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April 1998

Affirmative Action in Higher Education on the Line (The Beginning of the End?)

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“Are we to say that just because time is passing and we are moving into an age of spectacular use of technology and the still sparse appearance of people color and women into nontraditional roles in this nation that this nation is forever healed and opened to the concept of diversity in higher education and the workplace? It seems highly unlikely.”

History shows that when racial and gender issues are brought into local, state or national dialogue, particularly when a group of people have something to gain, i.e., jobs, college admissions or training, there will be debate, divisiveness and controversy. The debate appears to intensify as time moves further away from slavery, Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement of 50s and 60s. Are we to say that just because time is passing and we are moving into an age of spectacular use of technology and the still sparse appearance of people of color and women into nontraditional roles in this nation, that this nation is forever healed and opened to the concept of diversity in higher education and the workplace? It seems highly unlikely. Colorblindness is not a choice of the majority nor is the idea of diversity aggressively sought after in the majority of this country. Unfortunately it is not always bigotry that speaks against diversity, but ignorance, apathy and misunderstanding; the idea that there is nothing wrong. I say unfortunately, because it is easier to confront and persuade a need of legislated diversity when it is apparent that people are overtly discriminating on the basis of color and gender.

This paper will examine the concept of affirmative action by discussing its origin in Executive Order 11246. Also to be discussed is affirmative action's interpretation by educators and political scientists. In addition, this paper will analyze the judgment of the Hopwood vs. Texas case and will reflect upon the interpretation of the decision by Texas State Attorney General, Dan Morales.

Finally, this paper will conclude by discussing the implications for the future of Texas Institutions of Higher Education and the minorities seeking to enter its doors.

PRESENTER

Gail M. Prince, M. Ed. is the Human Resources Manager of an Intermediate Education Agency in El Paso, Texas. She has 5 years of experience in Human Resources/Teacher Certification and Recruitment issues. Prior to this she served the El Paso Independent School District for 5 years as a Speech Therapist for grades K-12.

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