Asian-American Admissions: 
Fair Or Discriminatory?

By MARY ANN CAMPO
Herald Staff Writer

Across the country, members of the fast-growing minority group claim that top universities like Brown are unjustly limiting their enrollment by setting quotas on the number of Asian-Americans accepted each year.

Groups representing Asian-American students say the number of highly qualified applicants is increasing while the number of Asian-Americans being accepted is not changing proportionally.

But universities say that there are no quotas on Asian-American admissions. The reason why the group's admission rate is sometimes lower, administrators say, is that too many of them are interested in certain fields, such as biology and medicine, and end up being rejected because of their interests rather than their race.

According to a recent New York Times article, many Asian-Americans feel they should be represented more in the nation's top colleges, since they have generally higher academic qualifications. The article explains that these students scored an average of 522 on the mathematics section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test and 408 on the verbal portion whereas white test-takers averaged scores of 490 on the math part and 445 on the verbal section.

Harvard and the University of California at Los Angeles are currently under investigation by the Education Department for possible discrimination in their admissions policies.

Brown's Role

Although Brown is not one of the schools currently being investigated, the university and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Eric Widmer have responded to similar criticisms raised by Asian-American students here.

An internal report published several years ago indicated that the number of Asian-American students being admitted had not gone up at the same rate as the number of applications.

Widmer insists that the discrepancy wasn't because of discrimination.

"We certainly don't have quotas. It's not the case," Widmer said. "The number of applications has gone up and so did the admissions." But a recent application disparity could be due to the fact that Asian-Americans don't apply to Brown in proportion to the number of Asian-Americans in the population.

"Asian-Americans may be less likely to apply than other groups," he said.

M. Squash

By JAMES KAPLAN
Herald Staff Writer

Men's squash has received the revival of young talents for the 1989-90 season. A group of 10 athletes has come up with the process of raising funds to allow the team to continue.

"I thought that the squash was missed on Brown experience," said Males '68, the one of the group. "I never expected why there was no squash. Basically, squash is an enjoyable game to the school building and the facility, I thought the team might be possible.

The addition comes of a recommendation by the Advisory Committee. University Planning and budget deficit in the department by possible a varsity team. Therefore, ACUP denied the varsity funding. Brown should place any priorities before new sports.

When asked if the squash team could replace other areas of activity, Sports Foundation Director Dave Zucker said, "There's bound to be some people just can't woodwork on this one. Everyone concurred the money is almost..."
Asians
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year]."

Widmer said he could not ac-
count for past discrepancies in
Asian admissions, since he was
not directly involved.

He said Brown received
1,770 applications from Asian stu-
dents this year and accepted 413,
a 23 percent admissions rate.
Widmer pointed out that this per-
centage is an increase from last
year and equals the all-college ac-
cception rate. This year, he said,
was also the first time the accept-
ance rate for Asians was higher
than that for whites.

But the university's quest for
diversity in its student body has
often backfired on Asian-Ameri-
cans, according to some officials.

"It used to be said that too
many Asians are competing
against each other by saying they
are pre-med or are biology ma-
jors. I believe it played a role.
Whether it's a justifiable justifi-
tation, I'm not sure," he said.

He did say he believes Asians
are becoming increasingly in-
volved in other fields, such as so-
cial sciences and humanities,
which could help in the search for
diversity.

Brown is always actively re-
cruiting minorities in various
ways, he said, but in the past
Asians have felt the resulting
growth in applicants has not been
met with a higher acceptance
rate.

"We have to understand that
growth of admissions is never
going to be met at a commensu-
rate level as the growth in appli-
cations. The freshman class is so
large and needs to be diverse. So
many factors are taken into ac-
count," Widmer said.

This year's admissions statis-
tics demonstrate that Brown ad-
missions officers are becoming
more aware of and more sensitive
to the concerns of Asian-Ameri-
can students, he said.

Widmer was on a Con-
gressional committee last spring
which included this topic in its
agenda. The panel included vari-
ous people from all walks of life,
especially educators, including
one from the University of Cal-
fornia at Berkeley, which has
been the subject of numerous in-
vestigations.

The Asian Response
Asian students at Brown aren't
satisfied with the university's jus-
tifications.

"I do believe that there is a
quota that certain universities try
to fill," said Marissa Fung, presi-
trarily categorizing Asians as pre-
dominantly science-oriented stu-
dents.

"There is no pre-med con-
centration at Brown," he explained.
"People at Brown change their
major four or five times once they
get here."

He said that a report made with
Dean Robert Ripley shows that
only 20 percent of the Asian stu-
dents go to medical school whereas
Widmer had given him a
statistic of more than 50 percent.

Mee Moua '92, admissions co-
ordinator of AASA, agreed with
Kim's charges.

"Too often I see the Asian com-
unity generalized into one
group and not being look at indi-
vidually," she said.

Kim said he does feel Widmer
has shown flexibility in creating
his first freshman class and that
he is aware of Asian concerns.

Pressure from Asian-American
students, he said, has also helped
spark awareness: for example, the
AASA released a report in 1983
that showed the discrepancy be-
tween Asian applications and ad-
nouncements. Kim said adminis-
trators responded immediately, but
then a year later, the Asian accep-
tance rate went down again.

Kim added that although ad-
missions officers show sensitivity
for the Asian concern, they are
not aware of the diversity of the
types of Asian-Americans in the
United States. He said Brown is
not recruiting groups like South-
east Asians or Asians from urban
areas.

"It's not only a question of the
numbers, it's a question of the
type of students at Brown," he said.

Admissions Elsewhere

In addition to current investi-
gations of Harvard and UCLA,
the University of California at
Berkeley has continually been
the subject of investigation for un-
tentional discrimination in its
admissions policies.

Bailey said Asians represent
about 26 percent of the freshmen
applicant pool and about 30 per-
cent are admitted, in contrast to
whites, who represent approxi-
mately 60 percent of the appli-
cants and make up 32 percent of
the freshman class.

Although Director of Admis-
sions Robert Bailey said there was
"no confirmation of any inten-
tional discrimination," Berkeley
has started to implement their
new Karabel Study, an alteration
to their traditional policy which
will take effect for the upcoming
freshman classes.

Bailey explained that Berkeley
has traditionally admitted 40 per-
cent...