and children of large donors.

A new study by Professor Raj Chetty and his colleagues at Harvard's Opportunity Insights group found that partly because of such preferences, top colleges in effect offer affirmative action to the wealthy. For example, children from the top 0.1 percent of households in income are 2.2 times as likely to be admitted as kids with the same scores from less wealthy households.

In fact, this understates the injustice, for the less advantaged children achieve the same scores without $1,000-an-hour SAT coaches.

If you're rich and your child sails, maybe he can be recruited by an Ivy League sailing team. Or perhaps after enough lessons, she can impress admissions officers with her French horn skills. Or write a moving essay about volunteering in Kenya and then raising $50,000 for children there — not mentioning that the sum was raised by asking Dad for a check.

All told, a 2017 study found that 38 colleges had more students from the top 1 percent than from the bottom 60 percent. Adding to the pressure on legacy admissions, the Education Department has opened a civil rights investigation into the practice at Harvard.

(Conflict alert: I was a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers, and my wife, Sheryl WuDunn, is currently a member and previously served on the Princeton and Cornell boards; our three children also attended Harvard.)

So what can be done to expand opportunity, aside from ending preferences for the privileged? Top colleges have taken some steps, including broadening recruitment and reducing costs for families of modest means. Bravo to Wesleyan University for this month becoming one of the latest to abolish legacy preferences, joining Amherst, Johns Hopkins and a few others.

Class-based and geographically based affirmative action is still allowed, and it may be possible to boost kids from low-income or low-education families to compensate in part for the Supreme Court ruling. A 2012 study found that seven out of 10 public universities studied were able to maintain or increase the share of Black and Hispanic students with race-neutral strategies targeting socioeconomic inequality.

More broadly, though, too much of the discussion about equity is focused narrowly on affirmative action at competitive universities.

Top universities are important because they disproportionately propel graduates into the Senate, the Supreme Court and other top jobs, but never forget that it is humble community colleges that transform lives at a far greater scale. While Harvard changed my trajectory, I had childhood friends who would have benefited even more if they could only have attended a career academy or community college and learned a marketable job skill; instead they were lost to factory layoffs, addiction and overdoses.

According to a very rough estimate by Professor Sean Reardon at Stanford University, race-based affirmative action has benefited only about 10,000 to 15,000 students each year who might otherwise not have been admitted at their elite colleges — whereas more than three million Black and Hispanic students were enrolled in community colleges in 2020-21. Like public universities, community colleges are some of America's greatest engines of opportunity.

Joseph Nye, an eminent professor emeritus at Harvard, told me that he had been thinking of donating part of his I.R.A. to Harvard when a friend suggested a community college instead. Nye investigated and ended up donating $100,000 to help students attend Bunker Hill Community College in Boston. That will help an enormous number of young adults.

In the broadest sense, the real college admissions scandal isn't even the extra benefit given to privileged kids; it's that so much talent is never nurtured and a majority of young people don't get a chance to graduate from college at all. If we're serious about promoting equality, we can champion early childhood programs: To get more kids in a university, invest in pre-K. We can take on local funding of education, which leads to poor children attending poor schools. We can fight to raise high school graduation rates. As I've written, we can learn from states that have gained ground — including Mississippi, once mocked as the nation's educational caboose and now a place where fourth-graders in poverty are tied for best in the nation in reading.

It's easy enough for us liberals to sit around carping about the Supreme Court. Sure, let's do that — for five minutes, and then let's focus on all else that we can still do to boost opportunity and diversity.

You can also listen to this programme

Document 12 - **Affirmative Action — For The Rich** - NPR, JULY 27, 2023

https://www.npr.org/2023/07/27/1190554210/affirmative-action-for-the-rich/

The Supreme Court may have ended race-conscious admissions in higher education. But the end of affirmative action seems to have added fuel to another contentious debate around college admissions policies.

For decades, many elite, private institutions have given prospective college students preference if a relative attended the school or, in some cases, when a major donor was involved.

While the practice of affirmative action is dead, legacy admissions continue. But more and more critics of the practice are calling on schools to do away with them, including President Biden.

Host Juana Summers speaks with economist John Friedman, a professor and chair of economics at Brown University. He co-authored a study that quantifies the lasting socio-economic disparities between legacy students and their less affluent peers.

Document 13 - **It's Time to End Race-Based Affirmative Action**

Credit...Illustration by The New York Times; photograph by Ricky Saputra/Getty Images

By John McWhorter, Opinion Writer, ***The New York Times***, Jan 22, 2023

Back in 2009, I and the sociologist Dalton Conley debated affirmative action with N.A.A.C.P. chairman Julian Bond and Columbia University president Lee Bollinger. In my closing statement I suggested a scenario in which I had a daughter who got into nearly every college she applied to while her similarly credentialed white friends got into schools only here or there. If that happened, I said, the reason, "given the fact that she will not have grown up under anything you could call disadvantage," would be that:

> *There are administrators beaming at the fact that by admitting my daughter they are sticking a thumb in the eye at white people who don't feel guilty enough about their supremacy. If the idea is that the administrators are beaming because my daughter is going to make the campus more diverse; if they are beaming because by admitting my daughter, they are showing that racism is not dead ... I will feel that my daughter is being condescended to. I will feel it as a mark of disrespect to me and my ability to get past the ills of the past and to pass on those abilities to my daughter.*

The debate was civil in a way that debates, sadly, frequently no longer are, and it was part of a long line of such debates over affirmative action that has since continued, and soon promises to return the issue to the fore.

Affirmative action — broadly speaking, policies that seek, *affirmatively*, to achieve racial and gender balance in areas such as hiring, contracting and university admissions — has been controversial since it was instituted in the 1960s. It's frequently thought to have originated, in a formal sense, with President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925 and has proliferated throughout American institutions over time. It was controversial at the time of that 2009 debate and it still is, such that in its upcoming term, the Supreme Court will be considering challenges to affirmative action programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina.

I now have that daughter. (I don't remember what made me so sure I would have a girl, since she wasn't born until a few years later, but here we are, and she'll be applying to college in eight years, I assume, with my younger daughter doing so three years later.) And not only do I stand by what I said more than a decade ago, I feel it more deeply now. It's not that I'm opposed utterly to affirmative action **in the university context, admitting some students under different grade and test score standards than other students. I just think affirmative action should address economic disadvantage, not race or gender.**

When affirmative action was put into practice around a half-century ago, with legalized segregation so recent, it was reasonable to think of being Black as a shorthand for being disadvantaged, whatever a Black person's socioeconomic status was. In 1960, around half of Black people were poor. It was unheard-of for big corporations to have Black C.E.O.s; major universities, by and large, didn't think of Black Americans as professor material; and even though we were only seven years from Thurgood Marshall's appointment to the Supreme Court, the idea of a Black president seemed like folly.

But things changed: The Black middle class grew considerably, and affirmative action is among the reasons. I think a mature America **is now in a position to extend the moral sophistication of affirmative action to disadvantaged people of all races or ethnicities, especially since, as a whole, Black America would still benefit substantially.**

And that informs my perspective on racial preferences as they might apply to my own children now, in the 2020s. My daughters are lively young people taking their places in this thing called life, learning how to deal with problems (including growing up during a pandemic), embracing what they love, discerning what they don't, figuring out who they are on their way to becoming thriving individuals.

I shudder at the thought of someone on a college admissions committee, in the not-too-distant future, reading their dossiers and finding their being biracial (in their case, half Black and half white, or "mixed," as we might have said in my day) — and thus, officially "diverse" and even, according to our strange retention of the retrogressive "one-drop rule," officially "African American" — the most interesting thing about them. Or even, frankly, interesting at all.

I don't want an admissions officer to consider the obstacles my children have faced, because in 2022, as opposed to in 1972, they really face no more or less than their white peers do.

I don't want that admissions officer to consider that, perhaps here and there, someone, somewhere, underestimated them because both of their parents aren't white. In the 2020s, that will have happened so seldom to them, as upper-middle-class persons living amid America's most racially enlightened Blue American white people, that I'm quite sure it will not imprint them existentially any more than it did me, coming of age in the 1970s and 1980s.

I don't want the admissions officer to consider my children's "diversity."(…)

"Diversity" has become one of those terms (and ideas) that makes us feel cozy inside, like freshly baked blueberry muffins and "A Charlie Brown Christmas." But how would you feel about looking a Black undergraduate in the eye and saying, "A lot of the reason we wanted you here, on our campus, is your differences from most of the other students and the life lessons they can learn from them"? Someone says, "I want my kids to interact with Black students before they go out into the world." I ask, "Just what was it about Black people that you were hoping your kids would learn?"

There are ripostes to this, of course. **Some would say that we need to maintain racial preferences in admissions until we've eliminated inequalities between Black, Latino, Native American and white America — no differences in wealth, educational opportunities, health outcomes or access to the ballot. (Note that Asian Americans are a somewhat different case, broadly speaking, that we might take up another time.) I understand that argument but consider it flawed, for two very straightforward reasons.**

First, where is the evidence that maintaining racial preferences in admissions, at the nation's most selective universities, is the only, the best or even a reasonably effective way to rectify those inequalities? In individual cases, certainly, some students of color will receive, and capitalize on, opportunities that they otherwise may not have had. But the persistence of the wealth gap, after generations of affirmative action, suggests that somewhere along the way, we've missed the mark, policy-wise.

Second, if you've raised your kids amid economic adversity, you most likely will understand and even support having those circumstances taken into account in their evaluation by a university, even if you're not part of a racial minority. But suppose that those aren't your circumstances, that you're middle class or above and aren't Black, Latino or Native American. How would you feel about your kids being admitted to a university because of their "diverseness" from other kids rather than, well, their selves?

Document 14 - **What is DEI and why is it dividing America?**

By Nicquel Terry Ellis, **CNN,** March 11, 2024

Diversity, equity and inclusion programs have come under attack in boardrooms, state legislatures and college campuses across the country.

Since 2023, 81 anti-DEI bills that target programs at colleges have been introduced in 28 states and in Congress, according to a tally by the Chronicle of Higher Education. Eight have been signed into law, in states like Texas and Florida.

A 2023 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 52% of employed U.S. adults say they have DEI trainings or meetings at work, and 33% say they have a designated staff member who promotes DEI.

But recently, some companies have slashed teams dedicated to DEI and wealthy corporate leaders such as Bill Ackman and Elon Musk have made posts on social media that decried diversity programs.

Critics say DEI programs are discriminatory and attempt to solve racial discrimination by disadvantaging other groups, particularly White Americans. But supporters and industry experts insist the decades-old practice has been politicized and is widely misunderstood.

What is DEI?

CNN interviewed seven DEI experts and industry leaders and asked each to define diversity, equity and inclusion. Although their responses varied slightly, most had a shared vision for what constitutes DEI:

Diversity is embracing the differences everyone brings to the table whether it's someone's race, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability or other aspects of social identity.

Equity is treating everyone fairly and providing equal opportunities**.**

And inclusion is respecting everyone's voice and creating a culture where people from all backgrounds feel encouraged to express their ideas and perspectives.

Daniel Oppong, founder of The Courage Collective, a consultancy that advises companies on DEI, said DEI was created because marginalized communities have not always had equal opportunities for jobs, or felt a sense of belonging in majority-White corporate settings.

"That is the genesis of why some of these programs exist," he said. "It was an attempt to try to create workplaces where more or all people can thrive."

President Lyndon Baines Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964. The law made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and barred unequal application of voter registration requirements.
AP

When did workplaces start embracing DEI?

The backlash against DEI may feel like a pendulum swing from 2020, but the DEI practice has been around for decades.

Dominique Hollins, founder of the DEI consulting firm WĒ360, said the origins of DEI programs date back to the civil rights movement, which played a pivotal role in accelerating efforts to create more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed employment discrimination based on race, religion, sex, color and national origin. It also banned segregation in public places, like public schools and libraries.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which works to eliminate employment discrimination.

In the 1960s and '70s, employees began filing discrimination lawsuits with the EEOC and many companies began incorporating diversity into their business strategies by providing diversity training, according to a 2008 report published in the Academy of Management Learning & Education.

These diversity training efforts emerged around the time that affirmative action began by executive order from President John F. Kennedy. Although the two concepts may seem similar, affirmative action is different from DEI because it required federal contractors by executive order from the president to treat all applicants and employees equally based on race, color, religion and sex.

Colleges and universities also used affirmative action to boost enrollment of students of color at majority-White schools. But last year, the Supreme Court gutted affirmative action, ruling that race-conscious college admissions were unconstitutional.

After President Ronald Reagan backed corporate deregulation policies that said companies should be addressing discrimination internally in the 1980s, Hollins said some of the diversity efforts lost momentum.

In the decades to follow, Hollins said many companies continued to push for DEI-focused jobs and training in a "piecemeal" fashion, instead of creating ongoing programs and dedicated teams.

Hollins said many companies didn't have the staffing or resources to sustain DEI efforts.

But the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May 2020 sparked a racial reckoning and a renewed push for creating DEI leadership roles and initiatives at major corporations.

Between 2019 and 2022, according to a LinkedIn analysis, chief diversity and inclusion officer roles grew by 168.9%.

Today, some of those efforts have been rolled back and people have left DEI roles because they didn't feel fully supported, Hollins said. Companies "were giving the appearance of commitment without actually doing the right work for that commitment to be sustainable," Hollins said.

Despite the backlash against DEI programs and initiatives, many companies are standing firm in their support for DEI**.**

A survey published in January by the polling firm Ipsos, found 67% of people surveyed said their employers require or offer trainings, lectures, webinars, or resources on DEI. And 71% of people surveyed said they think DEI training is important to "creating a positive workplace culture."

What does DEI look like at work?

Today, studies show that many companies are prioritizing some form of DEI. According to a 2023 study by the Pew Research Center, 61% of U.S. adults say their workplace has policies that focus on fairness in hiring, promotions or pay. And 56% of U.S. adults say, "focusing on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion at work is mainly a good thing.**"**

Kelly Baker, executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Thrivent, an organization that provides financial advice, said DEI in the workplace can be a mix of employee training, resource networks and recruiting practices.

Her company, for example, has resource groups for women in leadership, young professionals, Black employees, Hispanic employees, and military veterans, among others.

Their DEI training teaches employees how to understand and bridge cultural differences in the workplace, she said.

Thrivent also seeks job candidates with diversity in their race, geography, gender and industry background, Baker said.

Experts say many corporations tie DEI to their business strategies.

Diversity "is related to our business growth strategy," Baker said. "It's pragmatic and essential and critical for us to ensure that our client base reflects the world that we are in and the world that we are going to be in."

What does DEI look like in higher education?

College campuses have become ground zero for the DEI debate as state lawmakers across the country launch efforts to halt or limit DEI programs in public schools and universities. Last week, the University of Florida eliminated the office of its Chief Diversity Officer to comply with regulations from the Florida Board of Governors that prohibit spending state funds on DEI programs.

Ella Washington, professor of practice at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, said she is concerned that efforts to ban DEI on college campuses will prevent students from being prepared for the real world.

Washington said while DEI looks different on every college campus, many schools focus efforts on recruitment and admissions, curriculum and special programs for underrepresented students. Georgetown's Office of Student Equity & Inclusion oversees several DEI-centered programs including the Disability Cultural Center, Women's Center, LGBTQ Resource Center, and the Center for Multicultural Equity and Access, according to its website.

Prioritizing and embracing a diverse student body allows students to interact with peers from different walks of life and learn new perspectives even outside of the classroom, Washington said. "Colleges are certainly a microcosm of the world," Washington said. "So, having an experience where equity is centered, equality is considered, inclusion is at the forefront of people's minds, those are things we are teaching the next generation about how they should be running the world."

What are critics saying?

In recent years, DEI has become a social and political lightning rod for lawmakers, corporate leaders and even conservative activists, who have sought to cast the initiatives as unfair and even racist.

Some were emboldened by the Supreme Court's decision to gut affirmative action last June.

Christopher Rufo, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and an outspoken critic of DEI, wrote in a New York Times op-ed last year that "these are not neutral programs to increase demographic diversity; they are political programs that use taxpayer resources to advance a specific partisan orthodoxy."

The Claremont Institute, a conservative think tank, holds a similar position. Ryan P. Williams, president of the institute, previously told CNN he believes the ideology behind DEI is "fundamentally anti-American."

"The words that the acronym 'DEI' represent sound nice, but it is nothing more than affirmative action and racial preferences by a different name, a system that features racial headcounts and arbitrarily assigned roles of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' groups in America," Williams said in an emailed statement. "If we continue to do democracy this way, it will only end in acrimony, strife, resentment, and American collapse."

Earlier this year, billionaire investor Bill Ackman posted a 4,000-word opus on X that criticized DEI as "inherently a racist and illegal movement in its implementation even if it purports to work on behalf of the so-called oppressed." Ackman's lengthy thesis was later reposted by billionaire Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, who now owns the social media platform. "DEI is just another word for racism. Shame on anyone who uses it," Musk wrote in his post.

In a follow-up post, Musk doubled down, adding, "DEI, because it discriminates on the basis of race, gender and many other factors, is not merely immoral, it is also illegal."

Tesla, which is owned by Musk, has since omitted all language regarding minority workers and outreach to minority communities in its 10-K filing with the SEC made January 29, CNN previously reported.

But not every business leader agrees. Mark Cuban, billionaire businessman and minority owner of the Dallas Mavericks, pushed back on Musk's posts in a thread defending DEI as good for businesses and their workers. "The loss of DEI-Phobic companies is my gain," Cuban wrote. "Having a workforce that is diverse and representative of your stakeholders is good for business."

In April 2022, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed HB 7, known as the "Stop WOKE' bill," in Hialeah Gardens.
Miami Herald/Miami Herald/TNS/Getty Images/File

What's next in the fight over DEI?

Texas, North Dakota, North Carolina, Tennessee and Utah each have at least one anti-DEI bill that has been signed into law, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.

In Nebraska, Republican State Sen. Dave Murman proposed a bill in January that would prohibit state colleges and universities from dedicating public money and staff time to DEI efforts.

The bill is currently with the Nebraska legislature's education committee which will decide whether to move it to the full legislature.

Murman's office did not respond to a request for an interview.

Nebraska Democratic state Sen. Danielle Conrad told CNN she opposes the bill in part because the broader effort to ban DEI has become "divisive." She said it also "distracts from the real issues" colleges are facing, such as families who can't afford tuition.

DEI, she said, is valuable to colleges and universities.

"We absolutely know from common sense and research that when we have more diverse perspectives in discussion or as part of our education, it helps us to have more thoughtful results," Conrad said. "It helps us to be more well-rounded, active and engaged citizens."

CNN's Athena Jones contributed to this story.

See also

https://www.vox.com/policy/2023/5/4/23644810/equity-social-justice-equality-sanders-biden

Document 15 - **Number of EU students enrolling in UK universities halves post-Brexit**

The number of EU students enrolling in British universities has more than halved since Brexit – with sharp declines in scholars from Italy, Germany and France, figures reveal.

Brexit is seen as the primary deterrent, with home fees and student finance no longer available to EU students who do not already live in the UK with settled or pre-settled status.

"The significant decrease shown in EU first-year student enrolments can be attributed to changes in fees eligibility," said the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which has published the data for the first full post-Brexit year.

Before Brexit, students paid home fees of just over £9,000 and had student finance available. Fees have risen as high as £38,000 after Brexit.

The number of students from the EU who enrolled for the first year of an undergraduate or postgraduate course was down from 66,680 the year before Brexit came into force, 2020, to 31,000 in 2021. This was the first year EU students were treated the same as those coming from China or India.

But the impact of Brexit is deepest at undergraduate level, with just 13,155 EU students enrolling in 2021 for the first year of a primary degree compared with 37,530 the year before, according to official data.

Universities say the loss of undergraduates removes diversity from the classroom and weakens the finances of colleges who could rely on EU students being in college for three or four-year courses – unlike many of the new international students who are coming for one-year postgraduate courses.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) figures shows that overall there are still 120,000 EU students in the system, down from 152,000 in 2020-21. This includes students who enrolled before Brexit and are completing their courses.

The loss of students at postgraduate level is a significant blow as it acted as a pipeline to the science sector, with students a vital part of Horizon and other cutting-edge developments in fields such as medical research and astronomy.

HESA data shows the number of postgraduate students from the EU went down to 14,000 from 24,000 in 2017-18 and the number of research students halving to 2,260 from 4,650 over the same period.

HESA data also shows the biggest exodus of students post-Brexit as being from Italy, Germany and France.

Ireland had replaced France as the No 1 source of EU students, said HESA, with just under 10,000 students enrolled in the UK in 2021-22, similar to the numbers in 2017-18. More than 2,000 of those are enrolled in Northern Ireland universities.

The number of Chinese students has risen from 107,000 in 2017-2018 to 151,000 last year.

Universities UK said the increase in students from outside the EU had not offset the exodus of EU students at undergraduate level, weakening financial stability in some third-level education and reducing diversity across some subject areas. "The decline in postgraduate taught and postgraduate research student numbers as the students transition to international fees is a cause for concern in terms of the pipeline of research talent for the UK."

The figures show "very clearly the impact of the sort of loss of freedom of movement and the change in European students fee status, but also, and critically for undergraduates, the loss of access to student loans", said Charley Robinson, the head of global mobility policy at Universities UK.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), which has more up-to-date data based on course applications, suggests the decline in EU students will continue, with EU resident applications for undergraduate courses in 2022-23 at 24,000 compared with 53,000 in 2016.

By the time EU students had considered their options and made their choice, this number dropped considerably, with just 11,300 taking up places in the UK, many of those likely to be from Ireland.

Before Brexit, EU undergraduate students across the bloc paid whatever domestic students paid, ranging from nothing in Scotland to £9,250 a year in England. They must now pay fees paid by non-EU students, which, according to Study UK and the British Council, can vary from £11,400 to £38,000 a year.

Brexit also excludes EU students from student loans with new immigration rules requiring non-Irish European students to obtain visas and proof that they can support themselves with access to £1,334 a month for courses in London and £1,024 a month for courses outside London.

A Department for Education spokesperson said a drop in the numbers of EU students was "expected … due to a range of factors" including Brexit.

"EU students remain an important part of our international education strategy ambition of hosting at least 600,000 students a year and generating £35bn in exports for the UK economy, both by 2030," they added.

The Guardian, January 27, 2023

Document 16 - **Most disadvantaged UK students are still not going to top universities**

University students from the UK's least well-off families are still no more likely to go to the country's top universities than when the Labour party launched a revolution in higher education 25 years ago, according to new research.

While the proportion of UK school-leavers enrolled at universities has risen by 60 per cent since Sir Tony Blair won power in 1997, the most disadvantaged remain stubbornly under-represented at the most prestigious institutions, even when they obtain the necessary grades.

The research compiled by consultancy dataHE for the Sutton Trust, a charity that promotes social mobility, was published on the eve of Labour's conference in Liverpool. Opinion polls show that the party — which on Friday secured a strong victory in a closely watched Scottish by-election — is on track to regain power next year after 13 years in opposition.

Sir Peter Lampl, who founded the Sutton Trust in 1997, said the lack of progress for the least advantaged children was "disappointing" given the efforts made by both government and universities to improve access over the years.

"Since Tony Blair said his priorities were 'education, education, education' 25 years ago, we have seen successive governments deprioritise it, at the expense of the least advantaged young people," he said. "Although more young people from less well-off backgrounds are going into higher education overall, there are too many who have the grades to get into the best institutions but aren't gaining access."

The proportion of British 18-year-olds at higher education institutions has increased from 22 per cent in 1997 to 35 per cent in 2021, according to government figures. While access has improved at the most selective universities, they have failed to close the gap with the rest of the sector.

In 2020, one in 13 undergraduates at the elite Russell Group of research-intensive universities came from the regions of the UK with the lowest participation in higher education — compared with one in seven at other universities.

The Russell Group is underperforming even when differences in subjects and entry requirements are taken into account. In 2020, the number of undergraduates from the most disadvantaged areas was 11 per cent lower than expected based on the number with good grades studying similar subjects at other universities, worse than in 1997.

Andy Westwood, professor of government practice at the University of Manchester, said multiple factors explained the persistent failure of disadvantaged children to take up places at elite universities, including a cultural bias against leaving home to study and the spiralling cost of living.

"People from backgrounds where their parents have lower qualifications tend to be less mobile and less willing to take on debt — not just fees, but living expenses, which have increased a lot over the last few years. This make them less likely to apply even when they get the required grades," he said.

Bridget Phillipson, shadow education secretary, has said Labour will look at how to make student loan repayments fairer and more progressive if it comes to power, including by reducing monthly repayments for the lowest earners.

The party has also examined reinstating maintenance grants for disadvantaged students. In 2016, maintenance grants of up to £3,500 per year for students from less well-off backgrounds were replaced by the ruling Conservative party with loans that had to be paid back.

However, educationalists are concerned that the under-representation of poorer students is likely to worsen in future years as competition for university

places hots up because of a "demographic bulge" of 18-year olds.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service estimates that there could be up to 1mn applicants to university in 2030, up from almost 750,000 today.

Westwood noted that competition for places was likely to favour the growing number of middle-class parents who were better connected to Russell Group universities and whose children applied earlier and got higher predicted grades.

Anne-Marie Canning, chief executive of The Brilliant Club, a charity that assigns PhD researchers to tutor disadvantaged pupils aiming for top universities, said the "undermatch" between pupils with top grades and their representation at prestigious universities was partly explained by a lack of information.

According to a survey conducted by the charity, many families with children going to university for the first time were not aware, for example, that institutions made lower, "contextual" offers to students from less well-off backgrounds in order to take into account their circumstances.

"It's partly about offering support — feeling you'll belong at an elite institution if you get a place — but also about knowledge, so that target families are aware of these offers," said Canning.

The Russell Group said it was working directly with schools and colleges to increase routes to university, and that over the past four years the number of students from the least-represented backgrounds entering the group's universities in England had increased by more than 50 per cent.

"However, it is not enough to just get disadvantaged students into university. Our members provide a wide range of support to ensure every student beginning a demanding course has the opportunity to succeed," it added.

Labour was contacted for comment.

The Financial Times, October 8, 2023

Document 17- **University students in England 'have 50p a week to live on after rent'**

University students in England are left with the equivalent of 50p a week to live on from their loans after paying for accommodation, the cost of which has soared by nearly 15% over the last two years, research has revealed.

Maintenance loans, which students take out on top of tuition fee loans to pay for living costs, are now almost entirely wiped out by rent alone, according to a report by the student accommodation charity Unipol and the Higher Education Policy Institute (Hepi).

With the average annual student rent in England now £7,566 and the average maintenance loan expected to be £7,590 this year, the authors calculate that students are left with just £24 a year to cover their living costs, which works out at 50p a week.

Even in the case of the maximum maintenance loan, which only the poorest students are entitled to, the proportion eaten up by rent is still more than three-quarters (76%), when it is generally accepted that rent should account for no more than 30% of income. In many cases parents are unable to help.

The report, published on Thursday, focuses on student rental markets in 10 major regional university cities outside London and Edinburgh and found that students in Bristol pay the highest average annual rent outside the capital, up by 9% over the past two years to £9,200.

Exeter is not far behind at £8,559 (+16%), followed by Glasgow, which has seen the biggest rise in rent over the two-year period, up more than 20% to £7,548. Rents are highest in the cities where there is a shortage of student accommodation.

Large rent increases were also seen in Nottingham (up 15% to £8,427), Leeds (also up almost 15% to £7,627) and Bournemouth (up 11% to £7,396). Liverpool, Cardiff and Sheffield were the most affordable of those surveyed, with lower rents and smaller annual increases.

Ictoria Tolmie-Loverseed, Unipol's assistant chief executive, said students facing financial difficulties were being forced to take desperate measures, including illegally doubling up in rooms, taking on increasing amounts of paid work, or even avoiding university altogether.

"Failing to address the student housing crisis risks undermining decades of progress in widening participation in higher education. We risk excluding those from poorer backgrounds, forcing middle-income students to take on unsustainable debts, and damaging the student experience for all."

Natalia Gromek, 22, who studied psychology at Bristol University, where she recently finished a postgraduate degree, said working-class students were in danger of being priced out of going to university in some cities. "Despite receiving the maximum maintenance loan, I didn't have parents who could support me financially and I struggled with how expensive it was to live," she said.

She took on part-time work to try to make ends meet, but that also created problems.

"There is nothing wrong with students taking out part-time jobs, but I had to work three full days, which really impacted my ability to fit in adequate study time and made my experience pretty stressful," she said. "Working-class students are underrepresented in Bristol because it is so hard to live there without financial support from family. Something needs to change before students like me are priced out of going to university in certain cities."

Nick Hillman, Hepi director, said: "Across most of the UK, the official levels of maintenance support simply do not cover anything like most students' actual living costs. In the short term, maintenance support should be increased at least in line with inflation. For the longer term, we need measures to encourage the supply of new student housing, which is currently restricted by factors such as higher interest rates and confusion over new regulation."

A spokesperson for Universities UK, which represents 142 universities, said: "Universities will continue to support students, but we need government to help address this. The 2.8% rise in maintenance support announced for students in England is inadequate and will not cover the real-terms cut to maintenance that students have experienced since inflation began to rise."

Responding to the report, which was based on data provided by universities and the 10 largest providers of purpose-built student accommodation operating across the 10 cities, Chloe Field, the National Union of Students' vice-president for higher education, said: "With an election approaching, and students increasingly angry at being ignored, the government must take action to ensure an affordable bed for every student.

"This means a significant uplift to the maintenance loans, implementing rent controls, and overhauling the student funding system while returning to a grants system."

The Department for Education said the highest levels of support are targeted at students from the lowest-income families but if students are worried they should speak to their university. "To support universities to help their students we are making £276m available this academic year, which institutions can use to top up their own hardship schemes," it said.

***The Guardian*,** October 26, 2023

Document 18 - **Britain's universities are in freefall – and saving them will take more than funding**

Gaby Hinsliff - ***The Guardian***, Fri 29 Mar 2024

Imagine a beach before the tsunami. Out at sea, the wave is gathering force, yet on the sand people are still sunbathing, blissfully unaware. That's how it feels, one professor tells me, to be working in higher education. Academics by their nature don't look outwards much, he argues, so not all have registered the risk to their profession. "But something absolutely dreadful is coming."

As a scientist working in cancer research at a top British university, he's not the kind of academic I expected to be worried about the recent nationwide flurry of threatened redundancies in higher education, the scrapping of what, so far, are mainly arts and language courses, or shrill political attacks on supposedly "woke" campus culture. But lately almost everyone in higher education seems jumpy.

This week, it was the University of Essex's turn to hit the headlines by declaring a £13.8m shortfall, blaming a 38% drop in applications from foreign postgrad students for its plans to freeze pay and promotions. But it merely joins the University and College Union's growing list of, so far, 39 institutions planning cuts, ranging from ancient Russell Group names to relative minnows, and from modest voluntary redundancy schemes to the £100m savings that Coventry University plans to find over the next two years. What's striking is that it's seemingly solid, middle-ranking research institutions, not those bumping along the bottom of league tables, that are starting to hit the panic button.

At best, a miserable summer beckons for lecturers at risk of losing their jobs – another I spoke to was preparing to mark his students' finals and reapply for his post in the same anxious week – while students face a no-frills future of fewer choices and more uncertainty. (A friend's son found out only halfway through his gap year that the history and politics degree he was due to start this autumn has been ditched for a distinctly stripped-back version).

At worst, some are asking how the sector would cope if an established university goes bust. Since that's never happened before, nobody seems entirely sure how it would work: what would happen to students halfway through their degrees, or whether one failure might spook creditors into pulling the plug on others.

What has happened to Britain's supposedly world-beating universities is partly the old post-Brexit story of the young suffering the consequences of something they overwhelmingly didn't vote for. But it's complicated by austerity, and arguably by some vice-chancellors biting off more than they can chew.

The story starts with the freezing of tuition fees in 2017, creating a growing hole in university finances that many plugged by recruiting more foreign students (who pay more than British teenagers for the same degree). That kept the show on the road until the resulting immigration numbers became politically toxic, prompting a government clampdown on visas and a sudden 33% fall in foreign student numbers compared with the same time last year. In February, I wrote that we were about to find out what happens when young people stop coming to a country publicly hostile to them, and now here we are: the net result isn't more choice for British teenagers but, if anything, the reverse, given that foreign students were effectively subsidising them.

Meanwhile, middle-ranking universities have long complained of grander institutions stealing their lunch, by expanding humanities courses – which are relatively cheap to provide – and taking in teenagers who would otherwise have gone to the next tier of universities down. Some borrowed heavily to expand and make themselves more attractive, only to be caught out by rocketing inflation and borrowing costs. Put all of that together and it's no surprise that an independent report commissioned by Universities UK from the accountants PwC notes 40% of English and Northern Irish universities (plus 36% of Scottish ones, operating under a different fee system) are expected to go into the red this year, adding that "it may be inevitable that there is some loss of provision". And in a mockery of what was understood by levelling up, students from poorer backgrounds may be hardest hit: they're disproportionately likely either to go to post-1992 institutions, or to choose the nearest university so that they can save on rent by living at home. If it scraps the course they wanted, what then?

Perhaps you find it hard to care about universities at a time when the NHS is on its knees and everything in public life seems broken. Or perhaps you think teenagers with middling A-level results are better off not racking up debt for degrees that might not help their job prospects all that much.

What we're seeing isn't some slow, careful rebalancing of the system, done with teenagers' best interests at heart. Instead, it's just another messy, confused decline of something Britain was genuinely once good at, which contributed billions to the economy while projecting soft power abroad. Fixing it will take more than just funding, although a rise in tuition fees now seems inevitable. What's needed is a more fundamental restructuring, and an honest debate about exactly what – and who – a modern university education is really for. Right now, that's the essay question to which nobody seems to have a clear answer.

Gaby Hinsliff is a Guardian columnist