

Diversity & Inclusion Works in College and Business

Affirmative action, as it pertains to higher education at least, received a vote of confidence from the U.S. Supreme Court in late June when it voted 7-1 to stand by its 2003 ruling that allowed the use of race in considering college admissions.

The high court also remanded the case, involving the University of Texas, to the U.S. Appeals Court in New Orleans to further examine whether diversity can be achieved without taking race into account.

Filing "friend-of-the-court" briefs in support of retaining the status quo were 57 large corporations, including General Electric, Xerox, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and General Mills, that argued affirmative action programs should be retained because the resulting diverse workforces have benefited their companies and society in general.

There's little doubt that career ascendancy is inherently linked to the academic degrees attained, and that symbiotic relationship represents the pillars of equal opportunity, as well as diversity and inclusion.

Throughout this issue of *Equal Opportunity* magazine, we learn various tales on how their rigorous university studies, while adhering to a student's strict budget, better prepared these professionals in the computer science, pharmaceutical and environmental fields.

Anil Rao's master's degree in computer science was in jeopardy when his savings and scholarships all the sudden weren't enough to make tuition. He scrimped, borrowed and worked full-time on campus and managed to finish his thesis and graduate on time, after which a job at Dell was waiting for him. He's now the company's global lead for embedded and systems management software solutions development in Dell's Enterprise Solutions Group.

If you're still in school, don't underestimate the importance of landing an internship as getting a foot in the door. "Each summer, about 75% of our intern hires are at the undergraduate level and about 25% are at the graduate level," says Amy Burtgart, director, talent acquisition, for AbbVie, which, until the beginning of this year was part of Abbott Laboratories.

The HR representatives from the other companies in the article, Covance, West Pharmaceutical, Genentech, and EMD Millipore, all speak of how interns have excellent chances of staying on after graduation, and also moving through the various organizations.

Picking a growing field, such as "green jobs" (i.e., those involved with protecting the environment) for one's career is always a prudent move, as Jasmine Powers has learned. She's a sustainability and health, safety and environment specialist for Vestas, a provider of wind turbines. Her graduating class had 13 students enrolled in the degree program; now it's upward of 150.



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