Achieving *Holistic* Diversity & Inclusion at a Major Research University

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Opinions expressed are solely my own.

Diversity's Potential

- Engender tolerance and understanding

- Help mitigate/reverse long-held prejudices and harmful polarization

- Improve our thinking, sharpen any debate, and foster innovation

Diversity:

The degree to which students, faculty, and staff represent/demonstrate a range of different skills, knowledge, cultures, identities, geographies, values, experiences, ideologies, philosophies, and personalities, to provide the greatest opportunity to learn and grow from each other.

Conventional Diversity: Physical/Identity Only

Type	Examples
Physical/ Identity	Race, gender, age, ethnicity, geography, language, disability, sexual orientation

Holistic Diversity: The Entire Individual

Type	Examples
Physical/ Identity	**Race, gender, age, ethnicity, geography, language, disability, sexual orientation**
Cognitive/ Intellectual	**Abstract vs. concrete thinking; risk aversion vs. risk taking; long- vs. short-term time horizons; relationship vs. transactional orientations in dealing with others; collaborative vs. independent work styles; introversion/extroversion; ability to delay immediate gratification; intelligence**
Related Attributes	**Household income; zip code, veteran status; first-generation college attendance; civic associations joined; hobbies; sports; and musical, sartorial, and tonsorial preferences...**

Holistic Diversity: The Entire Individual

Type	Examples	
Physical/ Identity	**Race, gender, age, ethnicity, geography, language, disability, sexual orientation**	**• Religion/ faith** • **Political orientation**
Cognitive/ Intellectual	**Abstract vs. concrete thinking; risk aversion vs. risk taking; long- vs. short-term time horizons; relationship vs. transactional orientations in dealing with others; collaborative vs. independent work styles; introversion/extroversion; ability to delay immediate gratification; intelligence**	
Related Attributes	**Household income; zip code, veteran status; first-generation college attendance; civic associations joined; hobbies; sports; and musical, sartorial, and tonsorial preferences...**	

Why *Holistic* Diversity?

- **To consider the *entire* individual and not overlook important variables**

- **Overweighting *some* variables *reduces* diversity in *other* important variables**

- **Cognitive/intellectual diversity makes boards, committees, and work groups better decision-makers**
  - **Physical/identity, only to the extent that it indicates cognitive/intellectual**

Why Physical/Identity Diversity Hijacks Our Attention

**Thinking Fast – immediate, knee-jerk reactions**

- Drives racial and gender discrimination

Thinking Slowly/deliberately takes *effort*

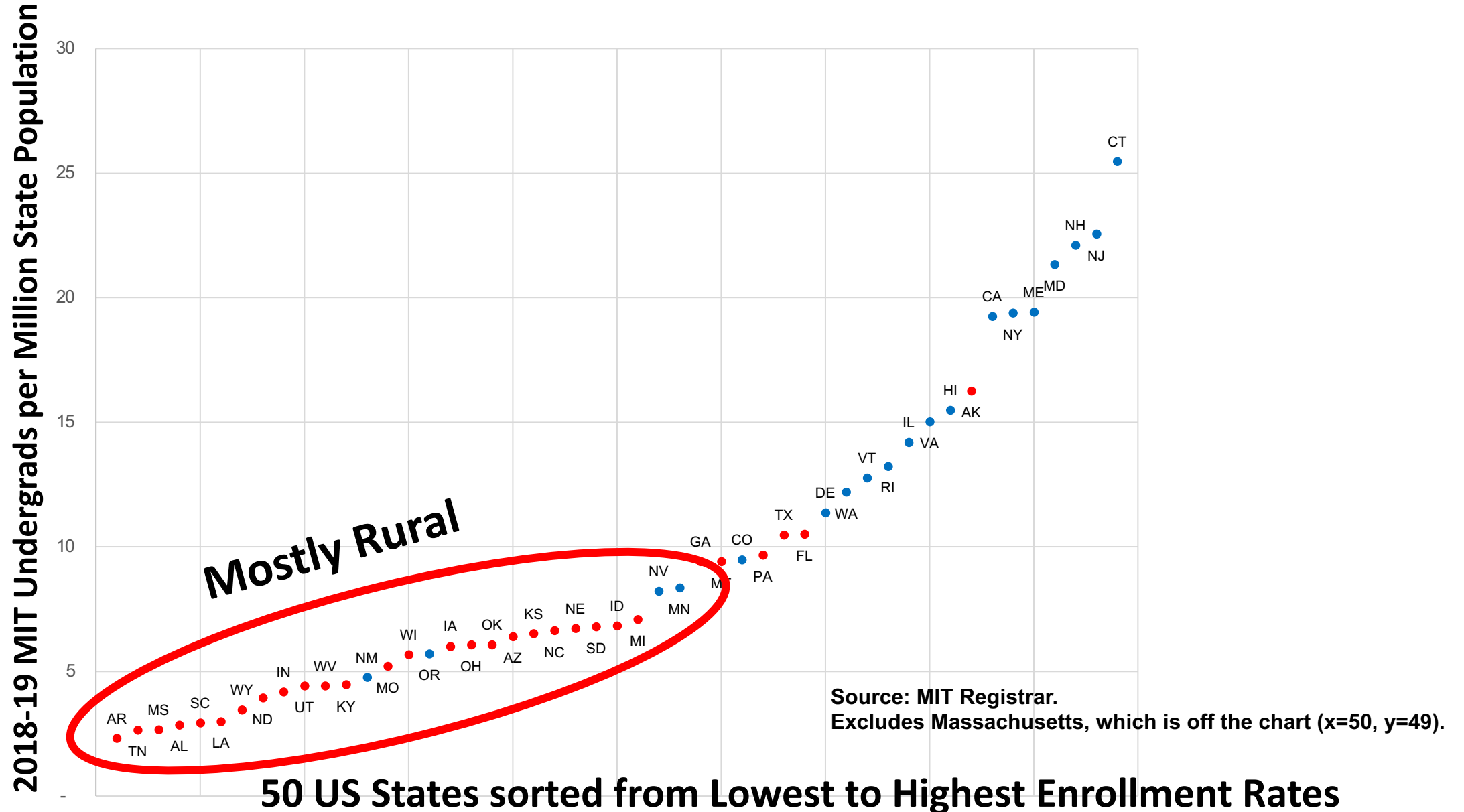- To see people's value and talent beyond the visible and superficial

We are MIT: We excel/take pride in "thinking slowly"

- We *don't* ignore important dimensions not immediately visible

- If *others* focus just on visible variables, *we* set the example to do otherwise
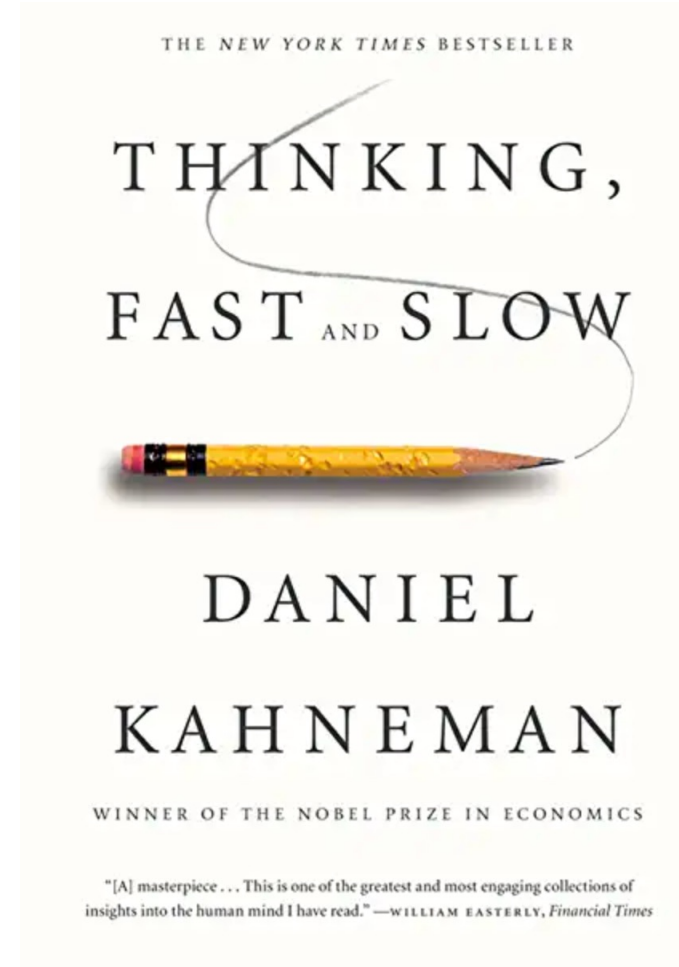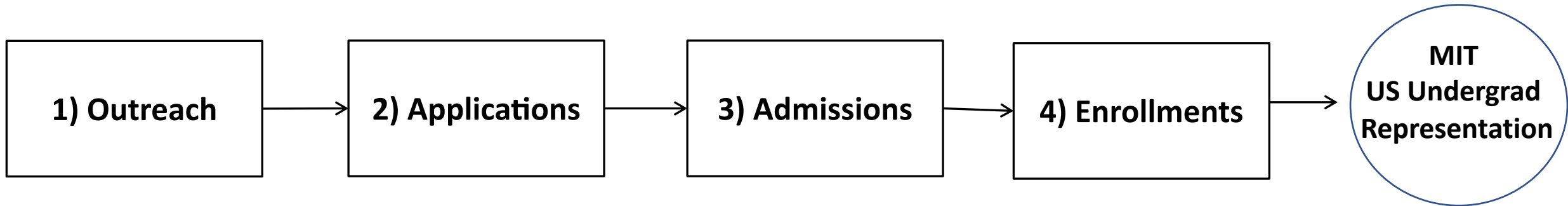
Adjusted for State Populations, 2018 MIT US Undergrad Enrollment for the Bottom 25 US States was *33%* the Enrollment for the Top 25 US States
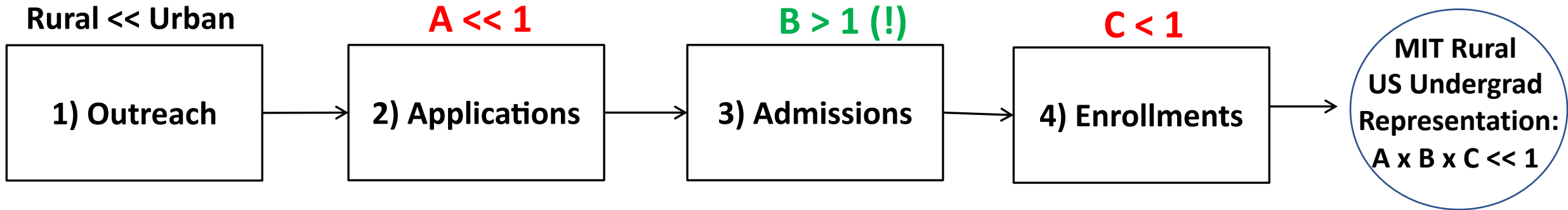
2018-19 MIT Undergrads per Million State Population

30

25 — CT

NH
NJ

20 — CA ME MD
NY

HI
15 — AK
IL
VA
VT
RI
DE WA

TX
10 — GA CO
FL
PA
NV M
MN
NE ID
KS
IA OK
WI SD MI
NM NC
IN WV OR OH AZ
MO
WY
SC ND UT KY
AR MS
TN AL LA

5

-

Mostly Rural

Source: MIT Registrar.
Excludes Massachusetts, which is off the chart (x=50, y=49).

50 US States sorted from Lowest to Highest Enrollment Rates

MIT US Undergrad Admissions Pipeline

| 1) Outreach | → | 2) Applications | → | 3) Admissions | → | 4) Enrollments | → | MIT US Undergrad Representation |

MIT US Undergrad Admissions Pipeline

For Rural States

Rural << Urban

A << 1 B > 1 (!) C < 1

1) Outreach → 2) Applications → 3) Admissions → 4) Enrollments → MIT Rural US Undergrad Representation: A x B x C << 1

Notes:
- A = Percent of rural population applying to MIT / Percent of total US population applying to MIT
- B = Percent of rural applicants admitted to MIT / Percent of total US applicants admitted to MIT
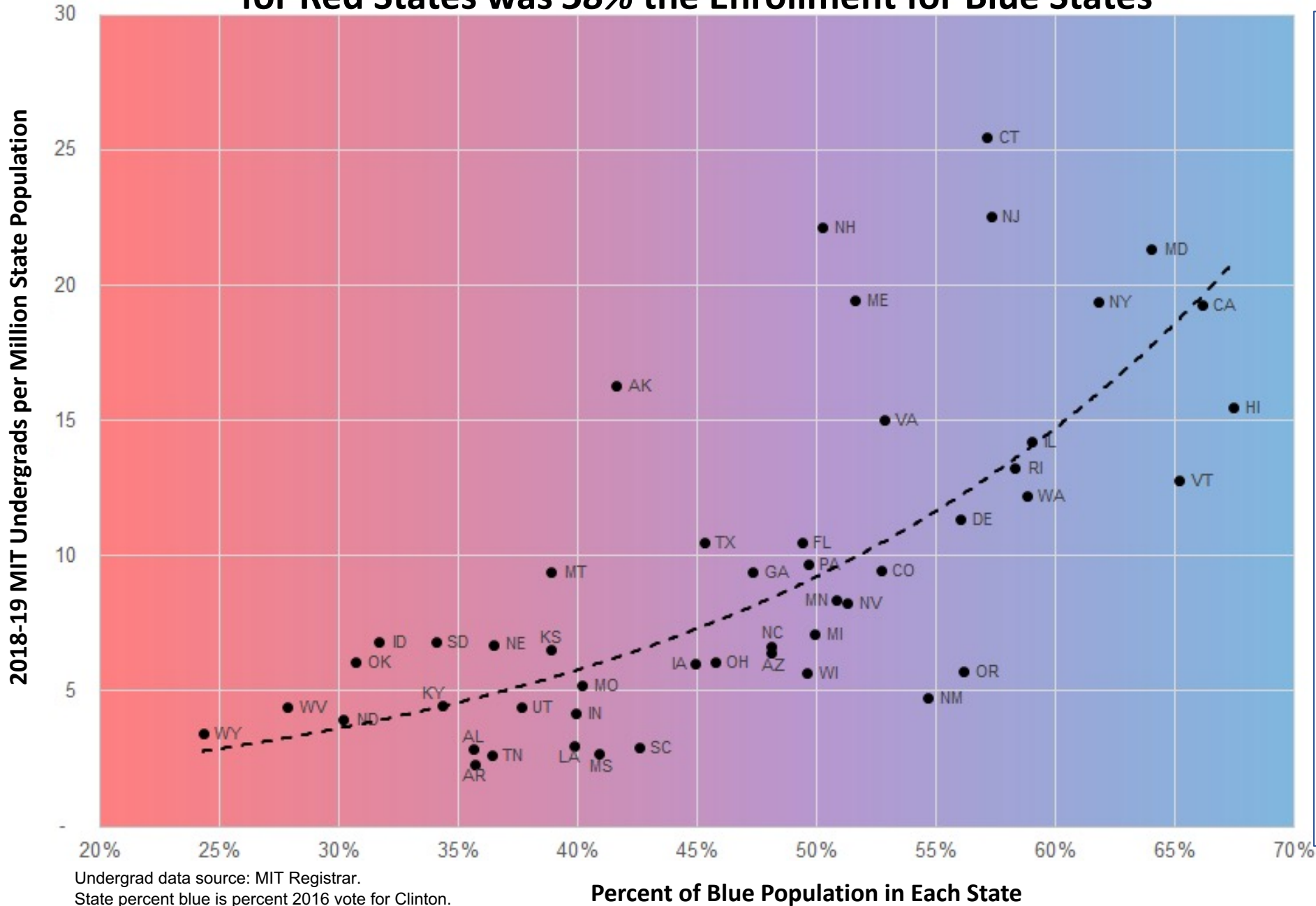- C = Percent of rural admits enrolled at MIT / Percent of total US admits enrolled at MIT.

Not Different Just Geographically,
But *Culturally, Economically, Intellectually, and Politically*
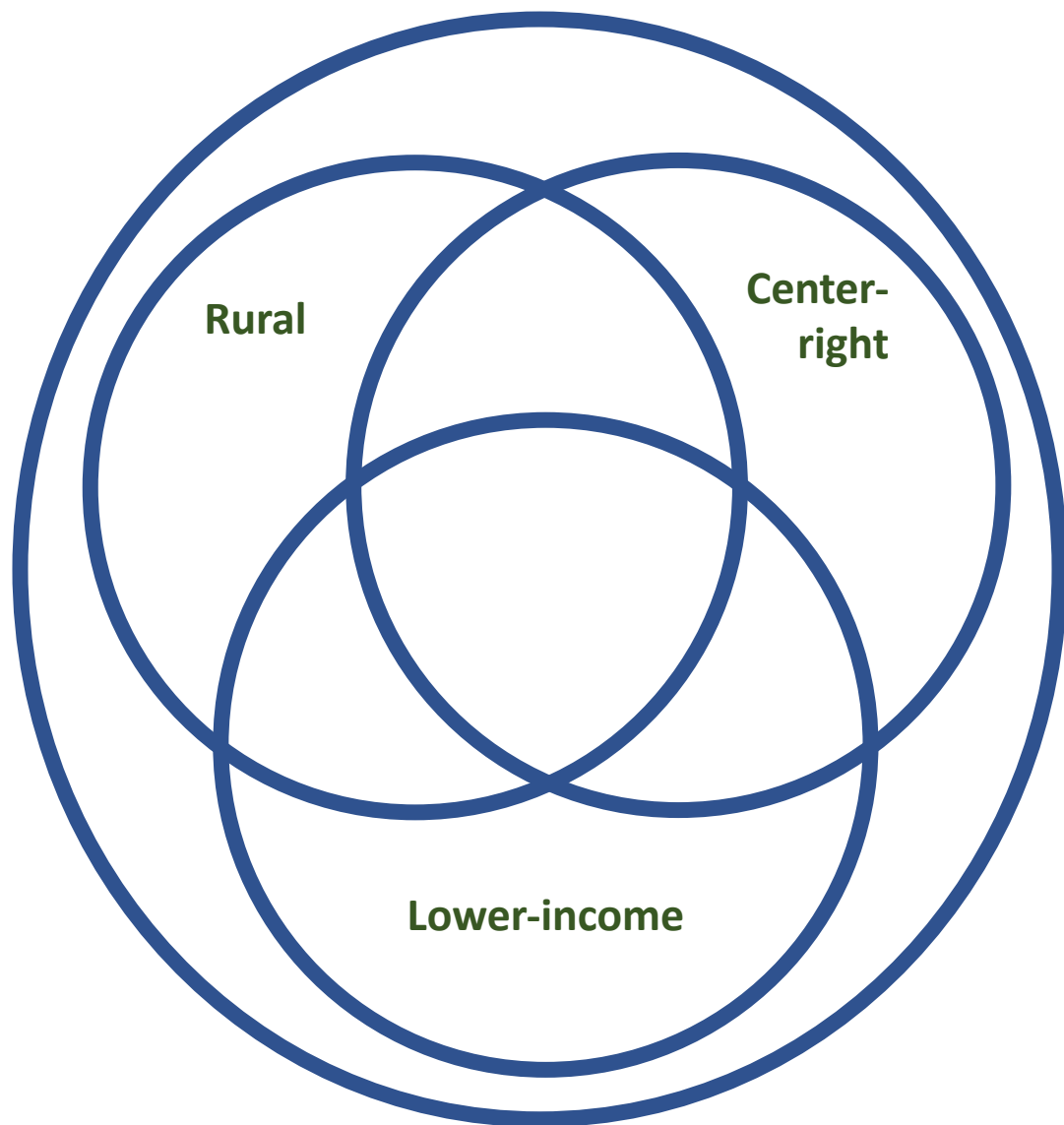
- Place higher value on:
  - Individual rewards/responsibility
  - Local civic ties
  - Frugality
  - Work ethic
  - Nuclear families
- More fiscally/socially conservative
- Lower income overall
- Mostly red states

The "Other Half" of the US

Adjusted for State Populations, 2018 MIT US Undergrad Enrollment for Red States was *38%* the Enrollment for Blue States

2018-19 MIT Undergrads per Million State Population (y-axis)

Percent of Blue Population in Each State (x-axis)

Data points labeled: CT, NJ, MD, NH, ME, NY, CA, AK, VA, HI, IL, RI, VT, WA, DE, TX, FL, PA, CO, GA, MT, MN, NV, NC, MI, KS, ID, SD, NE, OK, IA, OH, AZ, WI, OR, MO, NM, KY, UT, IN, WV, ND, WY, AL, TN, LA, MS, SC, AR

Undergrad data source: MIT Registrar.
State percent blue is percent 2016 vote for Clinton.
Excludes Massachusetts, which is off the chart (x=65%, y=49).

The "Other Half":

- *No* on-campus constituency or advocacy

- *More* under-represented than racial minorities

- Routinely stereotyped

"They don't share our values."

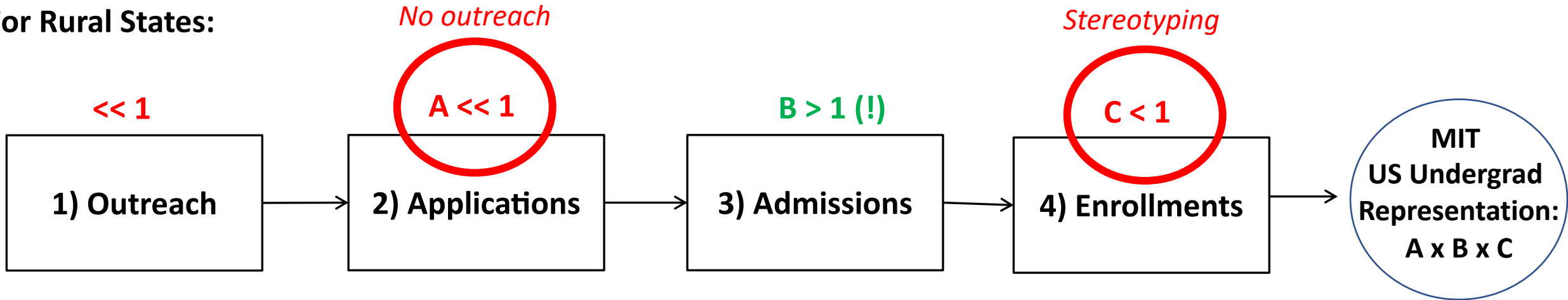"Poor, white, and uneducated."

 Provost Martin Schmidt:
"Being Republican may be the hardest
  thing to be on campus."

# MIT US Undergrad Admissions Pipeline

For Rural States:

No outreach

Stereotyping

<< 1

A << 1

B > 1 (!)

C < 1

| 1) Outreach | 2) Applications | 3) Admissions | 4) Enrollments | MIT US Undergrad Representation: A x B x C |

Notes:
- 1.0 = MIT total US undergrad population normalized by US population.
- A = Percent of rural population applying to MIT / Percent of total US population applying to MIT
- B = Percent of rural applicants admitted to MIT / Percent of total US applicants admitted to MIT
- C = Percent of rural admits enrolled at MIT / Percent of total US admits enrolled at MIT.

The "Other Half" @ MIT:
A Negative Feedback Loop

Stereotyping

Under-representation

By James Freeman
Dec. 9, 2019 4:16 pm ET
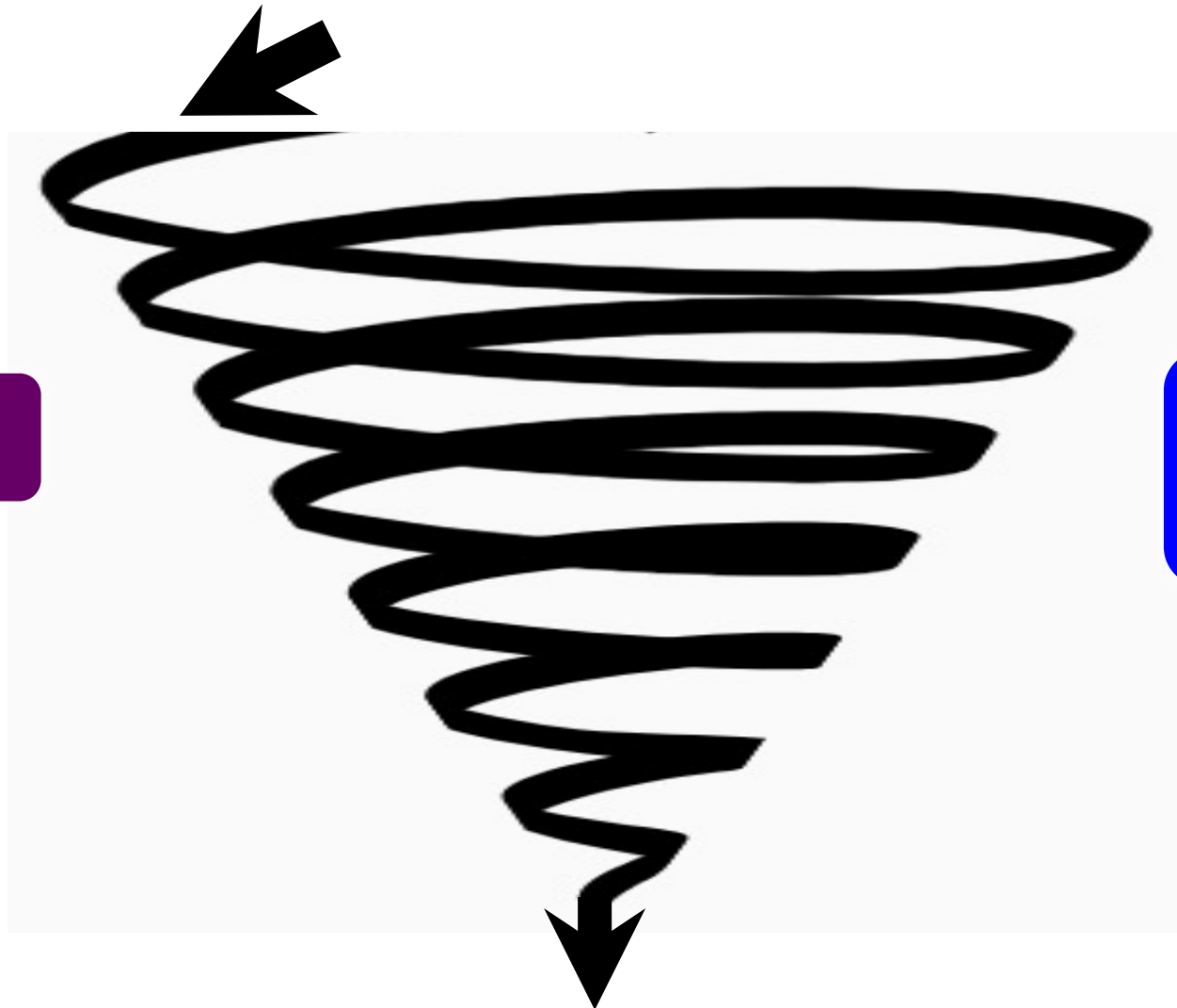
Yale Prof Estimates Faculty Political Diversity at '0%'
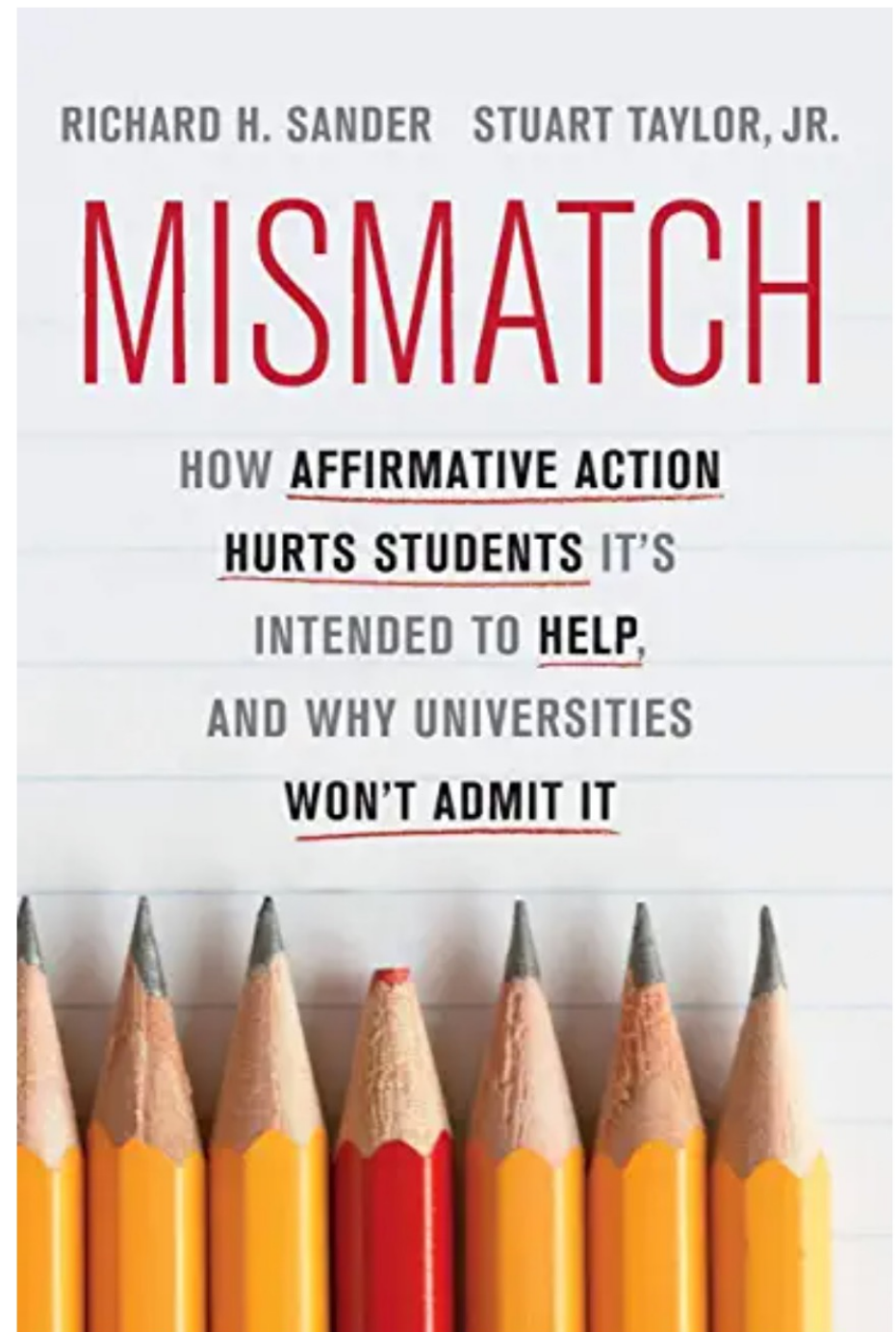
Pressure to join the "herd groupthink" in New Haven.

Nobody looks to the Ivy League for balanced political discourse. But a new report suggests that on at least one campus, the stifling of conservative views among faculty members is nearly complete.
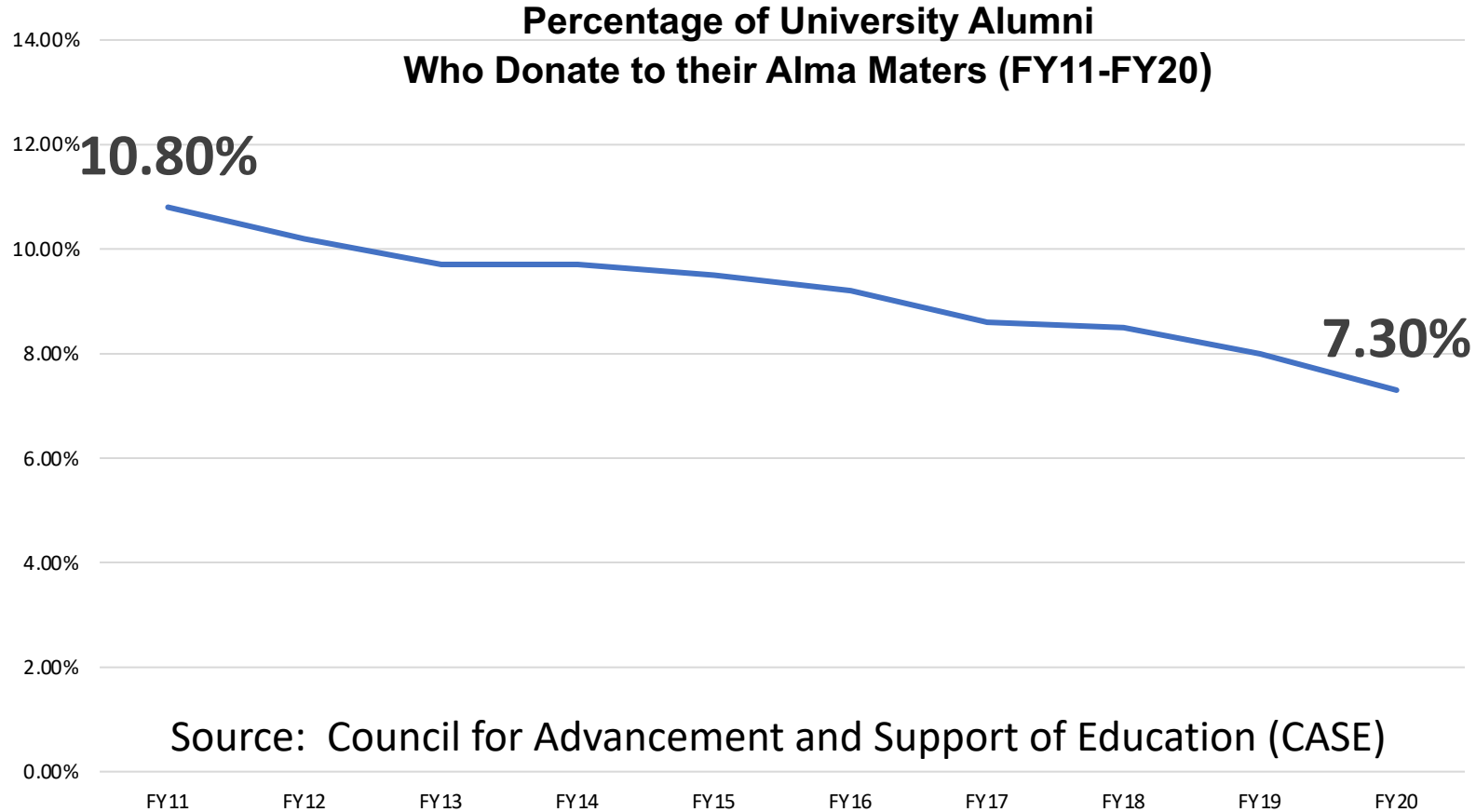
Should we Lower Academic Standards to Enroll The Other Half?

Should we Lower Academic Standards to Enroll The Other Half?

Mismatch: Underqualified students who are admitted to elite universities experiencing worse life outcomes than those who were not admitted in the first place.

Inclusion & Belonging Apply To Alumni, Too

**Percentage of University Alumni
Who Donate to their Alma Maters (FY11-FY20)**

10.80%

7.30%

Source: Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)

14.00%

12.00%

10.00%

8.00%

6.00%

4.00%

2.00%

0.00%

FY11   FY12   FY13   FY14   FY15   FY16   FY17   FY18   FY19   FY20

*Hypothesis to test: Some part of the decline is due to universities
becoming more ideological and thus estranging alumni*

- **Consider a broad set of diversity variables**, including both physical/identity and cognitive/ intellectual, for which greater diversity could make MIT a stronger, better, and more equitable place, before selecting those that we will prioritize in our admissions, hiring, and promotion.

- **Serve the entire nation**, not just selected communities, regions, and states.

- **Leverage AI** to overcome biases and promote diversity in admissions.

- **Expand our DEI efforts** to address shortfalls where on-campus constituencies and advocacy are lacking.

- **Assess our admissions pipeline** – outreach, applications, acceptances, and enrollments – to understand where and why shortfalls occur and address them.

Recommendations - 2 of 3

- **Leverage outreach, applications, and enrollments** (Stages 1, 2, and 4 of the admissions pipeline) to achieve diversity along a broad range of dimensions.

- **Resist the temptation to compromise academic standards** to admit (Stage 3 of the pipeline) Other-Half candidates or those of any other segment, thereby putting candidates' well-being, and MIT's long-term standing and effectiveness, at risk.

- **Consider both achievement and distance advanced** in evaluating *all* candidates.

- **Seek out and include** voices of Other-Half members of the MIT community, even if they are few in number and/or deeply closeted.

- **Refuse to stereotype** the Other Half either in person or online. **Recognize our vast common ground** with the Other Half and expand on it.

Recommendations - 3 of 3

- **Launch an Institute-wide Task Force on US & Global Polarization** to study forces driving and recommend solutions. It should address, in part, how higher education can help mitigate or reverse growing polarization. More than any other institutions, universities can model open discussion and tolerance to avert this outcome.

- **Call for sensitivity and civility**. Encourage, praise, and celebrate civil engagement and robust debate based on mutual respect.

- **Closely review all large-scale alumni communications** for content which is unduly ideological. Lead instead with MIT's universal, inspiring, unifying achievements in the sciences, engineering, and technology.

- **Join or support Heterodox Academy**, a nonpartisan collaborative enhancing the quality of research and education by promoting open inquiry and viewpoint diversity.

- **Summon courage** to do what is right, not merely popular. ■