

# EXHIBIT 209

# Editorials

## STAFF EDITORIAL

### It's Time for a New Legacy

"What did I do wrong?" It's a question that many Stuyvesant students find themselves asking come November and April once they receive rejection letters from some of the nation's top universities. After four years of working hard in one of the best schools in New York City, it's hard to imagine anything other than a college acceptance at the end of the line. But even our top artists, mathematicians, writers, athletes, and scientists fall prey to what seems like an unreasonable amount of rejections and deferrals. Obviously, this devastates star students, but many are suffering due to something completely out of their control—race. The majority of the Stuyvesant population is Asian American, and Asian Americans are considered to be the least desirable racial group at many universities, many of which enforce an unspoken "Asian quota." As a result, even the most qualified Asian American Stuyvesant students are receiving rejection letters simply because of their ethnicity.

There are just as many college-ready, elite Asian American students across this nation as white students. However, due to legacy practices and the need to preserve "tradition," Ivy League schools are restricting the number of Asian Americans they accept. Legacy admissions policies, where students are admitted on a basis of donation-potential alone (often due to having had family already attend the college), have become standard in college admissions offices. These students are far less qualified than non-legacy students of any race, but because they come from predominantly white, upper-class families they are considered more desirable. Recently, the Harvard Crimson published a statistic that 30 percent of legacy applicants are admitted, about four times the regular acceptance rate. That is unacceptable. Ivy league schools fail to carry out the holistic admissions process they promise in information sessions, giving priority to legacy students instead. In comparison, Stuyvesant's Harvard acceptance rate over the last four years is 10.17 percent, and that's including legacy students.

Students of all races at

Stuyvesant are being looked over because of legacy policies. However, statistics indicate that Asian Americans are being shut out more than any other group. Harvard, one of the schools many Stuyvesant students dream of attending, is infamous for both its favorable policies toward legacy students and its unfavorable policies toward Asian American students. Along with other elite universities on the east coast, Harvard maintains specific percentages of each racial group. According to the New York Times, the percentage of Asian students has stayed around 20 percent since the 1990s. Meanwhile, white representation at the school stays close to 60 percent. In the California system, which implements race-blind admissions policies, Asian representative is closer to 40 percent. This difference indicates that Harvard and other Ivy League schools either have utterly different systems of assessing their applicants or they have determined that Asian students are less desirable as a group.

This bias against Asian students isn't seen only in admission demographics. Take the SAT, a test we all have ample experience with. For high school students, it is often considered to be one of the most important steps into acing the college admissions process: a no-nonsense way to show the world your abilities through a cold hard score. But a recent analysis of Princeton University's admissions statistics by Thomas Espenshade revealed that, in order to gain acceptance to this prestigious university, an Asian American student needed to score an average of 140 points higher than a white applicant and 450 higher than an African American one on an SAT scored out of 1600. The numbers speak for themselves.

To think that these students are being denied acceptance because of their race makes it easy to lose faith in the college process. That hard work and a dazzling resume may not pay off in the way we've all been told is incredibly disheartening to any student, Asian American or otherwise.

It'd be easy to point to these students and say that Harvard

rejections will not ruin their lives. But for those who make it past the quotas, a greater hurdle looms: the price of tuition. At Stuyvesant, it is no secret that many of us come from immigrant families that cannot afford to pay college tuition - we're a Title I school, meaning that 40 percent or more of the students in attendance are on free or reduced lunch. A result of this is an "Ivy or bust" attitude in many Stuyvesant families. Why is that? It's not due to ignorance or arrogance. It's because Ivies and other wealthy universities tend to be more far more generous with their aid packages. Other respected private institutions will tell you to take out a loan, a loan that will follow you for the rest of your life. This is the real problem. Tuition is shooting up and little is being done to combat it. Our nation's top universities would rather continue a policy of race-based affirmative action than actively help students who are living in poverty. Across the board, students from any racial group are more likely to attend college if their family is affluent. A study conducted by Denver University showed that students in the top quartile were 25 times more likely to attend elite universities than those from the lowest quartile. The "American dream" is shattered for many Stuyvesant students every spring because they can't afford the education that will allow them to raise their families' economic status.

Rather than focusing on maintaining status quo racial breakdowns, colleges need to promote admissions policies with emphasis on merit rather than parental alma matters, and class diversity rather than racial diversity. What difference does the color of one's skin make if everybody is coming from similar upper middle class backgrounds and has similarly affluent parents back home? Learning alongside students from all walks of life can give you more insight into how the world works than taking a class as perfectly mixed as the cover of an admissions brochure. Colleges need to start playing fair and granting education to those who truly deserve it.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

By Maria N. Nedwidek, Ph.D.  
Re: Defining What Defines Us

Thank you for the flattering description of my Genetics Research course in your feature titled "Defining What Defines Us," which was published on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 (Volume CIII, No. 7). I write to thank the gracious participants and contributors to the course's major lab component, which is the Research of the Genetics Research course. While the article mentions the term project, it does not specify the nature of the genome analysis exercise students accomplish when they do the project. Students engage in an intensive, two-day analysis of the sequences of their own physical genome, spending significant time after the lab work to analyze the results using computer algorithms. In the analysis, students look for precise correlations between their indi-

vidual DNA sequence data and their ethnic backgrounds. For the seven years that this unique and rare opportunity has been a part of my fall semester Genetics course, the research conducted by my students has been carried out at specialized educational lab facilities. To complete the work, students have taken excursions to the DNA Learning Centers at New Hyde Park in previous years, at Harlem this year, and at Stuyvesant last year with the gracious participation of a team of college research scientists under my guidance over two consecutive weekends.

The genome field lab exercises were conceived and are run by scientists at the prestigious Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the research home of Nobel Prize winner James D. Watson. The field labs are partially funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a major biomedical research philanthropy. Since

2006, students taking Genetics Research have been subsidized by grants from our Parents' Association and the Stuyvesant Alumni Association to perform this in-depth genome analysis. Many students have commented positively on the immersion experience of doing these labs and its personal impact in terms of allowing them to examine a part of their own genomes. Stuyvesant's biology department and I are grateful to our benefactors, to the Stuyvesant administration, and to the countless teachers and parents who have graciously consented, and will continue to consent, to allow Genetics Research students to participate in this enlightening, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of self-discovery.

Sincerely yours,  
Maria N. Nedwidek, Ph.D.  
Biology Department  
Stuyvesant High School

## The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse of the Student Body"

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