

Higher Education: Reconnecting with the American Dream

“The Politics of Inclusion: Higher
Education at a Crossroads”

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

September 11, 2006

American vs. European Models

American Dream

European Model

Liberal element: social
mobility

Ancient Europe: rigid
hierarchies

Conservative element:
rise or fall on
individual effort

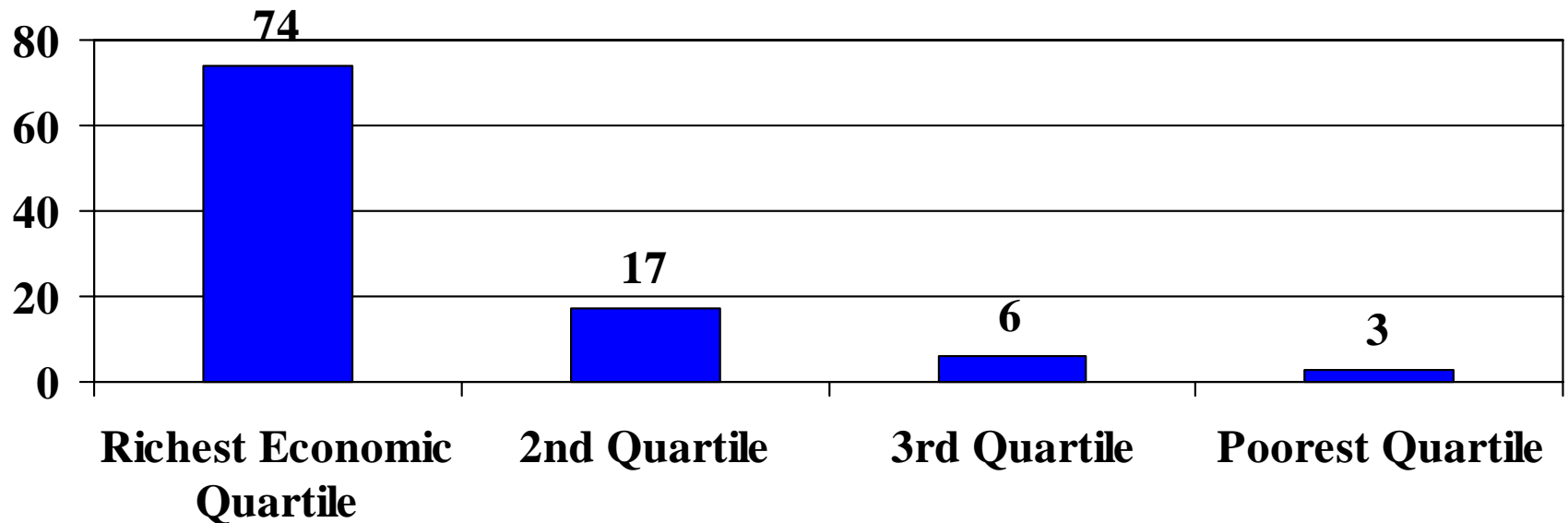
Modern Europe:
generous safety
net/guaranteed results

Liberal Critique of Higher Education

- Mortenson: \$90,000: 1 in 2 obtain bachelor's degree by 24; \$35,000: 1 in 17.
- Lee: 78% in highest achievement quartile and lowest economic quartile enroll in postsecondary education 2 years after graduating vs 97% of high achieving/high SES students and 77% of low achieving/high SES students.

Extent of Economic Diversity Today

Economic diversity at top 146 colleges (Barron's)
Century Foundation Study



Source: Anthony P. Carnevale and Stephen J. Rose, "Socioeconomic Status, Race/Ethnicity and Selective College Admissions," The Century Foundation, New York, March 2003, Table 1.1.

Race as a Proxy for Economic Disadvantage

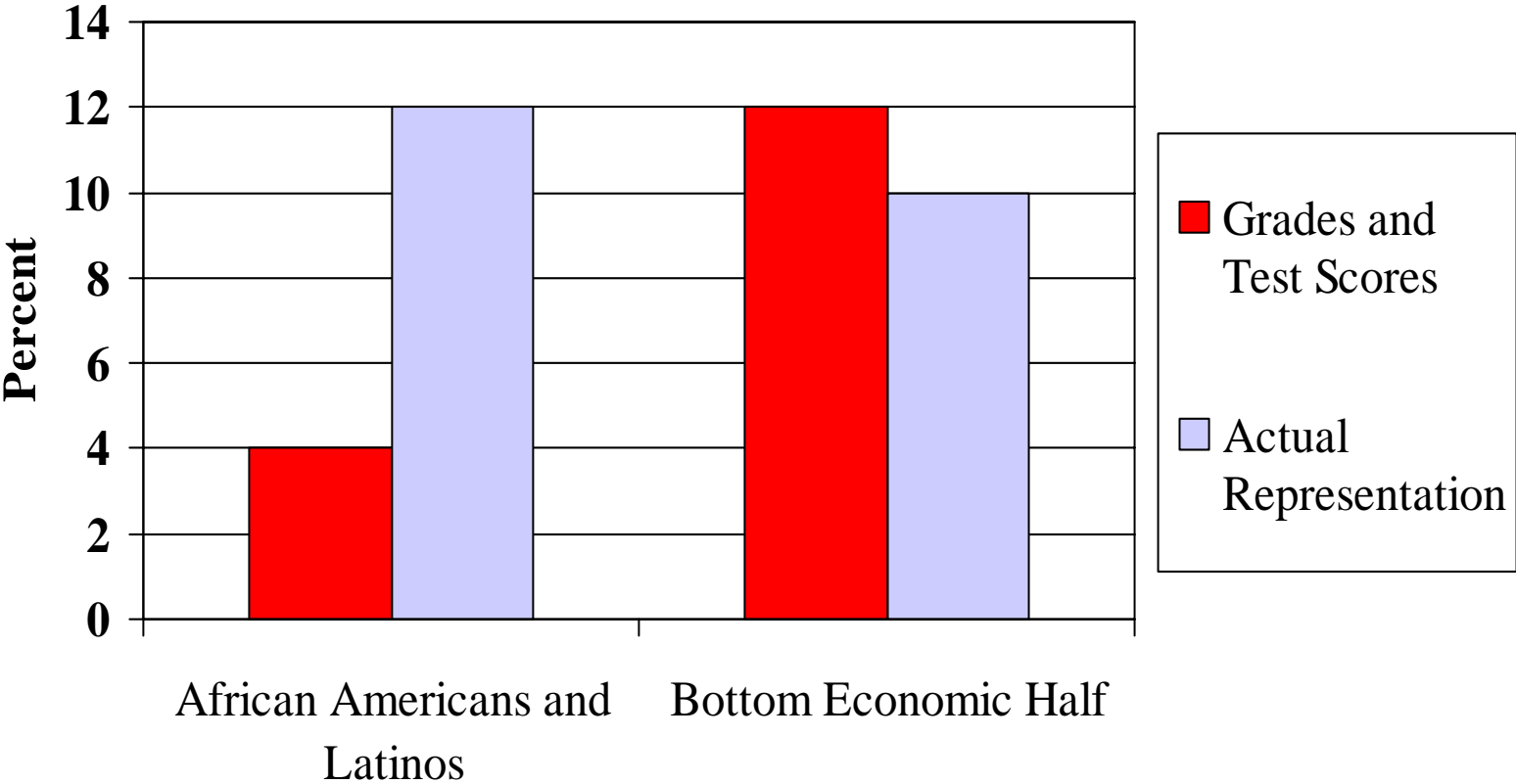
At 28 selective colleges studied by Bowen and Bok, 86% of African Americans were middle or upper middle class.

Source: William Bowen and Derek Bok, *The Shape of the River* (Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 49, Figure 2.12.

Legacy and Development Admits

- Legacy preferences. Bowen study:
Increases chance of admissions by 20 percentage points.
- “Development” candidates – Daniel Golden.

Extent of Economic Affirmative Action Today



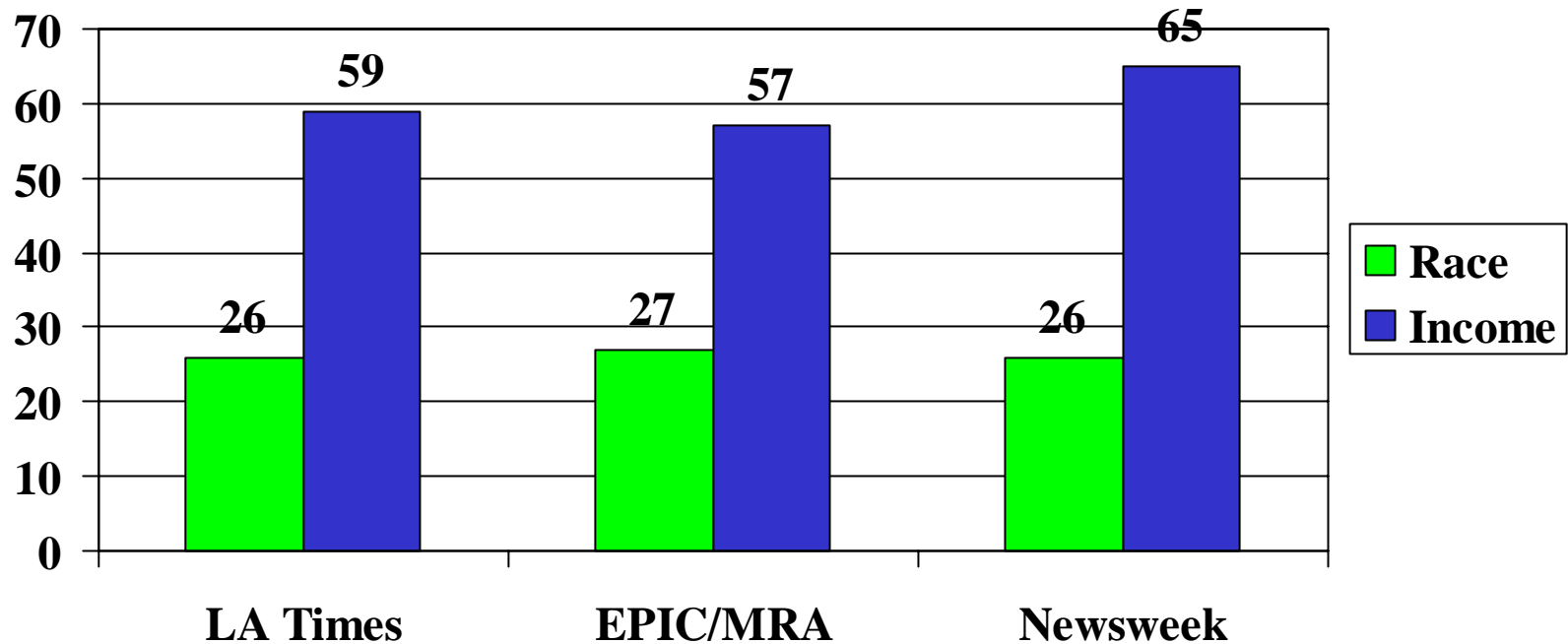
Source: Carnevale and Rose, “Socioeconomic Status,” p. 47.

Conservative Critique of Higher Education

- Emphasis on “diversity” by race, class, geography rather than “fairness” and “deservedness.”
- Alumni preferences and diversity preferences based on which students serve the needs of the university (for diverse learning environment, fundraising) rather than rewarding for hard work.

Economic Affirmative Action: Public Support

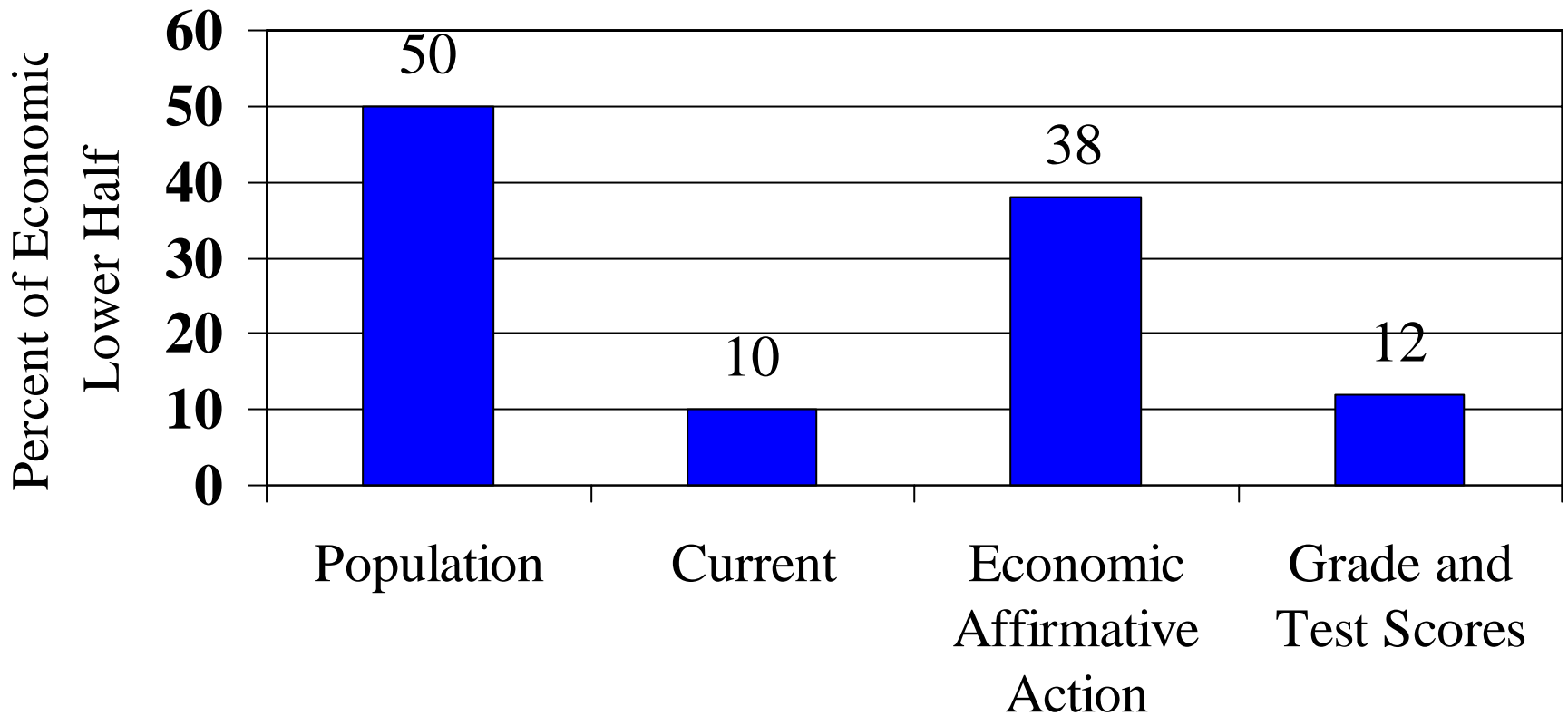
Support for Racial and Economic Affirmative Action: 3 polls



Source: EPIC/MRA poll (conducted January 29–February 3, 2003); *Los Angeles Times* poll (conducted January 30–February 2, 2003); and *Newsweek* poll (conducted January 16–17, 2003).

Economic Diversity

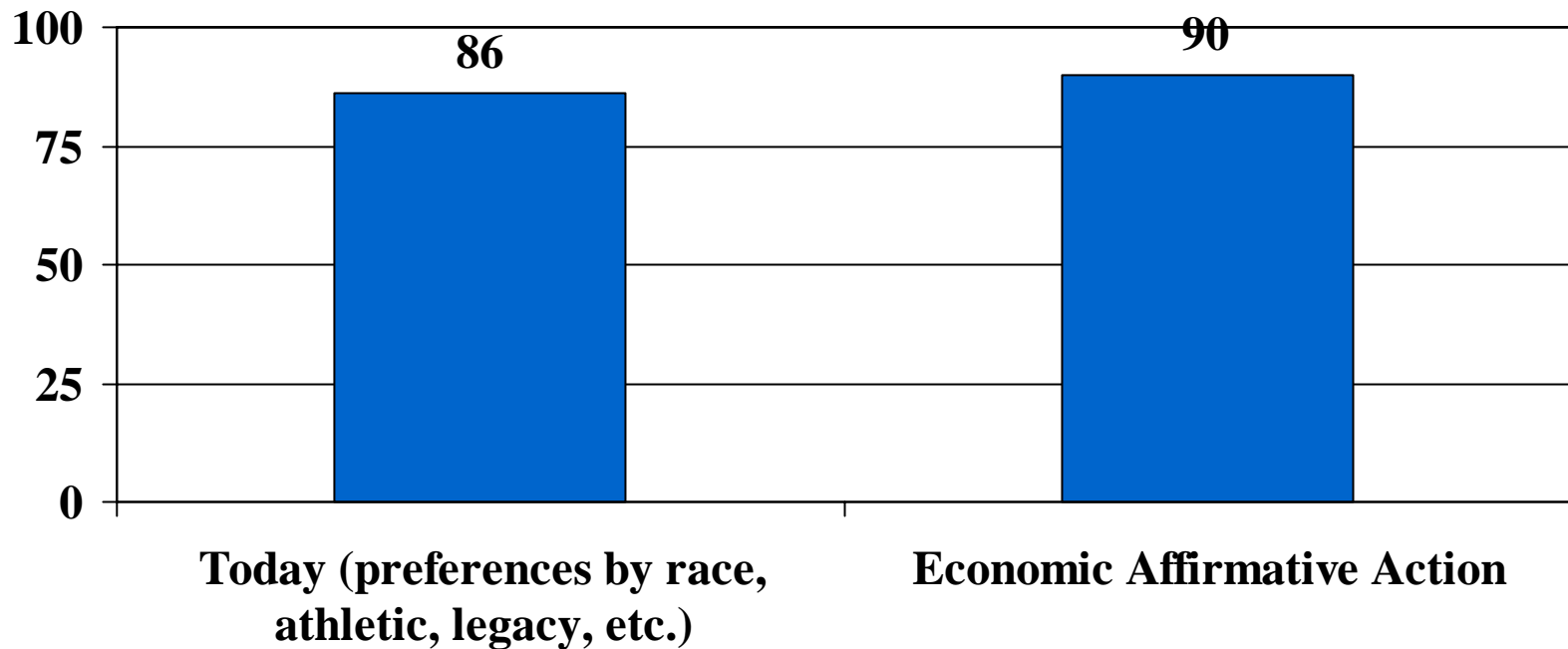
Economic Diversity at top 146 colleges



Source: Carnevale and Rose, "Socioeconomic Status," pp. 47 and 55.

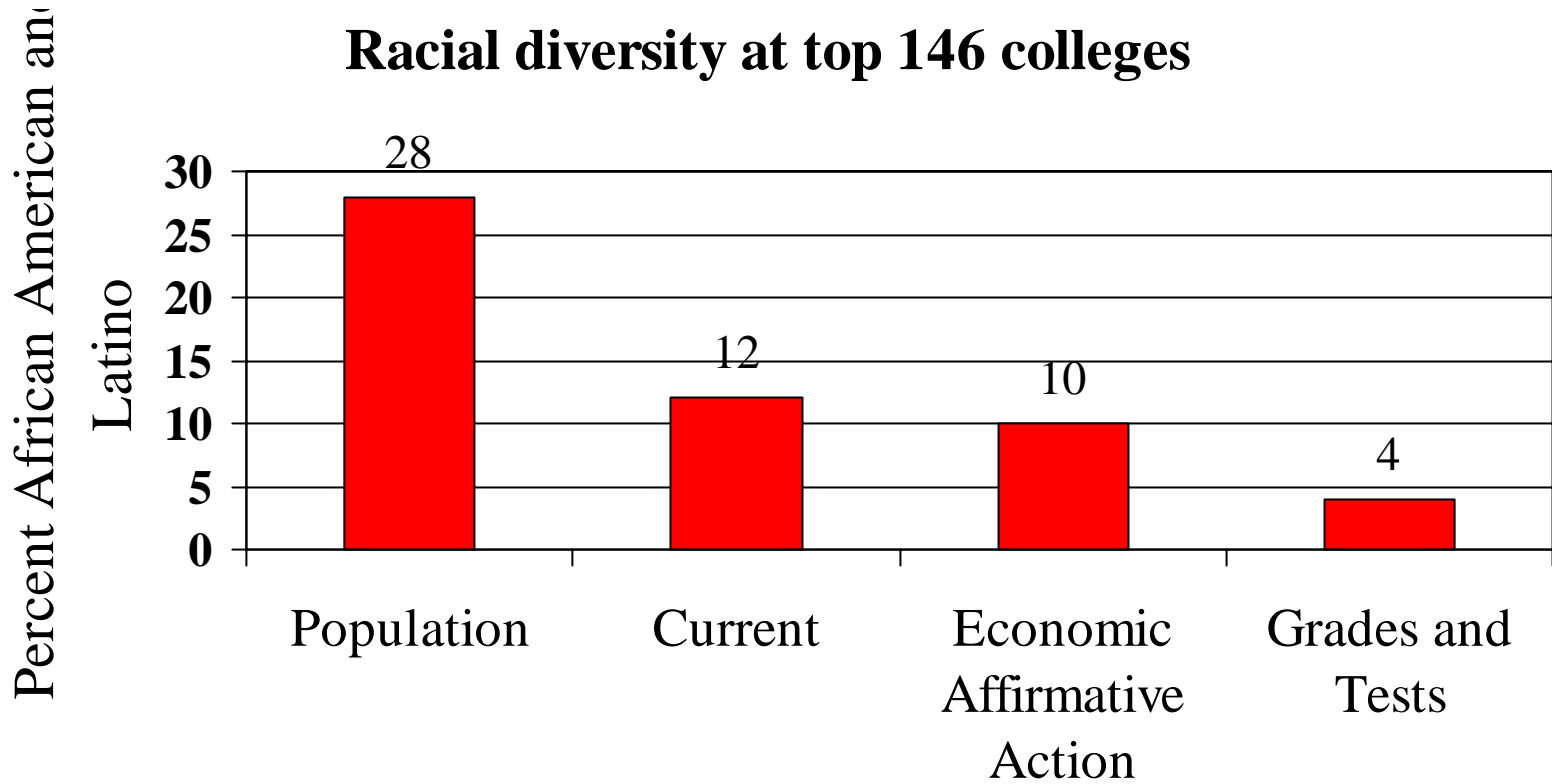
Economic Affirmative Action: Graduation Rates

Graduation Rates at top 146 Colleges



Source: Carnevale and Rose, "Socioeconomic Status," p. 55

Racial Diversity



Source: Carnevale and Rose, "Socioeconomic Status," pp. 46, 47, and 55.

Boosting Racial Diversity

Additional Factors Not Employed By Carnevale and Rose Should Increase Racial Diversity Further:

* Neighborhood Poverty

Black families with incomes in excess of \$60,000 live in neighborhoods with higher poverty rates than white families earning less than \$30,000.

Source: Daryl Fears, “Disparity Marks Black Ethnic Groups, Report Says,” *Washington Post*, March 9, 2003, p. A7.

* Net Worth/Wealth

While black median income is 62 percent of white median income, black median net worth is just 12 percent of white median net worth.

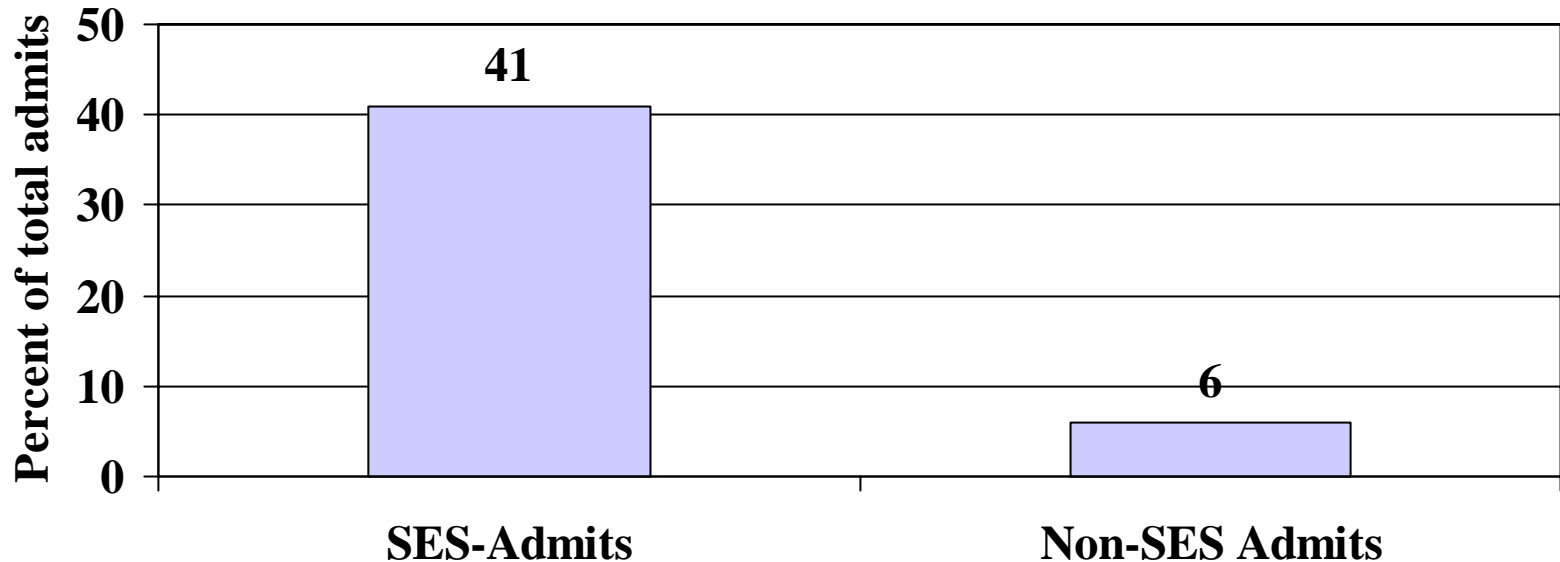
Source: Edward N. Wolff, *Top Heavy: The Increasing Inequality of Wealth in America and What Can Be Done About It* (New York: New Press, 2002), p. 20, Table 4.1.

Economic and Racial Diversity at UCLA Law School

UCLA School of Law						
Fall 2002 SES Admission Summary						
	SES			All Others		
	Apps	Admits	Enrolled	Apps	Admits	Enrolled
Native American	1	0	0	46	7	2
African American	30	19	8	331	13	5
Chicano/Latino	51	26	13	478	36	11
Asian	63	20	17	1221	158	37
White	86	30	17	2521	400	129
Other/Unknown	57	16	9	1724	234	57
Total	288	111	64	6321	848	241

Economic and Racial Diversity at UCLA Law School

African Americans and Latinos SES vs. Non-SES admits UCLA Law School, Fall 2002



Source: Sossin-Bergman, November 2002

Examples of American Dream Approach

- University of California – “comprehensive review”— examining academic accomplishments in light of such obstacles as “low family income, first generation to attend college,” and “disadvantaged social or educational environment.”
- University of Washington – academic achievement in the context of such factors as “family income, number in family, parents’ educational level, [and] high school free lunch percent.”

Contact Information and Sources

Richard D. Kahlenberg

Senior Fellow

The Century Foundation

1333 H Street, N.W., 10th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20005

202-745-5476

kahlenberg@tcf.org

www.tcf.org; www.equaleducation.org

America's Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education (Century Foundation Press, 2004), edited by Richard D. Kahlenberg, with chapters by Anthony Carnevale and Stephen Rose; Michael Timpane and Arthur Hauptman; and Lawrence Gladieux.

Richard D. Kahlenberg, *The Remedy: Class, Race, and Affirmative Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1996)