



June 29, 2023

Dear Friends,

Today, the U.S. Supreme Court acted to limit the ability of colleges and universities to consider race in making admissions decisions. In making their ruling, the majority members of the Court have set aside long-standing precedent in a deeply disappointing decision.

For The University of Scranton, enrolling a diverse student body is more than just a pedagogical necessity. As a Catholic and Jesuit institution, our commitment to diversity is an inseparable part of our mission and identity.

As a university, we strive to provide a learning environment that harnesses the unique background and experiences of all students and creates opportunities for them to learn from and with each other. In our Institutional Learning Outcomes, we aspire to advance our students "... towards positions of leadership in their chosen field of study" or require that they "...exhibit broad knowledge of the human condition." We are, therefore, committed to enrolling a student body that reflects the rich diversity of the world in which we live.

As Catholic and Jesuit, we draw our inspiration from the example of Jesus, who called out injustice and reached out to the marginalized. As we find in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: (Gaudium et Spes)*, "Human institutions, both private and public, must labor to minister to the dignity and purpose of [the human person]. At the same time let them put up a stubborn fight against any kind of slavery, whether social or political, and safeguard the basic rights of [human beings] under every political system" (29).

For these reasons, we want Scranton graduates to demonstrate that they are persons of character and women and men for and with others, through their devotion to the spiritual and corporal welfare of other human beings and by their special commitment to the pursuit of social justice and the common good of the entire human community."

Additionally, we strive always to live out our founding mission to make the dream of higher education possible regardless of means. Our commitment to access and affordability has evolved throughout our history to meet the pressing needs of the time. Today, it is perhaps best seen in our efforts to enroll talented members of underrepresented groups. Then and now, this is a moral imperative.

Our reasons echo and amplify the view of dozens of Catholic and Jesuit institutions as expressed in an *amicus* brief filed with the Supreme Court last August. The brief identified four reasons why having a racially diverse student body serves our Catholic mission. These reasons included the creation of a dynamic learning environment, student growth and development, a commitment to the common good and social justice, and developing thoughtful, creative and diverse learners committed to the Catholic goal of service. As noted in the brief:

A tenet of Catholicism is that “communion is enriched by respect and appreciation for differences within an overall perspective that advances the common good.” In an educational setting, the Catholic mission is “enriched by the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students,” and is reinforced by Catholicism’s focus on respecting the dignity of all people, including the “intrinsic connection between dignity and diversity as a natural and necessary context for human flourishing.

For all of these reasons and more, The University of Scranton will not waiver in its efforts to promote meaningful and mission-driven diversity. We will do all that we can within the law, to remain an accessible choice for aspiring leaders, and to provide a transformational education that fosters in our students a commitment to social justice and the common good and a deep appreciation of all that makes us human, especially our diversity.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph G. Marina, S.J.
President