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Edward Blum  
*President*

September 4, 2019

Re: Annual Report of Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA)

Dear SFFA Member:

As a new school year approaches, I'm happy to once again bring you our annual report. It has been an impressive year for our organization, and I'm excited for what the future holds.

### **Our Harvard Litigation**

Like so many of you, I am eagerly awaiting the opinion from Judge Allison Burroughs, the Boston-based federal judge who presided over the 2018 trial challenging Harvard's admissions policies. As you may recall from our earlier newsletters, the Harvard trial began on October 15, 2018 and ended on November 3, 2018. Harvard and SFFA then made a second appearance before Judge Burroughs on February 13, 2019 for additional closing arguments. We are hopeful we will see an opinion soon.

I am often asked about the probable outcome of the trial and what will happen if SFFA wins or loses at the trial court. Since there are so many possible outcomes, I have made it my policy not to speculate. But the one thing I will share with you is this: SFFA is committed to promoting racial equality in the college admissions process and to fighting racial discrimination in whatever form it takes. This mission is enduring—in the courts, on campus, and in our nation at large.

Turning back to the trial, I'm sure many of you followed newspaper and other media accounts of the proceeding, so I won't give you a day-by-day description of the trial; instead, I'll encourage you to read the more insightful articles that I think captured some of the major themes the trial revealed.

For example, this article from the [\*New York Times\*](#) relates to the first few days of the trial. It begins:

### **Harvard's Admissions Process, Once Secret, Is Unveiled in Affirmative Action Trial**

BOSTON — The deliberations that take place inside 86 Brattle Street, a red brick building where Harvard University's admissions committee convenes, have very much stayed inside 86 Brattle Street.

Until now.

A federal trial that began this week accusing Harvard of stacking the deck against Asian-American applicants is providing a rare glimpse into the secretive selection process at one of the country's most elite universities. It is as if those sitting on the wood benches before Judge Allison D. Burroughs of Federal District Court in Boston have been invited inside the inner sanctum of the Harvard Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.

Similarly, the [\*Boston Globe\*](#) described the shocking turn of events as trial unfolded:

### **As Trial Loomed, Harvard Changed Guidance for Admissions Officers**

Harvard University quietly changed significant portions of its training manual for admissions officers this year, addressing some of the key issues at the heart of an ongoing federal trial over whether the school discriminates against Asian-American applicants.

Harvard's updated guidelines for seemingly the first time explicitly tell admissions officials evaluating the crop of students for the class of 2023 in what instances they should consider an applicant's race. And they provide far more detailed information on how to measure personal qualities such as courage, leadership, and resiliency. Harvard's use of these attributes in the admissions process is at the center of the complaint by the Students for Fair Admissions.

These are just a handful of the powerful stories written about our efforts. I encourage you to visit our website to read other stories about the trial.

### **Our Litigation Against the University of North Carolina and the University of Texas at Austin**

In addition to the 2018 trial and the final closing arguments in 2019, it has been a busy year for SFFA. Most importantly, SFFA refiled our lawsuit against the University of Texas at Austin in April 2019. We also filed our motion for summary judgment against the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We eagerly await a ruling from that court as well.

## The Coming Year

In the coming year, we will likely see important (and perhaps groundbreaking) rulings in our cases. I look forward to sharing the results with you as soon as they happen.

I am also looking forward to continuing our organization's conversation with its members and with the public. In the past year, I gave a number of speeches and presentations around the country about the issues important to our organization. I also met with students and their parents who had been rejected from Harvard, the University of North Carolina, the University of Texas, and countless other universities. Our members' stories are powerful and remind us of why we fight.

Indeed, we are always eager to talk with recently rejected students, especially from Harvard, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Texas. So please send students to our website and have them tell us their story.

Our Board of Directors also is working tirelessly to support SFFA. Importantly, we will be having an election this winter for an open seat on our Board of Directors. All members of SFFA are eligible to join the Board. I will send you more updates later in the year. Needless to say, I encourage everyone who is interested in serving on our Board to run for the open seat, and I encourage everyone to cast a vote in the election once the ballot is set.

As always, we will continue to provide you with regular updates of SFFA's activities throughout the coming year. Membership participation is critical to SFFA's success. Indeed, some of my favorite events are our members-only conference calls. Your ideas, comments, and suggestions about the future of our organization and our movement are vitally important. I encourage all of you to join these calls and to converse with me and our Board of Directors.

Finally, many thanks to all of you who donated to SFFA this past year. As you can imagine, the cost of the three-week trial in Boston was enormous. And regardless of the outcome of this trial, there surely will be appeals and those too will be costly. We are incredibly grateful for your support.

Sincerely,



Edward Blum

*President, Students for Fair Admissions*