



U.S. Dept. of Education investigating Harvard University legacy admissions

Civil rights inquiry into Harvard's legacy admissions practices comes after a Supreme Court ruling that brought down affirmative action

By Alex Tang
NEWS EDITOR

On July 25, the U.S. Department of Education opened a civil rights investigation into the legacy admissions policy at Harvard University. This move comes after the Supreme Court ruled affirmative action unconstitutional on June 29, prompting further scrutiny of the college admissions process.

Shortly after the Supreme Court ruling was released, three Boston-based groups, the Chica Project, the African Community Economic Development of New England, and the Greater Boston Latino Network, filed a complaint with the

Department of Education against Harvard, alleging that Harvard's consideration of legacy in admissions prefers relatives of alumni and donors and discriminates against Black, Hispanic, Asian, and other minority applicants.

"It is imperative that the federal government act now to eliminate this unfair barrier that systematically disadvantages students of color," Michael Kippins, a litigation fellow at Lawyers for Civil Rights, said when the complaint was filed.

The inquiry could culminate in a protracted legal battle that could end up once more in the hands of the Supreme Court. Nicole Rura, a Harvard spokeswoman, said

that in the wake of the investigation, Harvard was reviewing its admissions policies and added that "Harvard remains dedicated to opening doors to opportunity and to redoubling our efforts to encourage students from many different backgrounds to apply for admission."

Harvard's legacy practice was investigated in the 1980s by the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights in the context of discrimination against Asian American applicants.

A statement of findings from the 1988-90 probe said that the investigation "revealed clear evidence of a 'tip' for legacies and re-

cruited athletes' but said that Harvard's legacy preference was not in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which bars discrimination based on race.

Legacy admissions have been a long-standing practice at many of the nation's most prestigious universities, including Stanford, Yale, and Princeton. Wesleyan University, a selective private college in Connecticut, recently ended its legacy preference after the Supreme Court decision.

MIT does not consider an applicant's legacy status in the private institute's admissions process, according to the MIT Admissions website.

Former President Trump Indicted on charges stemming from 2020 election

On Aug. 1, former President Donald J. Trump was indicted on four counts relating to his attempt to overturn the 2020 election, which culminated in a deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. The indictment, which was filed by special counsel Jack Smith, contains charges including conspiracy to defraud the United States, witness tampering and conspiracy against the rights of citizens, and obstruction of an attempt to obstruct an official proceeding.

Trump is due in court Aug. 3 and is currently embroiled in two other criminal indictments involving falsifying business records and mishandling classified documents. According to a New York Times/Siena College poll, the former president remains the front-runner for the Republican party in the approaching 2024 election.

— Alex Tang

IN SHORT

The last day of classes for the summer session is August 18.

Pre-registration closes on August 24 at 5 PM.

First-year student orientation begins on August 27.

Labor Day is September 4.

Registration Day is September 5.

First Day of Classes is September 6.

The Tech's mailing lists have been shut down; use tt-join@mit.edu for general questions and the following new department-specific mailing lists in the interim: tt-news-editors@mit.edu; tt-opinioneditors@mit.edu; tt-photographyeditors@mit.edu; tt-arts-editors@mit.edu; tt-campus-life-editors@mit.edu; tt-science-editors@mit.edu; tt-sportseditors@mit.edu.

Interested in joining The Tech? Email tjoin@mit.edu

Send news and tips to tt-news-editors@mit.edu

U.S. Women's Team Stumble in World Cup

The U.S. Women's National Soccer Team had a rocky start to the World Cup which began on July 20. After beating Vietnam 3-0 in their opening match, the squad has drawn their last two matches 1-1 and 0-0 with the Netherlands and Portugal respectively. The team has advanced to the Round of 16, where they will face a strong Sweden team on Aug. 6.

— Alex Tang

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[Reprint] Affirmative action brought down by Supreme Court

President Sally Kornbluth: "These decisions represent a turning point for our nation"

By Alex Tang
NEWS EDITOR

On June 29, the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action, ruling that race-conscious admissions processes at Harvard and the University of North Carolina were unconstitutional. In a video to the MIT community on July 1, President Sally Kornbluth said she wanted to "express my profound frustration with these decisions." She added that such an action "threatens our mission."

Upending Precedent

Before this ruling, the Supreme Court had upheld affirmative action policies, albeit with slight majorities. In 1978, the Court said that considering an applicant's race through an affirmative action program was a viable factor in building a diverse class, similar to characteristics such as an applicant's geography or scholastic achievement. In 2003, the Court reaffirmed the constitutionality of such a program.

With its current conservative supermajority, the Court was split along ideological lines, ruling 6-3 and 6-2 in the University of North Carolina and Harvard cases, respectively. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson recused herself in the Harvard decision.

In the majority opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that "many universities have for too long... concluded, wrongly that the touchstone of an individual's identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned but the color of their skin." Justice Clarence Thomas added that current university admission policies "fly in the face of our colorblind Constitution."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in the dissent that the Court's decision

"subverts the constitutional guarantee of equal protection by further entrenching racial inequality in education, the very foundation of our democratic government and pluralistic society." Justice Jackson said, "Deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life."

President Kornbluth's Response

On June 7, President Kornbluth sent an email to the MIT community anticipating the decision, stating that "we expect the ruling to pose a serious challenge to sustaining, in future classes, the diverse mix of undergraduate and graduate students who make MIT the place it is today."

Kornbluth wrote that her inauguration demonstrated to her "the simple reality that MIT has never been more excellent-and never more diverse." Later on, she wrote that "every MIT student brings their own life experiences that enrich the education of all students, and every student is a valued and important member of our community." Thus, Kornbluth states that MIT ought to "do whatever we can, within the bounds of the law, to keep our doors open to this full breadth of human talent."

In her video address, Kornbluth echoed her previous statements: "MIT has never been more excellent and has never been more diverse and I see these factors as inextricably intertwined."

In the aftermath of the decision, Kornbluth cited the ruling as threatening the Institute's ability to "prepare the next generation of leaders for our multi-racial society." She stated that "these decisions represent a turning point for our nation" and added that "we need to take a step back and decide how to address the racial and eco-

nom ic inequalities that still persist in our society."

An impact on and off campus

The decision has broad implications beyond the college admissions landscape. President Kornbluth wrote in her June 7 email that "the decision may also affect a range of programs and services beyond admissions." In an NPR interview, Harvard co-counsel Bill Lee said that the ruling will "open a Pandora's box across the country and across institutions and industries."

The ruling will likely impact selective high schools, including Boston Latin, Thomas Jefferson, and Stuyvesant. Such schools have recently been a source of controversy following measures to diversify the student body.

An uncertain future

In her email and video communications, Kornbluth reiterated the necessity for MIT to obey the law while also continuing efforts to promote diversity on campus. Kornbluth wrote, "We will do everything within the law that we can to sustain the MIT community as we know it."

Kornbluth underscored the importance of education, saying that "I know that education is the most... powerful way for individuals to change their circumstances," but added that in light of the decision, "we need to reimagine how we educate our whole population, so everyone has a fair shot."

She concluded her video message with the following note: "I am working closely with faculty and administrative leaders to understand the decision fully, and we will dedicate ourselves to maintaining the diverse and inclusive environment that we have worked so hard to build."

Meet your fellow tech staff.
(aka, your new 3 a.m. pset support group)



Are you a tetris ninja?

Use your powers for good!

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...by joining the production department at The Tech!

CLIQUE COUNTING

Count cliques the comp. sci. way with staff writer Alor Sahoo. **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 2**

WANDERING AROUND TIANMU

Read about Campus Life editor Vivian Hir's experiences in Tianmu, Taipei. **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 3**



FUN PAGES

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SUDOKU

XKCD

... and more!

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WEATHER

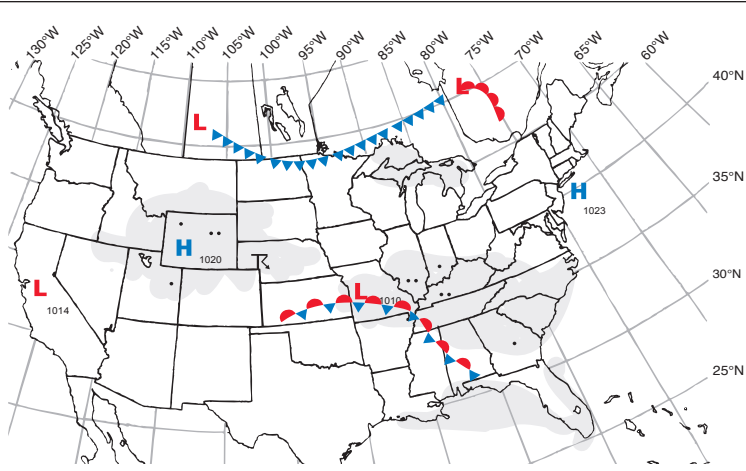
A brief stormy pause to an otherwise pleasant weekend

By Phoebe Lin
CHIEF METEOROLOGIST

Clear skies are coming to Boston as high pressure moves in from the west. Cloud cover will increase into Friday, when heavy rain and some thunderstorms are expected to move through the Northeast. Then, pleasant temperatures and comfortable humidities will return over

the weekend. It's a great time to enjoy some outdoor activities in Boston as the summer term is wrapping up!

The Northeast seems to have been spared this week as the South has been baking through another dangerous heat-wave. We hope you're staying hydrated, staying cool, and checking on any loved ones that may be in danger to the heat.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, August 3, 2023

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts		Precipitation Symbols		Other Symbols
	High Pressure	Low Pressure	Snow	Rain	
H	High Pressure	L	Shows	Light	Fog
L	Low Pressure	L	*	*	Thunderstorm
§	Hurricane	L	**	**	Haze
		L	***	***	

Extended Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny. High around 78°F (26°C). South winds 10-12 mph.
Tonight: Chance showers. Low around 65°F (18°C). South winds 10-15 mph.
Tomorrow: Rainy. High around 76°F (24°C) and low around 64°F (18°C). South winds 10-15 mph.
Saturday: Mostly sunny. High around 83°F (28°C) and low around 60°F (16°C). North winds around 10 mph.
Sunday: Mostly sunny. High around 82°F (28°C) and low around 63°F (17°C). Southwest winds around 8 mph.

ALOR'S LORE

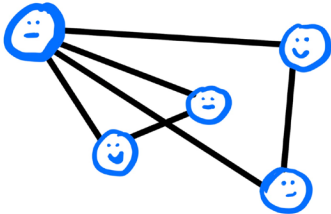
Clique Counting

Cliques in computer science... and socially

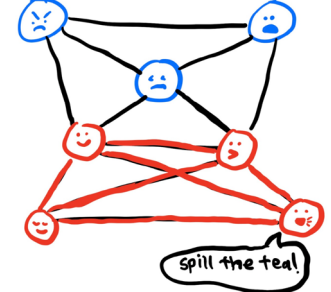
By Alor Sahoo
STAFF WRITER

I've been frustrated by the idea of cliques, both in computer science and socially. Let me explain. The computer science "clique maximization" problem kinda goes like this: Within a graph, find and list all the biggest cliques, where a clique is a group of vertices where everyone is connected to everyone else.

This is a graph, with smiley-face nodes and edges between them:

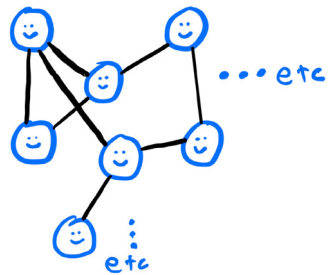


Here's an example of a graph, with the biggest clique colored in red:

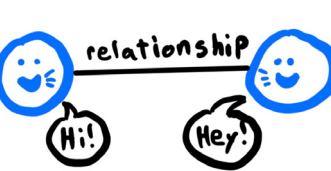


How easy of a problem is it to solve? Very roughly, it's considered a "hard" problem to solve computationally. That's kind of funny to me, given how "cliques" also used to describe exclusive social groups.

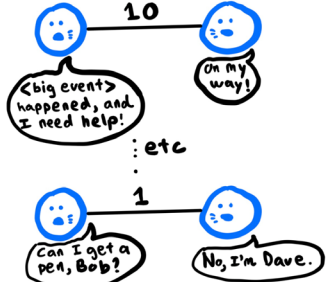
To integrate these two different views on cliques, here's a little walkthrough. Imagine that



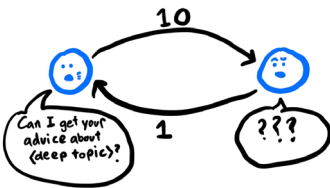
everyone in the MIT community is represented by a node:



There's an edge between two nodes if and only if they are acquainted with each other. Clearly, not every relationship is equally strong. So let's assign some arbitrary weights to represent the "value" of a relationship. Yes, this is very reductive:



Hold on again, though. In some relationships, there's some unevenness, with one person putting in more energy than the other. For another oversimplification, let's direct our edges, so that we can now have up to 2 weighted edges between any 2 nodes. Here's an example where the left person feels they have a stronger relationship with the right than the other way around:



Of course, there are even more complications. For example, each person/node can only expand certain amounts of energy socially. Graphically, this limits the number of weights "exiting" a specific node, unless it stresses itself out:



My eventual conclusion is the following: people can't be friends with everyone they might possibly want to be friends with.

When I first spawned onto the MIT social graph during CPW, I looked for people nearby — people with similar experiences, interests, vibes, etc. At first, I was confused: the connections I'd formed seemed both sparse and weak. At CPW, there were obviously some people that I knew, and that knew of me, through Instagram or Messenger — but that was mostly it. As I walked through and across and over all the subgraphs of MIT, I felt disconnected:



This disconnect was surprisingly OK for me, as long as it was temporary. Surely, I just needed to wander through some more vertices, cross some edges, and then I'd stumble into the right group of people. In other words, I wanted to solve my personal MIT clique maximization problem — and fast.

This epiphany hit me in the middle of CPW. Boba started taking its toll on my tastebuds, so I went to grab a real lunch at a dining hall. Nearby some dozen or so prefrosh were hanging out. I grabbed my food, sat at a nearby table, and while wolfing down rice pilaf, I caught casual bits of conversation — a "Mrs. So-and-So" and a "remember when XYZ did ABC?" and so on. Then it hit me: *Duh, they all went to the same high school.*

It stung knowing that I'd never get that big, nostalgic high school-MIT crossover. Even when I met people I'd already known, I felt like I was missing out. Someone else always seemed to either be a part of cooler graphs or more graphs.

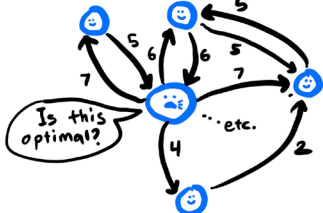
By Fall 2022, I started to realize that optimizing my number of connections wasn't a healthy goal. The primary driving force was exhaustion: I was too tired to "keep up." It worked out.

Later on, I started thinking about a new aspect of the "clique maximization" problem: what even defines one? When do group events go from special and inclusive to irritating and exclusive? Can a club that hangs out outside meetings become a clique? Was I part of one?

For sure, some of these groups are bound to be tight-knit: living groups, certain clubs, pset groups for grueling classes, and so on. But a lot of them are much bigger, once you include MEng students, alumni, friends of friends, etc.

But what was the biggest one? Hard to define, but an obvious guess is each graduating class, if that counts. Between sophomore ring delivery to annual formals to fancy senior spring events, they're pretty cohesive, as much as a group of more than a thousand students can be.

So, as a quick exercise, I decided to calculate my "MIT friend age" average. Here's how it works: define 0 to be a brand-new frosh, 4 to be a graduated senior. My average? 2.3. Was that a bad thing? I didn't know. Was I just not "froshy" enough? I was pretty worried, and for a few weeks, I repeatedly asked myself:



Now, a semester later, I don't have the answers.

But I also don't care. Because all approaches quantifying any aspect of this problem boil down to the same ideas: First of all, that being closer with some people means being more distant with others. Second of all, there is no perfect way of reconciling this difference whenever two corners of the MIT social graph intersect.

As a result, I'm giving up on the MIT clique maximization problem. I've spent way too long adding edges to my node, adjusting the weights, and removing edges, and so on. I'm going to just let my edges naturally form, break, weaken, and strengthen as the years go by. Most importantly, I learned that tinkering with my graph and trying to "solve" this unproblematic problem is futile: even the computer scientists admit that.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3 – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23

THE MEG 2: THE TRENCH
(FRI, AUG 4)



MAMAMOO: MY CON THE MOVIE (WED, AUG 9)



THE LAST VOYAGE OF DEMETER (FRI, AUG 11)



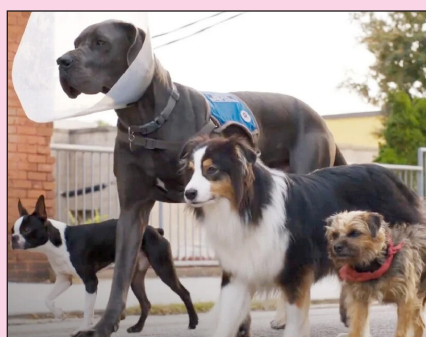
3 DAYS IN MALAY (FRI, AUG 11)



**BLUE BEETLE
(FRI, AUG 18)**



STRAYS
(WED, AUG 18)



HEARTSTOPPER (S2)
(THU, AUG 3)



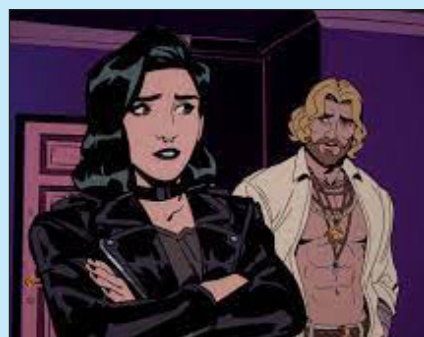
ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING (S3) (TUE, AUG 8)



STAR WARS: AHSOKA (WED. AUG 23)



STRAY GODS
(THU, AUG 10)



OVERWATCH 2
(THU, AUG 10)



THE COSMIC WHEEL SISTERHOOD (MON. AUG 16)



Solution, page 3

- 01 Caramel-colored carbonated drink
- 05 Arches National Park state
- 09 Colorful cube creator
- 14 Frosts
- 15 Religious affiliation of the average 16-across
- 16 Present-day Persian
- 17 Like an easy job
- 18 "The Spiderwick Chronicles" author
- 20 "Howl" poet Ginsberg
- 22 Roof overhangs
- 23 "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" actress
- 26 TikTok opening screen, for short
- 29 "We ____ The Champions" (sporting event anthem)
- 30 "The ____ from U.N.C.L.E."
- 31 Cookie Monster's street
- 33 Peppy
- 36 SeaWorld star Shamu
- 37 "Melrose Place" actress
- 42 Wheel shaft
- 43 Foursome
- 44 Show promo

48 Chinese-American chicken
general

51 Tax form ID

52 Paige Matthews' actress in
"Charmed"

56 Slimy garden gastropod

57 Santa _____

58 Wedding day helper (or a
hint to 18-, 23-, 37-, and
52-across)

63 Gently mix

64 Spanish ladies

65 Christmas carol?

66 Off-white shade

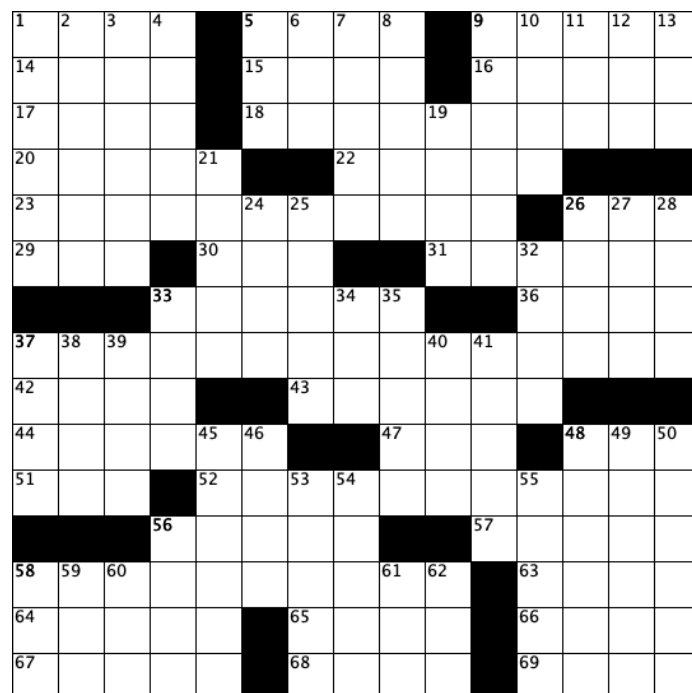
67 James Bond, for one

68 Sporty car roof

69 If's partner

01 Noisy summer bug
02 Eye-related
03 Nielsen of "Airplane!"
04 Bonfire remnants
05 Seat, informally
06 Howe'er
07 Suffered
08 Not haram

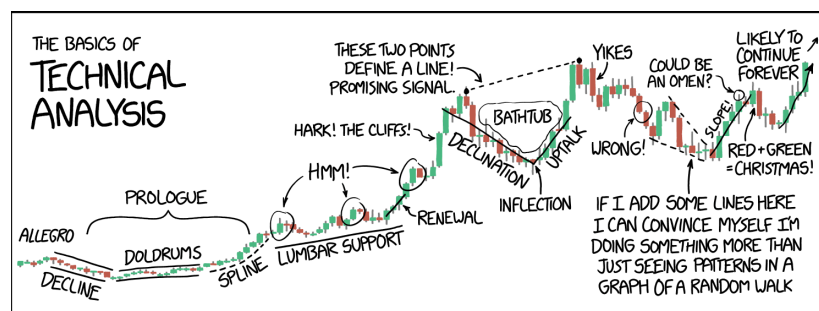
- 10 Web links
- 11 Sheep statement
- 12 "Monsters, ____"
- 13 Messaging app
- 19 Saint Laurent of fashion
- 21 Female folklore figure
- 24 Broccoli ____
- 25 Sluggish
- 26 Meter reading
- 27 Village People hit
- 28 Prickly ____
- 32 Auctioneer cry
- 33 5-across natives
- 34 Pub pint
- 35 Tribal emblem
- 37 They can be felt
- 38 Former flames
- 39 Mathematician Turing
- 40 Freeing foam footwear
- 41 Roo's mom
- 45 Writer Hemingway
- 46 Expression of pride?
- 48 Livestreaming service for gamers
- 49 Like Seneca's
"Apocolocyntosis"
- 50 Hitting blackjack after



blackjack
53 One of the five senses
54 "The Waste Land" poet
55 Beginning
56 Ugly Duckling's adult stage
58 Rx overseer

59 Ants on a ____ (fun snack)
60 2010s boy band ____
Direction
61 P for Plato
62 Chop

[2101] Technical Analysis



[2772] Commem. Plaque

