January 10, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
Executive Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

The leaders of the undersigned higher education associations join me in bringing to your attention two cases before the Supreme Court that are of critical importance to public and private colleges and universities in the United States. The cases - *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*, which both involve the use of affirmative action in institutional admissions policies - will be argued before the high court this spring.

Diversity is essential to the basic purposes and mission of the vast majority of institutions of higher education: to enable students to lead "the examined life"; to prepare them to maintain the robust democracy in which we live; and to prepare them to be productive participants in the national economy. Each of these aims of higher education entails breaking down barriers that isolate the student. Racial and ethnic diversity is not the only kind of diversity higher education institutions need to advance their purposes and missions, but for most it is a necessary aspect. Moreover, research findings show that the interactions diversity allows and institutional commitment to diversity are associated with success in college, growth in acceptance of people of different races, low racial tension, retention of minority students, and other educational benefits for white and minority students.

American higher education is considered the best in the world because of America's long-standing tradition of government deference to educators' judgment on academic questions, such as what combination of students yields the best educational outcomes. The freedom to pursue diversity is especially worthy of protection because diversity

file:///C|/Documents%20and%20Settings/Tom%20Borzo/Des...website%20html%20files/issues/HigherEdLtr1.10.03.html (1 of 2) [2/22/08 10:38:44 AM]
benefits all students.

For all of these reasons, we hope that your administration will support the effort to preserve diversity in higher education by filing an *amicus curiae* brief in support of the University of Michigan. The persuasive power of the White House could prove significant to a positive outcome before the Supreme Court. We urge you to join us in this important effort.

Sincerely,

David Ward
President

DW/cms

On behalf of:

ACT, Inc.
American Association for Higher Education
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American College Personnel Association
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Independent Colleges
Educational Testing Service
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
United Negro College Fund, Inc.
University Continuing Education Association