

# Grantee Selection Strategies and the SCOTUS Race-Conscious Admissions Decision

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# Supreme Court Decision on Harvard and UNC Admissions



- The decision governs undergraduate, graduate, and professional school admissions
- The court
  - invalidated the consideration of an applicant's racial classification (e.g., a checked box) while
  - upholding the consideration of an applicant's self-expressed lived experiences related to their racial or ethnic background (e.g., essay responses)

# Supreme Court Majority Opinion

- “[N]othing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.”
- The “touchstone of an individual’s identity [must be with respect to] challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned”—not “the color of their skin.”



# Dept. of Justice/Dept. of Education Guidance



“[I]nstitutions of higher education **may continue to articulate missions and goals tied to student body diversity** and may use all legally permissible methods to achieve that diversity...**schools can continue to use strategies that remove barriers and expand opportunity for all.**”

- Targeted outreach, recruitment, and pathway programs
- Collection of demographic data
- Evaluation of admissions [and selection] policies
- Yield and retention strategies and programs

# AAMC Holistic Review in Admissions Framework™

- Emphasizes the importance of giving individualized consideration
- Provides operational guidance
- Applies a balanced approach

# holistic review /n.

...a **flexible, individualized way** of assessing an applicant's capabilities,

by which **balanced consideration** is given to **experiences, attributes, and academic metrics** (EAM) and, when considered in combination,

how the individual **might contribute value** as a medical or health care student and future physician or health care professional.

Source: *AAMC Advancing Holistic Review*

# CORE PRINCIPLE 1

**In a holistic selection process, criteria are**



*Broad-based*



*Linked to institutional mission and goals*



*Promote diversity and inclusion as essential to excellence*

# CORE PRINCIPLE 2

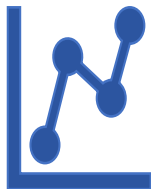
**A balance of experiences, attributes, and academic metrics (EAM) is**



Used to assess applicants with the intent of creating a ***richly diverse interview and selection pool***



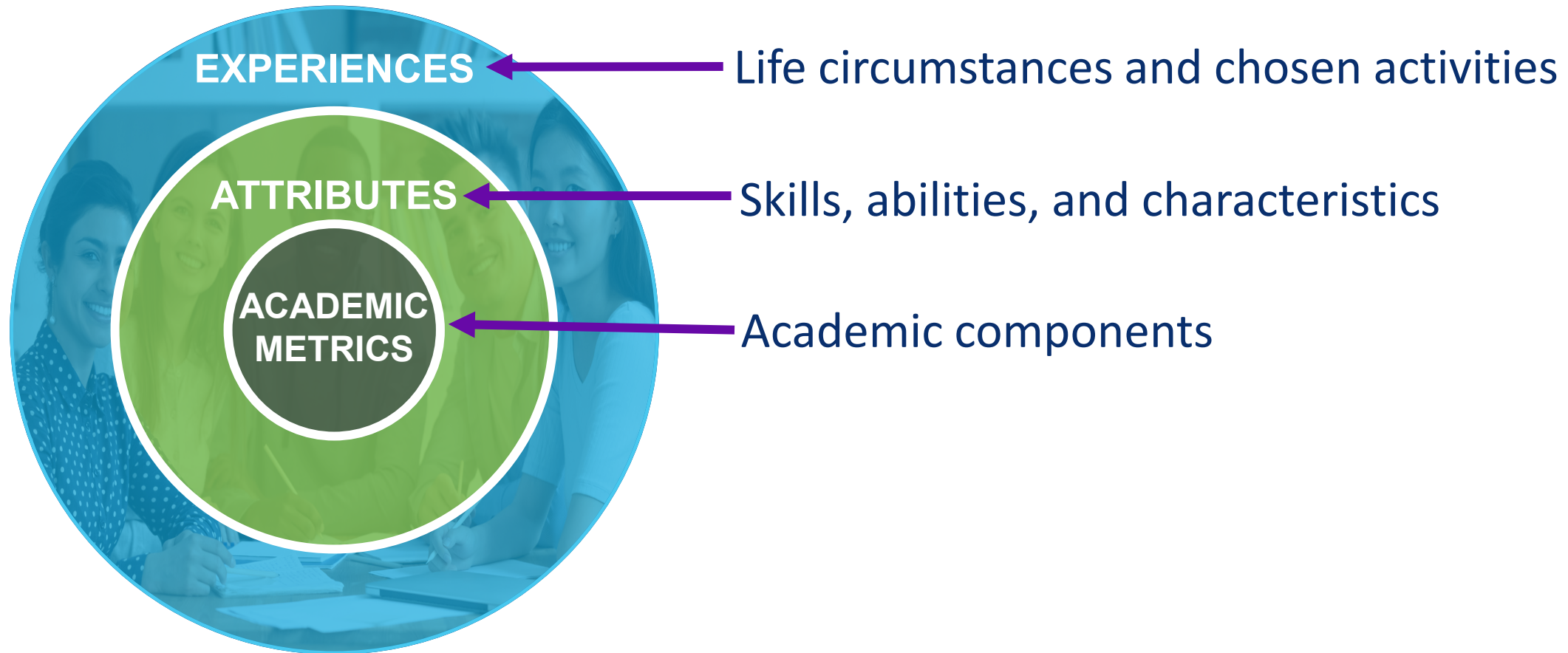
***Applied equitably*** across the entire candidate pool



***Supported by local performance data*** linked to a likelihood of success as a medical student at that school



# Experiences, Attributes, and Academic Metrics (EAM) Tool



# CORE PRINCIPLE 3

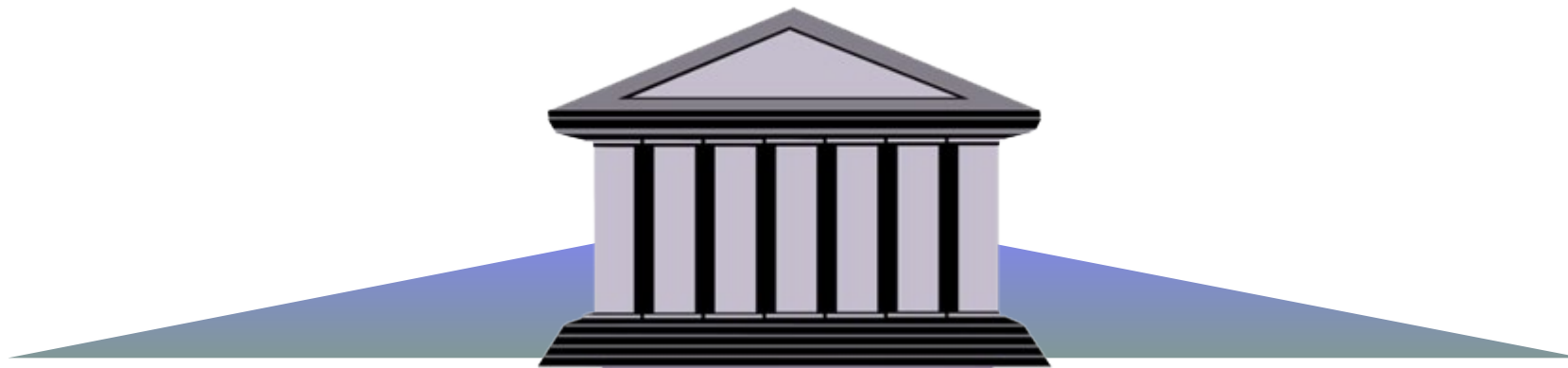
## Admissions staff and committee members



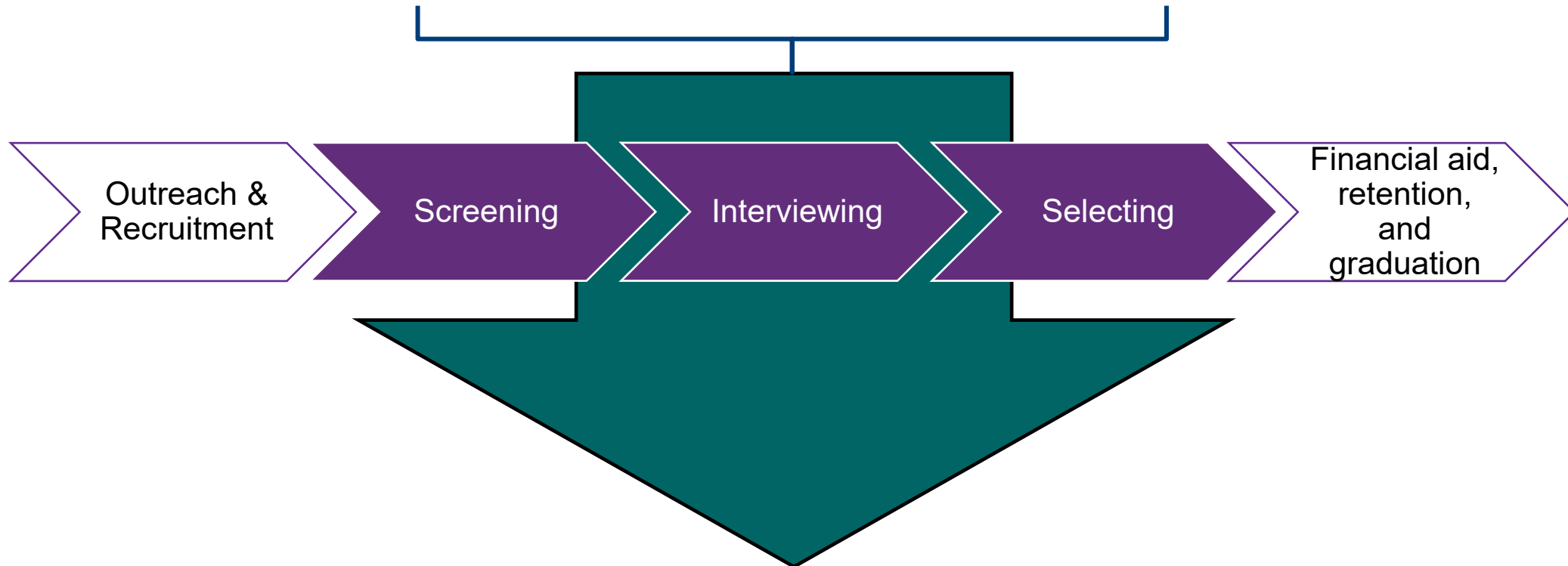
***Give individualized consideration*** to how each applicant may contribute to the learning environment and practice as a physician



***Weigh and balance*** the range of criteria needed in a class to achieve the outcomes desired by the institution



## Institutional Mission and Goals



## Selection Criteria

# Effective Practices: Groundwork



(Re)Assess, (re)affirm, and clearly communicate who you are, what your mission and goals are, and what you aim to achieve through your grant program(s).



Ground your review and acceptance criteria in your mission, goals, and research or workforce needs.



Develop shared definitions for these criteria.

# Effective Practices: Groundwork



Develop/affirm and communicate a clear, shared definition of diversity and its relationship with your mission.



Ensure your public facing materials clearly convey your mission, goals, definition of diversity, and review criteria.



Revise or design application and questions to yield the information you seek about applicants' experiences, attributes, and motivations in addition to technical information.

# Effective Practices: Review



Use a rubric to assess experiences, attributes, and metrics.



Train reviewers on the mission, goals, process, implicit bias, and how to use the rubric.



Have reviewers consider the context of the applicant.



Use an asset or strengths-based lens when reviewing applications.

# Effective Practices: Administration and evaluation



Review outreach, dissemination, and recruitment strategies and platforms to determine whether they're attracting the applicants you seek.



Regularly evaluate your processes and practices to assess the effectiveness, value, and necessity of policies and criteria.

# Key Takeaways

- The Harvard/UNC decision applies to higher education admissions and what colleges and universities can consider.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to holistic review.
- Lean toward racial and ethnic group inclusivity, not exclusivity in grants, fellowships, DEI initiatives, and hiring.
- The DOJ/DOE guidance provides good grounding, even outside of colleges and universities.



# Resources

[AAMC Diversity in Medical School Admissions webpage](#)

[AAMC Holistic Review webpage](#)

- [Holistic Review Primers](#)
- [Holistic Admissions Considerations for the Admissions Cycle](#)

[College Board's Access and Diversity Collaborative webpage](#)

Department of Justice/Department of Education

- [Dear Colleague Letter](#)
- [Questions and Answers](#)



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**Elson S. Floyd**  
**College of Medicine**



Leila E. Harrison,  
PhD, MA, MEd

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Vice Dean for Admissions, Student Affairs,  
and Alumni Engagement

Chair, AAMC Committee on Admissions  
(Beginning Nov 2023)







# Mission

To solve problems in challenging health care environments across the state of Washington

Focus on rural and underserved communities



# Vision

Washingtonians living longer, better





# Our Goals

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Increase the number of physicians serving in Washington State's workforce.

Attract students interested in taking care of patients in challenging health care environments, including rural areas and vulnerable populations.

Be informed by the communities and populations we serve to enhance our educational, research and clinical missions.

# To Receive a Secondary Application

Meet 3 of 4 “from Washington” ties or legal WA residency

## Washington Connections

- Born in WA
- WA childhood address
- Graduated from a WA High School
- Parent/Guardian lives in WA

Once Secondary is Submitted:

- All MCAT scores and GPAs are REMOVED from the application
- No human ever sees these academic metrics!

## Balancing Academic Metrics

AMP programmed to check  
Published on website

Enrolled Member of a Federally Recognized Tribe

Legally can consider enrolled Tribal membership

Alignment with our Mission

Asked how they feel they align with our mission

Experiences w/ Rural or Underserved Communities

Asked to share these experiences

Commitment to Washington

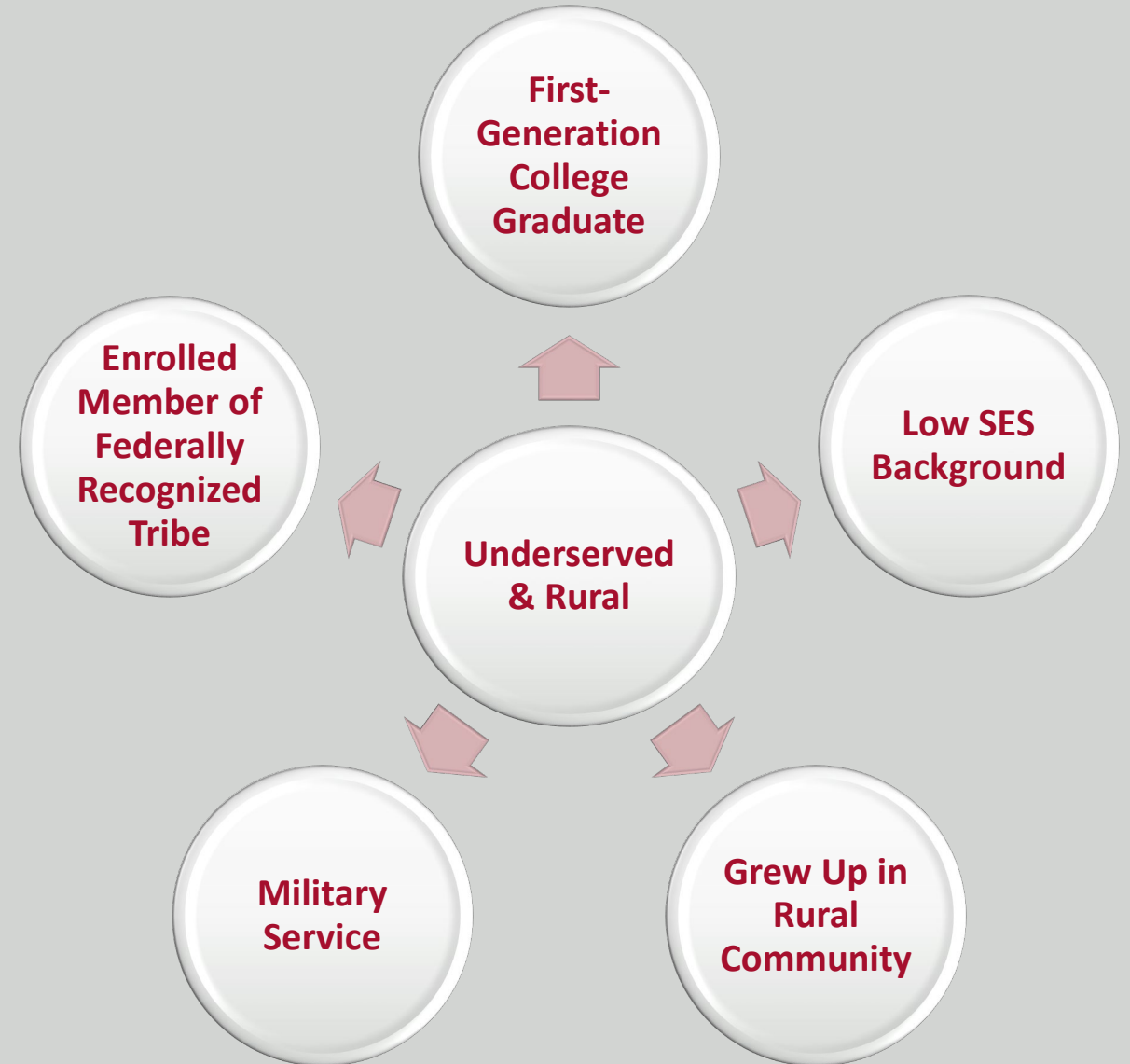
Asked to share the years they have lived in Washington and their commitment to serving Washington as a physician



# Secondary Application



# Applicant Backgrounds





# Enrollment of Mission-Aligned Groups 2017 - 2023



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
Elson S. Floyd  
College of Medicine

**Washington State  
Census:  
20.2% of same  
groups**

