

Group looks at legality of race-based awards

BY SETH PEAVEY
STAFF WRITER

The College Board hopes to give universities more guidance in evaluating the constitutionality of their race-oriented financial aid programs.

In 2003, the Supreme Court ruled against the University of Michigan's point-based affirmative action policy for undergraduate admissions but in favor of the university's affirmative action policy for law school admissions.

But neither ruling addressed the subject of race as it relates to financial aid.

The College Board will provide analysis of how these court rulings apply to the area of financial aid and will make recommendations this month that colleges can use to ensure the constitutionality of their scholarship programs.

"I know a lot of our colleges were looking at their (financial aid) programs to make sure that they complied, but there weren't a lot that had a correlation with the Michigan case," said Cheryl

Fields, director of public affairs of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

"There were some scholarships, mainly at private institutions, that were investigated and changed," Fields said. But most public colleges have not been affected.

In the UNC system, there are no solely race-based financial aid scholarships, but diversity can be considered, said Rose Mary Stelma, director of student financial aid at East Carolina University.

Diversity includes factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, geography and disability.

Leslie Winner, UNC-system vice president for legal affairs, said the Michigan ruling has had relatively little impact in North Carolina.

"There has never been a court case against the UNC system dealing with financial aid policy," she said.

"We were already not taking race into account in admissions. And in financial aid there was (state) legislation pre-dating the Michigan

ruling."

In 2002, the N.C. General Assembly consolidated all public scholarship programs into a single fund, titled UNC Campus Scholarships. The legislation also required that all colleges in the UNC system submit their financial aid plans to the system's Office of the President.

"Each campus defines its own criteria," Stelma said. "But all of those plans have to be reviewed and approved."

Legal counsels at the individual colleges in the system also review the financial aid plans before they are submitted, Stelma said.

The College Board manual will not provide strict rules for these legal counsels to follow but instead will provide them with guidelines to aid them in their evaluations.

"I think it's a good idea," Winner said. "But I don't think it will have much of an impact."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — America's employers, hit by high energy bills, turned more cautious in March and boosted hiring by just 110,000 jobs, the fewest in eight months. Still, that was enough to push the unemployment rate down.

The newest jobs report, released Friday by the Labor Department, offered another mixed picture of the country's hiring climate. The labor market has been one piece of the economy that has struggled the most to get back to full throttle after the 2001 recession.

"America is not flicking on the hiring switch," said Richard Yamarone, economist at Argus Research Corp. "Right now businesses have to contend with skyrocketing energy and commodity costs, but there is little they can do about that. The one big cost that they can control is labor. That is being done by tightening the hiring reins."

Nevertheless, the labor market was able to accommodate enough people to drop the unemployment rate from 5.4 percent to 5.2 percent, matching January's figure.

On Wall Street, stocks fell, partly reflecting investor jitters over oil prices, which surged to a record high Friday.

Payroll growth, as measured by a survey of businesses, slowed in March. Job losses at factories and in the retail sector tempered gains in professional and business services, construction, education and health services and in other industries.

March's payroll gain of 110,000 was roughly half the number economists expected. That was down from February's 243,000 new jobs.

The seasonally adjusted overall civilian unemployment rate, which dropped to 5.2 percent in March, is based on a survey of 60,000 households. It showed that 357,000 people said they found employment last month, outpacing the number of people who couldn't find work.

Economists tend to put more stock, however, in the much broader business survey of 400,000 work sites that is used to calculate the payroll figures. The two surveys often offer seemingly conflicting pictures of what is happening in the labor market.

NCAA

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he was expecting big crowds after Saturday's win.

Chapel Hill Sportswear Manager Holly Desmond said she is preparing her store by making sure it is well-stocked with T-shirts.

John Lindo, owner of Tarheel Book Store, which also carries UNC memorabilia, said he thinks he could sell anything with the National Championship logo on it, from T-shirts and hats to staplers.

"At this point the possibilities are endless for things with 'National Championship' on it," he said.

The Tar Heels play tonight against Illinois. The game is set to tip off at 9:21 p.m.

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PLATFORM

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will allow him to target other platform planks.

"A huge part of what we're trying to do involves lobbying with people," he said.

"And when you have 10 organizations that have similar interests, it makes perfect sense ... to help them come together to pool their resources."

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RAPE

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Haven program will provide more staff and faculty with training on handling rape crises, giving more students confidants after assaults.

Several other resources are available for victims of sexual assault.

Counseling and Psychological Services aids those who have been assaulted, and victims can file charges in the honor system if the perpetrator is a UNC student.

Victims also can issue no contact orders if the assailant is a student so they don't feel uncomfortable being confronted.

If students think they are in immediate danger, a safe room is available for them on campus. And the University provides assistance in reporting rape to the Chapel Hill Police Department.

Manning said the Office of the Dean of Students is willing to work with victims and give them time out of school to recuperate.

"The process of healing from sexual assault can be a very long process," she said. "It can take years."

To highlight the issue and UNC's efforts at solutions, members of the White Ribbon Campaign will don indigo blue T-shirts Thursday as a symbol of their commitment to ending violence against women.

Abrams is working with the campaign to broaden its influence from UNC to Chapel Hill as a whole.

"A good percent of offenders are men," Abrams said. "We as a community have to step up and work to end them."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

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