

# Ethnic diversity at LBHS

## How important is ethnic diversity?

By Zoe Epstein and Masha Goncharova  
Editors-in-Chief

**Masha:** A lack of racial diversity in a Californian beach school is not surprising. As students grow and flourish into young adults, however, this seemingly safe environment of Laguna Beach High School becomes almost a danger.

By getting naturally accustomed to the racial sameness of our school, we are unaware of our lack of readiness for the real world. By that, I mean that if you were put in a high school in Santa Ana, filled with racial diversity, you would likely not feel as comfortable as

in a high school in Newport Beach, which has student racial statistics similar to ours.

We are all headed off to college in the next four (or less) years. I believe that by continuing this trend of racial sameness, students will form mindsets about the world that stray from reality.

One way of incorporating racial diversity into the campus could be through teacher diversity.

Teachers, primarily, have to be good at teaching. However, a teacher force should also teach students lessons to prepare them for life. Although being racially diverse is not a lesson per se, I believe that a racially diverse teaching force could bring more awareness of the world to students in Laguna Beach.

I looked into the reasons why we do not have teacher diversity already. According to Principal Dr. Austin, there simply is not a variety of applicants.

“My goal as Principal is to get the best teachers I

can, but I can only hire the people who apply,” said Austin. “I think it is good to see different role models but to be careful not to just look at ethnic diversity.”

Dr. Austin brings up a good point. The diversity of the school as a whole makes up for the lack of racial diversity.

“We can be called both an academic school and an artist colony. When people act the same and have the same feel about them, that’s when we get in trouble. But at our school, we need to have the hard-core math teacher and the hippie art teacher,” said Dr. Austin.

Although the diversity of activities and classes offered at Laguna Beach High School should be celebrated, the lack of ethnic diversity remains a factor in our lives.

We should be aware that after we leave the generally racially homogenous Laguna Beach High School, other races and different types of people, in different social and economic standings, await.

**Zoe:** Diversity is everywhere.

From the moment we begin considering colleges, we start to see the diversity statistics of various schools. Throughout the college process, we see colleges concern themselves excessively with political correctness, trying to diversify so as not to seem discriminatory.

The theory behind it is equal opportunity for everyone. We provide scholarships and create associations in order to help ethnic minorities, as we should. We create opportunities for those who lack them and help those of Native American heritage get into school. Again, this is as it should be.

It is only when we begin to consider ethnicity above other qualifications that diversifying goes too far.

If the purpose of diversifying is to be fair and provide equal opportunities, then we must be careful. We should definitely help the underprivileged continue their educations

and careers, but we should not sacrifice academic or professional quality to do so. The purpose should be to bring the poor or undereducated up to the standards set by employers, not simply to ease the application process.

At Laguna Beach High School, the teacher population does not represent as wide a variety of minorities as teachers in many other schools do. So what?

I believe that the most important considerations in hiring teachers should be their ability to teach and the skills that they can contribute to our school. The teachers should do their best to prepare students for life, but they should do so not by being of specific ethnicities. Rather, they should prepare students for the challenges they will face by being open-minded and giving their students a genuine interest in learning.

That is not to say that a teacher’s ethnicity cannot add to a classroom. Mr. Jun

Shen’s Chinese heritage, for example, adds another dimension to his lessons when he teaches his World History students about the Cultural Revolution in China. Señor Jose Luis Gonzalez, who grew up in Mexico, is able to teach students about Mexican culture in addition to teaching them Spanish.

Certainly, ethnicity can add new dimensions to learning. We must remember, however, that ethnicity alone is not the instrument of diversity. I concur with Masha that diversity comes in many forms, that a person’s experiences and personality can add new dimensions to learning, just as ethnicity can.

LBHS really has a diverse force of teachers, with unique personalities and experiences that they bring to their classrooms.

There is nothing wrong with ethnic diversity either, but we should be careful, lest our fight against discrimination become indiscriminate favoritism.

## What really grinds our gears

Do you really think we care what you did last weekend? We don’t.

By Alexandra Michelson  
Opinions Editor

“Be on your best behavior,” is a well-known phrase that parents often deliver to their children.

Whether it relates to going to a movie, a dance, a party or just hanging out with friends, it is certainly a phrase that students have heard often.

Although, once you leave the house, your parents lose all control over your activities. You no longer have to be on your “best behavior,” and neither do your friends.

A fun-filled night is at your whim.

When students hold or

attend parties, it is almost expected that they will get out of hand. There is no such thing as a calm high school party.

However, no matter how much you want to inform your friends about your exciting weekend, everyone does not need to hear what happened at this party when school resumes on Monday.

It is human nature to be self-centered and to want to tell the whole world of your epic weekend adventures, but it is also human nature for others not to want to listen to you share them.

Spare your friends the whispered comments between classes about how

amazing your weekend was. Spare your friends the annoyance of having to hear you brag about that great party. Possibly even spare your friends the envy.

Keep your memories of your fun weekend to yourself. We don’t care about the crazy activities in which you partook, or how much you partied; we don’t care how “hardcore” you were.

No one has any interest in hearing about what you did over the weekend. What’s done is done, and your weekend is over with.

We really don’t care. We really just don’t. ...and that is what really grinds our gears.

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