



## U of Texas again facing admissions scrutiny

By Tara Garcia Mathewson

March 19, 2015

### Dive Brief:

- The conservative Cato Institute filed a brief with the Supreme Court urging review of the University of Texas at Austin's admissions policies following new information from a university system investigation.
- According to the institute, an alternative admissions process overseen by University of Texas at Austin President William C. Powers Jr. could have been used to favor race and ethnicity when considering potential applicants.
- When the university's "holistic" admissions process was upheld two years ago, the alternative process was not discussed, prompting the Cato Institute to cite it as a reason for re-examination, the Chronicle of Higher Education reports.

### Dive Insight:

Those opposed to affirmative action programs have taken their cases to the legal system for years, tearing down programs in California, Michigan, and elsewhere. The University of Texas at Austin program, which is admittedly "race-conscious," survived a threat in 2013 when the Supreme Court sent the case back to the lower courts and asked for stricter scrutiny. The latest investigation, commissioned by the university system, focuses much more on "undue influence" by politically connected individuals on admissions decisions, acknowledging race and ethnicity as acceptable considerations. The Cato Institute, however, is using the report to double down on its original argument with new evidence. If the Supreme Court justices have had a change of heart in the last two years or find the new evidence compelling, it could mean radical change for the University of Texas' admissions process.