UNC defends use of race in admissions

University responds to lawsuit from group representing applicants

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — North Carolina's flagship public university is defending its use of race in admitting students and wants a lawsuit filed against it by a group representing past and potential applicants and parents to be dismissed.

The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill filed written arguments in federal court Friday, as did lawyers for the organization called Students for Fair Admissions that sued in 2014.

The plaintiffs contend the university's practices are unconstitutional and fail to comply with U.S. Supreme Court guidance from a University of Texas case.

"UNC's use of race is the opposite of individualized; UNC uses race mechanically to ensure the admission of the vast majority of underrepresented minorities," the group's legal brief says.

Chancellor Carol Folt and Provost Bob Blouin, in a campuswide message Friday, said the school's admissions policies and practices comply with the letter and spirit of the law. The university also has a longstanding commitment to diversity, the school's brief said.

"In its academic judgment, the university has determined that pursuing the educational benefits of diversity is integral to fulfilling its mission to prepare the next generation of leaders," the school's filing read.

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