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Racial Justice in Access to College in Kansas

Bradley Richards

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Racial Justice in Access to College in Kansas

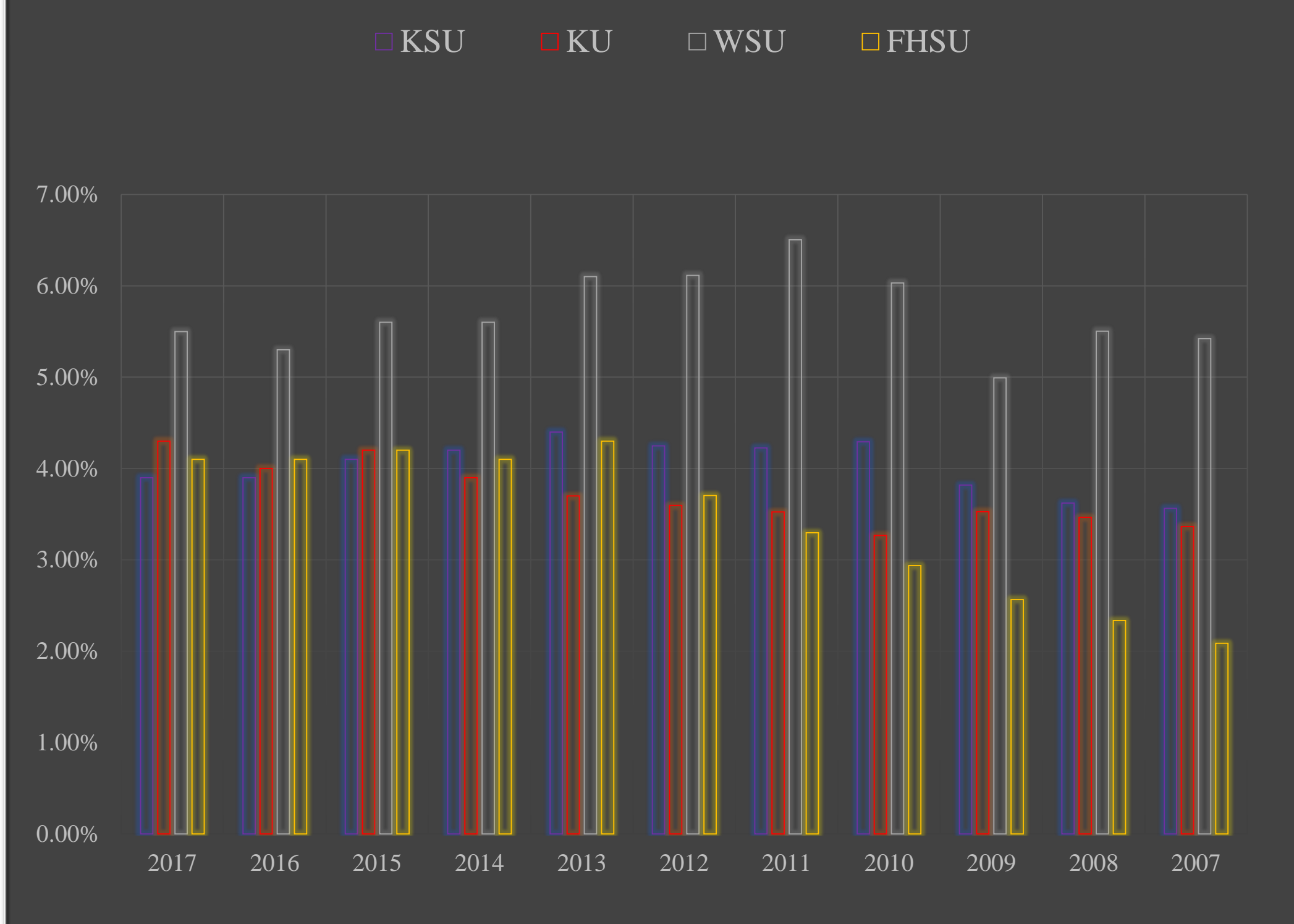
Bradley Richards, Dr. Jon Herington
Kansas State Department of Philosophy



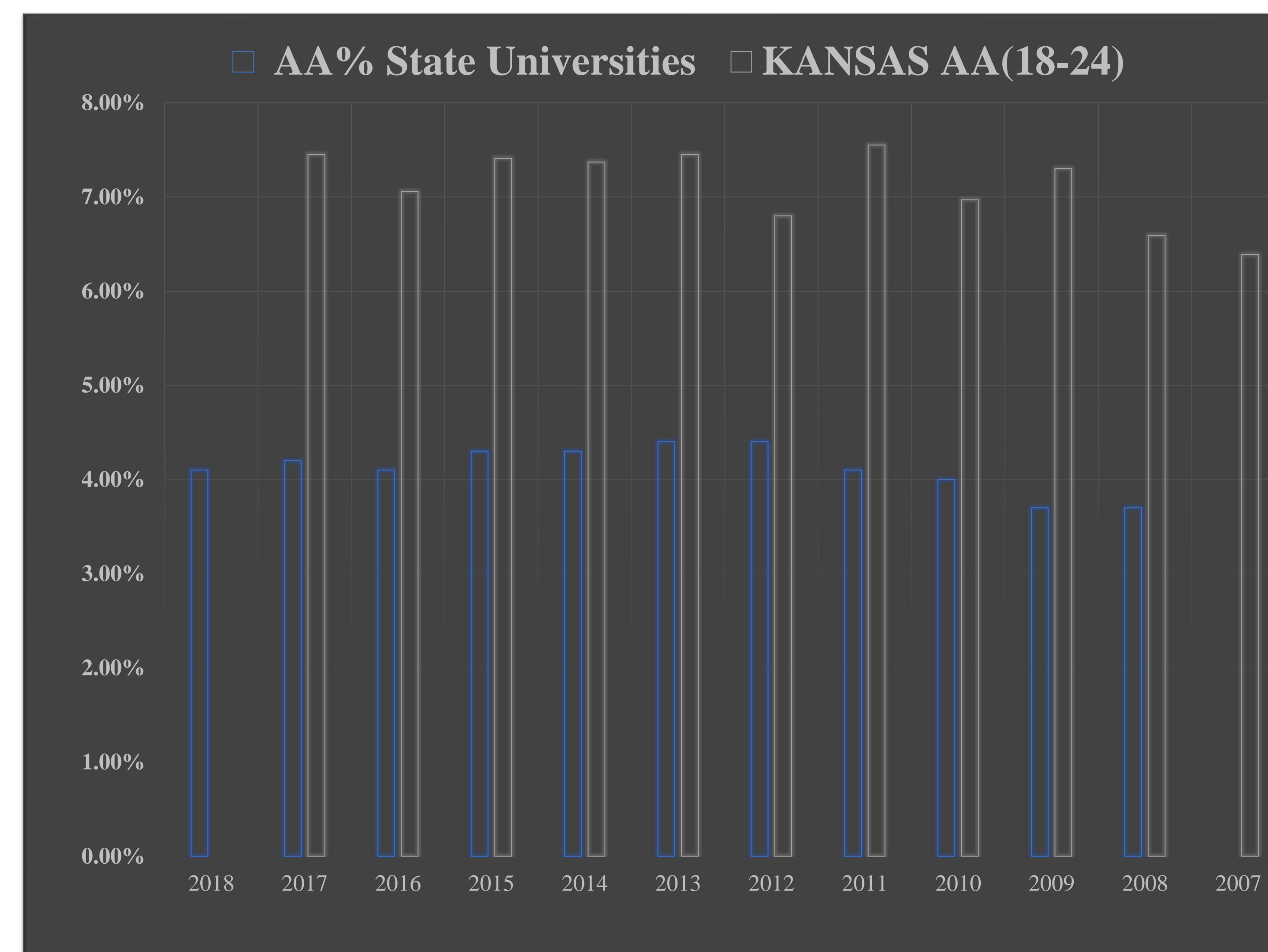
Introduction

This research project explores racial justice in the context of access to public universities in Kansas. This research aims to establish if 4-year universities in Kansas achieve two specific criteria, demographic parity and equal opportunity, with respect to enrollment of African Americans. To do so, we analyzed data from the Kansas Department of Education, Kansas Board of Regents, and United States Census Bureau. We collected this data over a ten-year period; from 2007-2017. We also examine some ways in which a lack of demographic parity may harm students of color on campus.

African American Student Population



Analysis



Demographic Parity

Demographic parity is achieved when the proportion of students enrolled in a college who are African American is equivalent to the proportion of Kansans ages 18 to 25 who are African American. According to the data, Kansas universities are failing to achieve demographic parity.

Equal Opportunity

Two interpretations of this data:

College-Ready: Red data captures the percentage of “college ready” high school graduates that are African Americans in Kansas. Therefore, any disparity between the blue and the red data is a disproportionate failure to enroll all the African Americans who are college ready.

Retention: Red data captures the percentage of freshman at state universities who are African Americans. Therefore, any disparity between the blue and the red data is a disproportionate failure to retain African Americans once at college.

The Effect on Students

Failures of demographic parity and/or equal opportunity may impose representational harms on African American students who do enroll. These may include:

- Stereotype threat
- Racially-insensitive campus climate
- Feelings of not-belonging
- Lack of mentors / role-models
- Code-switching stress

Conclusion

Public universities are failing to attract and retain African American students proportionate to Kansas’ population. These failures to achieve demographic parity may impose representational harms on African American, because universities look less black than the rest of Kansas.

References

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- Kansas Board of Regents Institutional Profiles for KU, KSU, WSU and FHSU For 2012-2007
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates