

Sy Stokes is a male studying in his third year at the University of California Los Angeles. He recalls almost dropping out of UCLA his freshman year because of the lack of diversity at UCLA. He felt that there were not enough black students on-campus, and as a result, he created a controversial video on YouTube outlining statistics and the lack of African Americans studying at UCLA. In the video regarding UCLA, it talks about African American students' graduation rates, number of black students enrolled, and the athletic emphasis for black students. Sy says that due to only having 3.3% of enrolled students being African American and so much emphasis on athletics, he felt that African Americans were not being viewed as "academically capable," but rather successful in athletics to make the school look good. It brings off a negative message, so he posted the video near November 30, which is around the time undergraduate applications are due to shine light on the topic.

In order to address this, it is important to have other stakeholders on the advisory committee including the dean of residence life, the university president, the Director of Media Relations, Vice Chancellor for Research, the Athletics Director, in addition to myself as the Director of the Community Programs Office (CPO). The reason to have the dean of residence life is to really discuss and share with the team how the black students are feeling as residents on-campus. It is his sole responsibility to be discussing with each individual black student as to how they are coping with the university environment. That is critical information to bring up within the meeting, so if the team wanted to provide a response video to Sy, they can deliver the real perspective of black students at UCLA. The university president is absolutely necessary in this entire process. Because of the level of response and reputation management that is necessary, the university president would be responsible for making the final decisions on what does and what does not need to be implemented in order to increase diversity without devaluing black students. The Director of Media Relations is needed on the advisory board because they are the ones responding to the critics, the general public, applicants, students, parents, faculty members, and other universities that inquire more details about the entire situation. The Director of Media Relations needs to be well-informed on the precautions to take, they need to be aware about what information needs to be confidential, and they need to have a clear focus on what direction the university is headed towards in terms of UCLA's diversity expansion initiatives. The Vice Chancellor for Research can serve as a vital asset on the advisory committee because they would be responsible for comparing the trends and research of ethnic backgrounds at UCLA compared to other public institutions. This is important for shedding light on the true facts, deflecting negative perceptions of UCLA, and for providing honest information to the staff members when they need to respond to the criticisms of the university. The Athletics Director is needed for serving on the advisory committee because he can talk about the true abilities and presence of black students on-campus. Because a huge emphasis of the video Sy created was about the black students being mainly involved in athletics as opposed to excelling in UCLA's academic rigor, it is important for the Athletic Director to speak up for the Black students, to advocate for their needs when assessing their work-life balance, and to share possible initiatives in which the black students can find a balance between athletics and academics. Finally, the Director of Community Programs Office is responsible for the retention of students, minority empowerment, and expansion of diversity at UCLA. The office acts as a multicultural branch of the university and serves the diverse student needs of expanding inclusion of each student and providing services, initiatives, and programming to ensure each student succeeds, regardless of their background. This position is most crucial to be on the Advisory Board as the videos primarily shines light on Black students' perception of success at UCLA as well as their enrollment and graduation numbers. Although it is understandable that Sy had the mere intention of increasing more Black student attendance at UCLA, it also in several ways discourages more black students from attending the school after they learned that black

students may feel isolated at UCLA. As such, the Director of Community Programs would be responsible for conducting research and implementing outreach programs which may help underserved areas, particularly in African American communities, in the college application process and developing bridge mentorship programs that can allow them to have a proper transition from high school to college.

The role the university needs to take in responding to this situation is first finding the real statistics about the university retention rates. Any student can make up statistics, but only the university has the real enrollment numbers, the number they actually admitted, and the initiatives that are already taking place to affirm that UCLA truly is a diverse campus which embraces all student backgrounds. By doing so, UCLA can show that a possible reason for having less black students would be external factors such as family obligations, travel expenses, or lack of financial aid. Several of the black students may have opted to attend private institutions because of scholarship money or more financial aid was offered which makes their education even more affordable. It appears that in the video, Sy was jumping into conclusions that black students were underrepresented, when in reality, there could be other reasons for the lack of black students. It is the university's responsibility to reveal the real statistics of black student acceptances, and immediately respond to the public through various media outlets. This can be in the form of a newspaper, radio, television, email, or a YouTube video, and it is important to immediately address the criticisms which may arise from alumni, applicants, potential donors, or the general public. All the public wants is the reason why UCLA is not admitting more black students or why there are so few attending. Once that is addressed to all the stakeholders, they can follow up on the video as to what initiatives they are planning and are expected to implement in response to the criticisms they have been receiving. This can include peer mentorship programs, community outreach initiatives, or student advocacy groups which promote an inclusive campus culture.

The video can promote discussion in classrooms, in student groups, in public forums, or panels with guest speakers. In several ways, this video is promoting dialogue within the student body, the faculty, other universities, and the wider UCLA community such as donors, parents, and alumni. It has certainly reached the administrative levels and the board of trustees, which means that the video sparked conversation to start initiatives and promote more diversity on campus. The need for diversifying those of different ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds will impact the university policies, the nature of programming, and the focus on coursework; all while grounding student activism as part of the campus culture. As a result, it is possible to see university legislations to focus on race when determining work study positions, or for coursework to include a segment on diversity.

The ongoing debate about affirmative action in college admissions and recent legislation at the state and federal level affects the opportunities for addressing student concerns in several ways. For example, those of different backgrounds will realize that UCLA primarily focuses on the academic promise of their applicants and are possibly recruiting from districts which may have smaller presence of black students. Affirmative action is something that will never go away for private institutions. However, because UCLA is a public institution, the only way to address the problem is by increasing diversity initiatives for black students who are admitted and by channeling their focus on recruiting from schools with higher African American demographics.

Sy saw UCLA's response as a "cop out" when they said the university does not consider race during the application process. UCLA in several ways is very fair in the admissions process - if one is academically capable, is well-rounded, and holds a competitive application - they will be admitted. In terms of addressing the student concerns and the possible effects on opportunity due to legislation, it is important to educate the students on the reasoning behind affirmative action and why it does not exist at public universities. Public education is about

providing access to education to all at an affordable cost, but with a school ranked so highly such as UCLA, the admissions standards need to be based heavily on academic performance - not ethnic background. This is something that Sy does not address at all in his video. Affirmative action at private institutions may help those underserved students or ethnic minorities to achieve a solid education; and as a result, the admissions team, judicial board, and community relations office need to provide disciplinary and academic actions that can keep each student accountable so they may graduate. When addressing student concerns, it is important to evaluate their personal needs and how it can be beneficial to socialize with those of different backgrounds. Nonetheless, affirmative action has long helped those of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, those from disadvantaged families, or those underrepresented minorities mainly in private institutions. At the public institutions however, it is important recognize the reason for its nonexistence and the level of advocacy these institutions provide with the limited resources and funds they have. At the state and federal level, affirmative action has mainly been beneficial, and admissions to these universities need to be based on the quality and diversity of its student - not on the mere basis of skin color as Sy suggests. The quality and diversity of UCLA's incoming class seems to be the primary focus, and the diversity is generally seen in light of talents, skills, academic achievements, or other major accomplishments which makes them worthy at UCLA students. As a university, they provide student services with various specializations such as diversity, mental health, academic services, or professional assistance to retain these students. It is important recognize the true intentions of affirmative action, not to undermine or publicly criticize a university for "not doing anything about it;" when clearly there are several initiatives to promote diversity on-campus and the staff care deeply about the success of every individual student.