

Analysis paper on (is legacy admissions ethical)



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Are legacy admissions ethical? With the rising enrollment in the public and private universities, legacy admissions have become a topic of hot debate. With the growing competition in pretty much all parts of life, it isn't a surprise that education too has becoming an avenue of great contest. All parents and students alike want to be part of the best universities and colleges; a good education has become the cornerstone to leading a successful life. Here comes in the question of legacy admissions and justice. Typically when speak of justice you would assume that all people would be treat with fairness, equity and impartiality; however in the case of the legacy admissions is such a feat possible? Does a person who works hard his whole life to get into a good college deserve an admission more than one whose father is capable of writing a large check? Legacy admissions are not based on merit but the wealth of your family and their history with the university that you are applying to. Your father went there, so did his father and you must follow in their footsteps regardless of how capable you are of doing so (Sacks 155).

As per the article under discussion, it is stated that, " justice calls for evenhanded treatment of groups and individuals," while this is a very noble concept, it is practically impossible. Yes, in autopian world society holds all individual equal. But is it a good idea to put the good of a few people above greater benefit for all? At a glance it wouldn't be inaccurate to say that such admissions are unethical, but the question is, who are they harming? Those that are denouncing legacy admission are doing so by promoting merit. Even former president George Bush spoke against legacy admission, however he himself has been known to graduate from Yale while his academic record shows no distinguishing patterns. Legacy admissions help by giving the

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educational institutes funds which they further utilize to make the edification experience more enriching. These funds result in high labs, competitive sports programs, state of the art libraries etcetera.

Investopedia, an investment company came up with a very simple calculation of yield-measurements e. g. if the university has an endowment fund of \$160 million and it has a 7% spending amount, this would yield an annual available income of \$11. 2 million. For instance the university has allocated an annual budget of \$7 million, the access amount \$4. 2 million is then spent in adding up to the prestige of these universities by offering more scholarships and building up more halls, libraries, auditoriums computer labs etc. Considering the huge amount of profits they gain from these endowments it is hard to say that admissions on such conditions should be stopped.

The problem is that the discussion of ' fair' and ' ethical' admissions will not stop at this one issue. There is actual standard of fairness that can be applied. Shepard & Thomas (2003) proved this point further when they wrote, " Should a state university give preference to in-state students? We would suggest yes, since the taxes paid by state residents support the institution. If one agrees, then that establishes that preference is permissible for those who financially support the university--especially if their support contributes to a better education for all of the students enrolled." Hence, even if an out state student has the best position in his entire state, he will still be at the bottom of the food chain in any other state.

The fact is that most state cannot claim that they fully support their universities. By removing legacy admissions, you would be putting the entire education system at a disadvantage. Public universities thus have two

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choices, turn a blind eye to a few academic records and enroll them for their monetary value or let the entire quality of education deteriorate due to lack of funds. Realistically speaking, the government will never be able nor willing to invest the kind of money that legacy admissions bring in to a single university. Raising the tuition is one other option that they can take up but affects all the students in an adverse manner. Not every disadvantaged student will be able to get a scholarship and many will not be able to afford a degree at all.

The article further goes onto state that, “ justice is largely based on the moral rights of individuals; the moral rights to be treated as a free and equal person.” This is again a very noble thought, this would knock legacy admissions right off the map. Then we can look at the question of special admission cases i. e. those based on minorities like blacks, Hispanics and Asians. The next step would be to cut these out of the system too because if everyone is equal, such an allowance should not be given. And if we go by that rule than legacy admissions seem to go hand-in-hand with sports scholarships. Students who are awarded placement because of their athletic abilities at times have a very disturbing academic record and many with high merit lose out because of their skills as athletes.

In a nutshell, the concept of justice is very tricky to tackle. It is very easy to say that justice should provide equality for all, but we live in a complicated world where not everyone can have what they want. Legacy admissions do trample the prospects of some deserving students with higher merit but if you look at the bigger picture, in general these admissions raise the value of education that all the students are receiving.

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