# Napa Valley College's Superpower: Knowing Our "Y"



Thuy Thi Nguyen
Keynote Address
Flex Day, August 2025





#### School Drive Aids Refugees



Dien, left, receiving the donation from Monica.

KOBE — St. Michael's International School donated a check for 120,565 yen Thursday to Vietnamese refugees presently housed at the Rokko Kaikan here.

The check was handed to Dien Tai Nguyen, a representative of the refugees, by Monica Barraclough, a four-year-old British girl from the school's nursery department, in a presentation ceremony held at St. Michael's chapel from 11.30 a.m.

"Thank you very much," said Dien in English. "Really I have no words to express my thanks for your sincere gift. I am impressed by your consideration to the people of Vietnam who are leading a hard life in Kobe." Monica smiled and made a bow.

The fund was obtained through the school's "Good

Neighbor Week." observed from Nov. 14 to 18. Every day, the 200 students, from kindergarten to advanced classes and English Language School. spared 45 minutes at lunchtime to hold various events to raise the money.

They operated games, sold stationery goods, flowers, coffee, cakes and cookies brought from home, held auctions and made sandwiches. Most of the items were sold for 10 or 20 yen, prices even small children could afford.

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(SOURCE: SOKUNTHARY SVAY FOUND THIS IN THE FOREIGN DESK RECORDS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES ARCHIVES AT THE BROOKE RUSSELL ASTOR READING ROOM OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.)





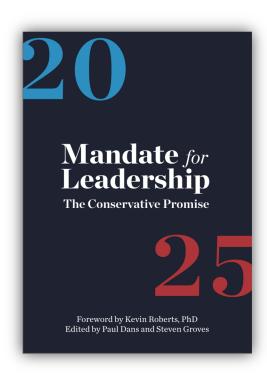




A new school year, with an increasingly challenging political & legal landscape nationally . . . \*\* What FEELINGS does this topic bring up for you?

Join at slido.com #2277





"The next conservative President must make the institutions of American civil society hard targets for woke culture warriors. This starts with deleting the terms sexual orientation and gender identity ("SOGI"), diversity, equity and inclusion ("DEI"), gender, gender equality, gender equity, gender awareness, gender-sensitive, abortion, reproductive health, reproductive rights, and any other term used to deprive Americans of the First Amendment rights out of every federal rule, agency regulation, contract, grant, regulation, and piece of legislation that exists."

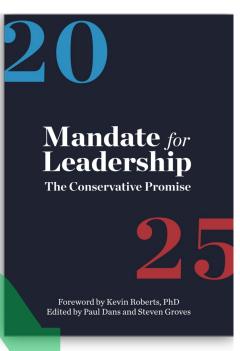


assignments in which students must defend the false idea that America is systemically racist, the theory is actively disrupting the values that hold communities together such as equality under the law and colorblindness.

- As such, lawmakers should design legislation that prevents the theory from spreading discrimination.
- For K-12 systems under their jurisdiction, federal lawmakers should adopt proposals that say no individual should receive punishment or benefits based on the color of their skin.
- Furthermore, school officials should not require students or teachers to believe that individuals are guilty or responsible for the actions of others based on race or ethnicity.

Educators should not be forced to discuss contemporary political issues but neither should they refrain from discussing certain subjects in an attempt to protect students from ideas with which they disagree. Proposals such as this should result in robust classroom discussions, not censorship. At the state level, states should require schools to post classroom materials online to provide maximum transparency to parents.

Again, specifically for K-12 systems under federal authority,
 Congress and the next Administration should support existing state
 and federal civil rights laws and add to such laws a prohibition on
 compelled speech.



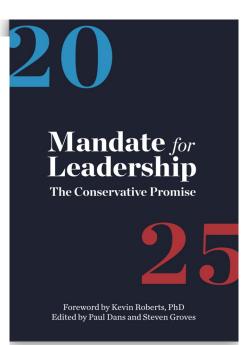


By its very design, critical race theory has an "applied" dimension, as its founders state in their essays that define the theory. Those who subscribe to the theory
believe that racism (in this case, treating individuals differently based on race) is
appropriate—necessary, even—making the theory more than merely an analytical tool to describe race in public and private life. The theory disrupts America's
Founding ideals of freedom and opportunity. So, when critical race theory is used
as part of school activities such as mandatory affinity groups, teacher training
programs in which educators are required to confess their privilege, or school

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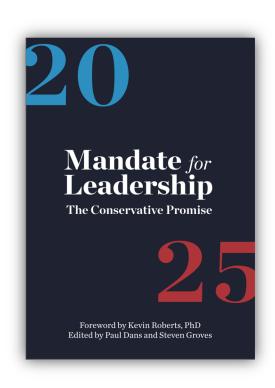
#### 2025 Presidential Transition Project

assignments in which students must defend the false idea that America is systemically racist, the theory is actively disrupting the values that hold communities together such as equality under the law and colorblindness.





## Project 2025: "Lawful"



"Restoring state and local control over education funding. As Washington begins to downsize its intervention in education, existing funding should be sent to states as grants over which they have full control, enabling states to put federal funding toward any lawful education purpose under state law."



## **Executive Order #14151**

#### January 20, 2025

- "Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing"
- Orders termination of "all discriminatory programs, including illegal DEI and 'diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility' (DEIA)" policies and programs across the federal government (including training)
- Directs the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), assisted by the Attorney General and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), to coordinate with agencies to terminate federal programs they deem discriminatory
- Agencies must give OMB a "list" of all "Federal grantees who received Federal funding to provide or advance DEI, DEIA, or "environmental justice" programs, services, or activities since January 20, 2021."

## **Executive Order #14173**

## January 21, 2025

- "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity"
- Rescinded several DEI EOs including:
  - ◆EO 11246/the Equal Employment Opportunity Act which required federal contractors to affirmatively prevent discrimination.
  - ◆New EO states actors "have adopted and actively use dangerous, demeaning, and immoral race- and sex-based preferences," and that these DEI practices "can violate the civilrights laws of this Nation."
  - ◆Orders OFCCP to "immediately cease" promoting diversity or engaging in "workforce balancing" on protected categories GARCIA HERNANDEZ SA

## **Executive Order #14190**

#### January 29, 2025

- "Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling"
- Within 90 days "the Secretary of Education, ..., in consultation with the Attorney General, shall provide an Ending Indoctrination Strategy"
  - ◆Calls for a summary of "All Federal funding sources and streams, including grants or contracts, that directly or indirectly support or subsidize the instruction, advancement, or promotion of gender ideology or discriminatory equity ideology"
  - ◆Calls for a plan on "eliminating Federal funding or support for illegal and discriminatory treatment and indoctrination in K-12 schools, including based on…discriminatory equity ideology"



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

#### THE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY

February 14, 2025

#### Dear Colleague:

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin is illegal and morally reprehensible. Accordingly, I write to clarify and reaffirm the nondiscrimination obligations of schools and other entities that receive federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education (Department). This letter explains and reiterates existing legal requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution, and other relevant authorities.

In recent years, American educational institutions have discriminated against students on the basis of race, including white and Asian students, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds and low-income families. These institutions' embrace of pervasive and repugnant race-based preferences and other forms of racial discrimination have emanated throughout every facet of academia. For example, colleges, universities, and K-12 schools have routinely used race as a factor in admissions, financial aid, hiring, training, and other institutional programming. In a shameful echo of a darker period in this country's history, many American schools and universities even encourage segregation by race at graduation ceremonies and in dormitories and other facilities.



# Judge strikes down Education Department guidance against school diversity programs

Politics Aug 14, 2025 5:57 PM EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Thursday struck down two Trump administration actions aimed at eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion programs at the nation's schools and universities.

In her ruling, U.S. District Judge Stephanie Gallagher in Maryland found that the Education Department violated the law when it threatened to cut federal funding from educational institutions that continued with DEI initiatives.

The guidance has been on hold since April when three federal judges blocked various portions of the Education Department's anti-DEI measures.





#### Office of the Attorney General Washington, D. C. 20530

July 29, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES

FROM:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

SUBJECT:

GUIDANCE FOR RECIPIENTS OF FEDERAL FUNDING

REGARDING UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

#### I. INTRODUCTION

One of our Nation's bedrock principles is that all Americans must be treated equally. Not only is discrimination based on protected characteristics illegal under federal law, but it is also dangerous, demeaning, and immoral. Yet in recent years, the federal government has turned a blind eye toward, or even encouraged, various discriminatory practices, seemingly because of their purportedly benign labels, objectives, or intentions. No longer. Going forward, the federal government will not stand by while recipients of federal funds engage in discrimination.

This guidance clarifies the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DEI") programs. Entities receiving federal funds, like all other entities subject to federal antidiscrimination laws, must ensure that their programs and activities comply with federal law and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or other protected characteristics—no matter the program's labels, objectives, or intentions. In furtherance of that requirement, this guidance identifies "Best Practices" as non-binding suggestions to help entities comply with federal antidiscrimination laws and avoid legal pitfalls; these are not mandatory requirements but rather practical recommendations to minimize the risk of violations.

Entities that receive federal financial assistance or that are otherwise subject to federal antidiscrimination laws, including educational institutions, state and local governments, and public and private employers, should review this guidance carefully to ensure all programs comply with their legal obligations.

DEI programs go by other names as well, such as Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility ("DEIA") and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging ("DEIB").



## Lawsuits Filed

#### Protection

Regarding the administration's Executive Orders, 362 lawsuits have been filed
collectively against them. In many of those related to higher education, Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion, and funding for ancillary student supports (such as
Americorps), preliminary injunctions have been granted, meaning that the law is
finding on the side of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Institutional Autonomy; and
Academic Freedom.

From Ed4All



# California Proposition 209

"[T]he state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."

1996 ballot measure, amended the CA Constitution Cal. Const., art. I, § 31, subd. (a)



# Ward off the chilling effect . . .

"...[w]hat typically happens in higher education when people are managing new legal restrictions. Research shows that the swirl of dialogue can create chilling effects far beyond laws' requirements. We need to be vigilant to this tendency...they call it repressive legalism."



# **Proposition 209**

November, 1996

# Proposition 209 Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment by State and Other Public Entities

#### **Background**

The federal, state, and local governments run many programs intended to increase opportunities for various groups--including women and racial and ethnic minority groups. These programs are commonly called "affirmative action" programs. For example, state law identifies specific goals for the participation of women-owned and minority-owned companies on work involved with state contracts. State departments are expected, but not required, to meet these goals, which include that at least 15 percent of the value of contract work should be done by minority-owned companies and at least 5 percent should be done by women-owned companies. The law requires departments, however, to reject bids from companies that have not made sufficient "good faith efforts" to meet these goals.





# CA Prop 209

#### Public Schools and Community Colleges

The measure also could affect funding for public schools (kindergarten through grade 12) and community college programs. For instance, the measure could eliminate, or cause fundamental changes to, *voluntary* desegregation programs run by school districts. (It would not, however, affect *court-ordered* desegregation programs.) Examples of desegregation spending that could be affected by the measure include the special funding given to (1) "magnet" schools (in those cases where race or ethnicity are preferential factors in the admission of students to the schools) and (2) designated "racially isolated minority schools" that are located in areas with high proportions of racial or ethnic minorities. We estimate that up to \$60 million of state and local funds spent each year on voluntary desegregation programs may be affected by the measure.

In addition, the measure would affect a variety of public school and community college programs such as counseling, tutoring, outreach, student financial aid, and financial aid to selected school districts in those cases where the programs provide preferences to individuals or schools based on race, sex, ethnicity, or national origin. Funds spent on these programs total at least \$15 million each year.

Thus, the measure could affect up to \$75 million in state spending in public schools and community colleges.

The State Constitution requires the state to spend a certain amount each year on public schools and community colleges. As a result, under most situations, the Constitution would require that funds that cannot be spent on programs because of this measure instead would have to be spent for *other* public school and community college programs.

Legislative Analyst's Office: https://lao.ca.gov/ballot/1996/prop209\_11\_1996.html



**HOW CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY** COLLEGES CAN MAKE PROGRESS **TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY IN TODAY'S LEGAL CLIMATE** 

Thuy Thi Nguyen, J.D.

Partner, Garcia Hernández Sawhney, LLP

**USC** Race and Equity Center







## **Focused Outreach**

SCOTUS

POSITION 209

Our "Why"

Race-Neutral

"Race-Conscious?"/ "Race-Based?"

Race-Based that violates Prop 209

**Compelling Interest** 

Race-Neutral

Race-Based

Race-Based that violates Equal Protection Clause "Strict Scrutiny"

#### A. Proposition 209: California Courts Provide Guidance on How Public Entities Could Still Have Race-conscious and Race-based Remedial Policies

Proposition 209 is a statewide ballot measure that amended the California Constitution, in part, that "the state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting." (Cal. Const., art. I, § 31, subd. (a).). The courts have consistently held that state and local public agencies' policies and procedures that give special scoring advantage to minority and women applicants in employment and contracting violate Proposition 209. They also nullified policies that set hiring goals and timetables for minorities and women (also known as racial and gender quotas).

Nevertheless, the California courts have also provided guidance on what could still be done to achieve racial diversity.

#### **FOCUSED OUTREACH BASED ON RACE**

Statutory laws enacted or amended after the passage of Proposition 209 offer clarity on what must still be done to achieve racial diversity. For instance, California Government Code Section 7400 explicitly creates an obligation to engage in focused outreach. This statutory requirement applies to all public entities, including community colleges, and even provides examples of focused outreach such as outreach efforts with women publication and minority conferences. Another example specific to community colleges is Title 5, Sections 53024.1 and 53001(b) which state that "[e]stablishing and maintaining a richly diverse workforce is an on-going process" and defines "diversity" to mean "a condition of broad inclusion in an employment environment that offers equal employment opportunity for all persons. It requires both the presence, and the respectful treatment, of individuals from a wide range of ethnic, racial, age, national origin, religious, gender, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic backgrounds (emphasis added)." Such legal requirement makes it clear that the state finds racial and ethnic diversity among community college employees a compelling interest.

In addition, case law has also provided guidance on what could still be done to achieve racial diversity.

#### SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Nos. 20-1199 and 21-707

## STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS, INC., PETITIONER

20 - 1199

v.

#### PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF HARVARD COLLEGE

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIRST CIRCUIT

## STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS, INC., PETITIONER

21 - 707

v.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, ET AL.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI BEFORE JUDGMENT TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

[June 29, 2023]

CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS delivered the opinion of the Court.

In these cases we consider whether the admissions systems used by Harvard College and the University of North Carolina, two of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the United States, are lawful under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.



## **SCOTUS**

Compelling Interest

Race-Neutral

Race-Based

Race-Based that violates Equal Protection Clause "Strict Scrutiny"



#### Opinion of the Court

First, the interests they view as compelling cannot be subjected to meaningful judicial review. Harvard identifies the following educational benefits that it is pursuing: (1) "training future leaders in the public and private sectors"; (2) preparing graduates to "adapt to an increasingly pluralistic society"; (3) "better educating its students through diversity"; and (4) "producing new knowledge stemming from diverse outlooks." 980 F. 3d, at 173–174. UNC points to similar benefits, namely, "(1) promoting the robust exchange of ideas; (2) broadening and refining understanding; (3) fostering innovation and problem-solving; (4) preparing engaged and productive citizens and leaders; [and] (5) enhancing appreciation, respect, and empathy, cross-racial understanding, and breaking down stereotypes." 567 F. Supp. 3d, at 656.

Although these are commendable goals, they are not sufficiently coherent for purposes of strict scrutiny. At the outset, it is unclear how courts are supposed to measure any of these goals. How is a court to know whether leaders have been adequately "train[ed]"; whether the exchange of ideas is "robust"; or whether "new knowledge" is being developed? *Ibid.*; 980 F. 3d, at 173–174. Even if these goals could somehow be measured, moreover, how is a court to know when they have been reached, and when the perilous remedy of racial preferences may cease? There is no particular point at which there exists sufficient "innovation and problemsolving," or students who are appropriately "engaged and productive." 567 F. Supp. 3d, at 656. Finally, the question in this context is not one of no diversity or of some: it is a question of degree. How many fewer leaders Harvard would create without racial preferences, or how much poorer the education at Harvard would be, are inquiries no court could resolve.

Comparing respondents' asserted goals to interests we have recognized as compelling further illustrates their elusive nature. In the context of racial violence in a prison, for

## <u>SCOTUS</u>

## **Compelling Interest**

Race-Neutral

Race-Based

Race-Based that violates Equal Protection Clause "Strict Scrutiny"



## **SCOTUS**

#### **Compelling Interest**

<sup>4</sup>The United States as *amicus curiae* contends that race-based admissions programs further compelling interests at our Nation's military academies. No military academy is a party to these cases, however, and none of the courts below addressed the propriety of race-based admissions systems in that context. This opinion also does not address the issue, in light of the potentially distinct interests that military academies may present.

Equal Protection Clause "Strict Scrutiny"



## **CA Prop 209**

Our "Why"

Race-Neutral

"Race-Conscious?" "Race-Based?"

Race-Based that violates Prop 209

**Compelling Interest** 

Race-Neutral

Race-Based

Race-Based that violates **Equal Protection Clause** "Strict Scrutiny"





# Our Y Our Why = Compelling Interest

"We want to do X,

because we are interested in Y"



# **UNC/Harvard's Compelling Interest**

"We want to do X, because we are interested in Y."

"We want to admit a racially diverse student population,

because we are interested in the educational benefits (e.g., robust classroom discussion)."



## **CA Prop 209**

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# California Court of Appeals

and consideration of communitywide demographic factors. White and African-American students from the same neighborhood receive the same diversity rating and the same treatment." The Court specifically stated that "not all race-conscious actions were meant to be eliminated – only those that discriminated against, or granted preferential treatment to, individuals or groups on the basis of that individual's or group's race (emphasis added)."

American Civil Rights Foundation v. Berkeley Unified School District (2009)
Page 10 of report



# **Compelling Interest!**

"We want to do X, because we are interested in Y."

"We want to racially integrate Berkeley USD,
because we are interested in reversing the detrimental
effects of school segregation (Brown v. Board of Ed)
/ students learning people, leadership skills to prepare
them for college and the work world."

# CA Community College Example

"We want to do X, because we are interested in Y."

"We want to hire a racially diverse faculty cohort,

because we are interested in narrowing/closing student success racial equity gaps."



### Diversity Benefits Students

Studies prove the educational benefits of a diverse community college faculty.

Narrowing achievement gaps by 19-51%



Fairlie, R. W., Hoffman, F., Oreopoulos, P. (2014). A Community College Instructor Like Me: Race and Ethnicity Interactions in the Classroom. American Economic Review

# How Large are Effects Relative to Student Success Gap?

Underrepresented Minority (White-Min.)

	Similar Instructor Effect	Achievement Gap	Percent of Gap	Minority Base Rate	
Dropped Course	0.020	-0.039	51%	0.281	
Passed Course	0.012	0.054	23%	0.835	
Course Grade	0.054	0.318	19%	2.58	
Grade B or Higher	0.024	0.112	21%	0.567	



## An Educational Program Example

"We want to do X, because we are interested in Y."

"We want to increase AB 288 dual enrollment, because we are interested in increasing Black and Latino students' college degree attainment."



# The Education Trust

# Who Benefits from Dual Enrollment Programs?

In many states, dual enrollment has been historically used as an acceleration strategy for highachieving learners, and often served middle- or higher-income students, though these opportunities have been found to be highly beneficial for all students. But taking college courses in high school has been found to benefit African American, Latino, and White students, and its positive effects on college degree attainment are even stronger for low-income students.



# Our "Why" = Compelling Interest

- Research / Data (Quantitative & Qualitative)
- Theoretical Framework
- College Survey/Data (Quantitative & Qualitative)
- College Mission/Vision/Values

### Other Evidence?

- Outside of higher education
- Outside of education



### **CA Prop 209**

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# **Policy Frame**

Structural → Cultural





Individual



	Structural	Cultural	Individual
Our "Why" Compelling Interest			
Race-neutral			
Race-conscious			





### STATE OF CALIFORNIA

### ERIK SKINNER, INTERIM CHANCELLOR

### CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

1102 Q STREET, SUITE 4554 SACRAMENTO, CA 95811-6549 (916) 445-8752 http://www.cccco.edu

### OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Thuy T. Nguyen, Interim General Coursel/ Vice Chancellor Jake Knapp, Deputy Counsel Peter V. Khang, Deputy Counsel

DATE: June 17, 2016

TO: Chief Executive Officers (Chancellor/Presidents and Superintendents/Presidents)

Presidents of Boards of Trustees Community College Attorneys Chief Human Resources Officers Chief Instructional Officers Academic Senate Presidents

Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity Committee Chairs

Other Interested Parties

FROM: Thuy Thi Nguyen

Interim General Counsel / Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: Legal Opinion 16-04: Sixteenth Advisory on Proposition 209 and Equal Employment

Opportunity

The purpose of this Legal Opinion is to provide legal guidance on developments in Proposition 209 and Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO") laws since the last Chancellor's Office Legal Opinion on Proposition 209 in 2002. This Opinion also addresses questions raised by faculty, classified professionals, and administrators on faculty diversity during various statewide EEO trainings and webinars that the Office of General Counsel conducted this academic year.

Federal and state employment laws are categorized into two areas: non-discrimination laws and equal employment opportunity (inclusionary) laws – two sides of the same coin. On one side of the coin, the Chancellor's Office, particularly the Office of the General Counsel, monitors non-discrimination laws and handles appeals of student discrimination complaints. On the other side of the coin, the Chancellor's Office also oversees the EEO laws in Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations related to inclusionary hiring practices and has authority to monitor and withhold funds if the Office believes there are patterns of discrimination and non-compliance with certain regulatory provisions. <sup>1</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All regulatory references of "Title 5" are to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

### Unconscious/Implicit Bias

Screening/selection committee shall be trained on:

- (a) federal and state **law**, including Title 5;
- (b) the **educational** benefits of workforce diversity;
- (c) the elimination of **bias** in hiring decisions; and
- (d) **best practices** in serving on a selection/screening committee.

California Title 5, § 53003(c)



	Structural	Cultural	Individual
Our "Why" Compelling Interest			
Race-neutral			
Race-conscious			



### **Growth Mindset**



### **Growth Mindset**

# Study finds STEM achievement gaps shrink by nearly half when faculty view intelligence as malleable

First universitywide analysis of its type finds professors' 'growth mindsets' are associated with better educational outcomes for all students, especially underrepresented minorities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Feb 15, 2019

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – In a major analysis of university faculty and students in science, technology, engineering and math, Indiana University social psychologists have found that professors' beliefs about intelligence play a measurable role in the success of all students in STEM, especially underrepresented minorities.



	Structural	Cultural	Individual
Our "Why" Compelling Interest			
Race-neutral			
Race-conscious			



	Structural	Cultural	Individual
Our "Why"			
Compelling Interest			
Race-neutral			
Race-conscious			

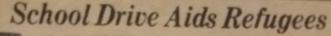




What Is Your "Y"?
"Napa Valley College's Superpower: Knowing Our Y."

Join at slido.com #2277







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Dien told the Mainichi Daily News that those remaining need oil, and oil stoves, gloves and clothing for the winter.

# 47 years later...





The unexamined life is not worth living.

The unexamined system is not worth perpetuating.

