

A política de cotas na Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul: regulamentações e resultados iniciais (2013-2018)

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Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar e discutir o ingresso fomentado a partir da Lei nº 12.711/ 2012 e da Lei nº 13.409/2016 na Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS). O público-alvo são estudantes que ingressaram no período de 2013 a 2018, por meio da Política de Cotas destinadas a estudantes negros e estudantes com deficiência. Para o desenvolvimento dessa discussão foram realizadas entrevistas, análises de documentos, bem como a leitura de referenciais que contribuíram para a interpretação dos materiais analisados. A partir dos resultados obtidos compreende-se que a Política de Cotas contribuiu para o acesso desses estudantes na educação superior, e estes a associam a possibilidade de melhoria na condição de vida, todavia identifica-se que essas políticas de ação afirmativa que contribuem para o acesso à educação superior devem vir acompanhadas de políticas focais de assistência estudantil, que possibilitem a permanência e conclusão do curso.

Palavras-chave: Educação Superior. Ingresso. Políticas de Cotas.

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The quota policy at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul: initial regulations and results (2013-2018)

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze and discuss the admissions fostered by Law No. 12.711/2012 and Law No. 13.409/2016 at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS). The target audience consists of students enrolled between 2013 and 2018, through the Quota Policy for black students and students with disabilities. To the development this discussion, interviews were carried out, documents were analyzed, and references were reviewed to support the interpretation of the analyzed materials. Based on the results obtained, it is understood that the Quota Policy contributed to the access of these students to higher education, which they associate it with the possibility of improving their living conditions. However, it is also identified that these affirmative action policies that contribute to the access to higher education should be accompanied by targeted student assistance policies that ensure the retention and completion of their courses.

Keywords: College Education. Quota Policies. Ticket;

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Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar y discutir la admisión promovida por la Ley nº 12.711/2012 y la Ley nº 13.409/2016 en la Universidad Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS). El público objetivo son los estudiantes que ingresaron en el período de 2013 a 2018, a través de la Política de Cuotas para estudiantes negros y estudiantes con discapacidad. Para el desarrollo de esta discusión, fueron realizadas entrevistas, análisis de documentos, así como la lectura de referencias que contribuyeron a la interpretación de los materiales analizados. De los resultados obtenidos se entiende que la Política de Cuotas contribuyó al acceso de estos estudiantes a la educación superior, y estos la asocian a la posibilidad de mejorar sus condiciones de vida, sin embargo, se identifica que estas políticas de acción afirmativa que contribuyen al acceso a la educación superior, deben ir acompañadas de políticas focales de asistencia estudiantil, que posibiliten la permanencia y conclusión del curso.

Palabras clave: Boleto. Educación Universitaria. Políticas de Cuotas.

Introduction

This study is the result of two master's research projects conducted between 2018 and 2020, focusing on admissions through the Quota Policy at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS). The aim was to analyze the admissions of self-declared Black students (Black and Brown) and students with disabilities under the quota system.

The issue raised throughout the study consists of analyzing data on the admission of quota Black students and quota students with disabilities at UFMS, Campo Grande campus, from 2013 to 2018. The study's temporal scope was determined by the implementation of Law No. 12.711/2012, which began reserving a percentage of higher education spots for Black students starting in 2013, and later by Law No. 13.409/2016, which began reserving spots for students with disabilities in the same educational level.

For the development of the study, data on admissions through the Quota Policy for Black students and students with disabilities were requested through e-SIC (Electronic Information System for Citizens) and sent to PROGRAD (Office of Undergraduate Studies at UFMS). Consequently, a form was sent to us filled out by all students upon enrollment containing information about the socioeconomic profile of the UFMS quota students. These were the primary data analyzed, positioning the study as both qualitative and documentary research.

In addition to collecting quantitative data, interviews were conducted with the staff responsible for managing DIAAF (Division of Accessibility and Affirmative Action). Two specific questions were highlighted: 1. What is the significance of the Quota Policy for people with disabilities? 2. What is your opinion on the self-declaration verification committees and medical reports?

The methodology for data analysis takes into account the historical movement, social conditions and contradictions, and the socioeconomic and political issues embedded in the neoliberal capitalist logic. These conditions are inseparable from understanding the context in which the students of this research are situated.

This discussion is relevant as it allows for an understanding of the admission process of quota students and the configuration of the Quota Policy at UFMS, so that, later on, it will be possible to

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(re)think better policy strategies that contribute to ensuring access: admission, retention, and completion of these students.

Access to higher education in Brazil, since the early 21st century, has undergone a process of reconfiguration. Educational policies promoted through the principle of university autonomy and by the State have contributed, in the first decades of this century, to a scenario of change and democratization of this educational level.

The implementation of programs such as the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI) in 2007, the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES) in 2007, the National Education Plan (PNE) in 2014, and the Quota Law No. 12.711 in 2012, amended in 2016 by Law No. 13.409, resulted in the expansion of spots on university campuses, democratizing access and contributing to ensuring that groups in vulnerable conditions can enter undergraduate programs at public universities, as well as allowing undergraduate students to enter, remain, and complete their courses.

Higher education courses in Brazil have always been associated with socioeconomically and socioculturally dominant groups, contributing over the years to the reproduction of inequalities between different social groups. "[...] one of the most elitist levels of education in Brazil is higher education, which still cannot meet the general demand of the population, with very few Afro-Brazilian students entering, remaining, and completing a degree [...]" (CORDEIRO, 2017, p. 25).

Social markers, such as race/ethnicity, gender, income, education level, disabilities, among others, are conditioning factors that contribute to the exclusion or difficulty in accessing higher education for these groups, as the university selection process is meritocratic, without considering historical and socioeconomic factors that may interfere with the performance of students entering this level of education.

Thus, the implementation of affirmative action in higher education emerges as a tool that can contribute to reducing socioeconomic inequalities, which are generated by the structure of the capitalist system and shaped by the neoliberal logic that underlies the society in which we live.

According to the website of the Ministry of Education (MEC), Law No. 12.711/2012, enacted in August of the same year, guarantees the reservation of 50% of seats per course and shift at the 59 federal universities and 38 federal institutes of education, science, and technology for students coming from public high schools, whether in regular programs or youth and adult education. The remaining 50% of the seats are filled through open competition.

Law No. 12.711, enacted in August 2012, aimed to reserve 50% of the places offered by federal university programs for Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. Four years after the law came into effect, at the end of 2016, Law No. 13.409/2016 was published, establishing university quotas for persons with disabilities.

Law No. 13.409/2016 amends the following articles:

Article 3 At each federal institution of higher education, the seats referred to in Article 1 of this Law shall be filled, by course and shift, by self-declared Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals and by persons with disabilities, in accordance with the legislation, in a proportion of no less than their respective representation in the population of the Federative Unit in which the institution is located, according to the most recent census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistic - IBGE. “Article 5 At each federal institution of secondary-level technical education, the seats referred to in Article 4 of this Law shall be filled, by course and shift, by self-declared Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals and by persons with disabilities, in accordance with the legislation, in a proportion of no less than their respective representation in the population of the Federative Unit in which the institution is located, according to the most recent IBGE census (BRASIL, 2016).

With the aforementioned amendments, persons with disabilities have come to be allocated a percentage of reserved seats equal to that of all other quota students admitted through the Quota Policy. The amendments to the Quota Law, including persons with disabilities as a group to be covered by the reservation of seats, demonstrate the recognition of this group, historically excluded from higher education. Admission through the Quota Policy offers this group an opportunity for access to education and underscores the need for new measures to expand their possibilities for remaining in higher education.

The *locus* of this study was the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), which, according to its Institutional Development Plan (2015), offers undergraduate and graduate programs, both on-site and distance learning. Graduate education includes specialization courses as well as master’s and doctoral programs. The university is headquartered in Campo Grande/MS and currently operates seventeen academic units, comprising ten faculties, five institutes, one school, and the Special Office for Distance Education and Teacher Training.

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At UFMS, the Quota Policy began to be promoted following the enactment of Law No. 12.711/2012. Although the institution—as noted by Maciel, Santos, and Teixeira (2019) —had already been discussing the implementation of affirmative action policies through a group composed of members of civil society and staff aware of the importance of such measures, it was only with the publication of the federal law that UFMS officially adopted the Quota Policy. Admission through the Quota Policy at UFMS is organized into categories that follow the guidelines set forth in the aforementioned document and can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories Defining Access through the Quota Policy at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul

| |
|--|
| Candidates with a per capita gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wages who completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Self-declared Black or Brown candidates with a per capita gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wages who completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Self-declared Indigenous candidates with a per capita gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wages who completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Candidates who, regardless of income (Art. 14, II, Normative Ordinance No. 18/2012), completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Self-declared Black or Brown candidates who, regardless of income (Art. 14, II, Normative Ordinance No. 18/2012), completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Self-declared Indigenous candidates who, regardless of income (Art. 14, II, Normative Ordinance No. 18/2012), completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Candidates with disabilities who have a per capita gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wages and who completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Candidates with disabilities who are self-declared Black or Brown, with a per capita gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 minimum wages, and who completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Candidates with disabilities who, regardless of income (Art. 14, II, Normative Ordinance No. 18/2012), completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |
| Candidates with disabilities who are self-declared Black or Brown and who, regardless of income (Art. 14, II, Normative Ordinance No. 18/2012), completed all of their high school education in public schools (Law No. 12.711/2012). |

Source: EVANGELISTA (2020).

Table 1 presents the different categories through which quota students may apply at the time of their enrollment. The categories highlighted in bold represent the target audience this article aims to discuss. In the first part, the discussion will focus on the access of Black quota students to UFMS, as well as their motivations for choosing their courses, in order to analyze the impact that access to higher education has on Black students admitted through the Quota Policy.

In the second part, the discussion will center on the admission of persons with disabilities to UFMS through the Quota Policy. The goal is to show how these individuals are entering the university using this hard-won mechanism, as a means of addressing and correcting historical inequalities.

The Admission of Black Quota Students at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul

The admission of quota students to UFMS occurred gradually, with 25% of seats added annually to its selection processes starting in 2013, in accordance with Law No. 12.711/2012. The full 50% of reserved seats for the groups targeted by the policy was implemented as of 2016.

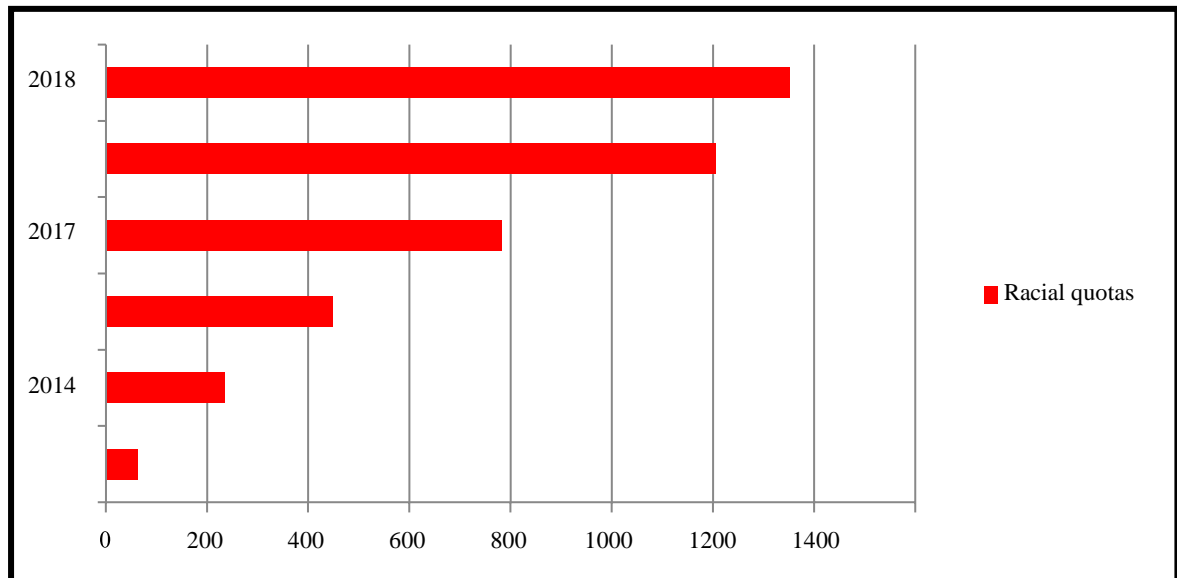
To obtain data on students admitted to UFMS through the quota policy for Black students, a request was submitted to the Information and Communication Technology Agency – AGETIC/UFMS for information regarding the socioeconomic profile of undergraduate students at the Campo Grande campus, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul (MS). The data request was made through the Citizen Information System (e-SIC), regulated by the Access to Information Law No. 12.527/2011.

In order to ensure the students' anonymity and prevent any harm, neither their names nor their Individual Taxpayer Registry numbers (CPF) were requested.

From 2013 to 2018, a significant increase was observed in the number of students admitted to UFMS undergraduate programs through the Quota Policy, as shown in Graph 1 below:

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Graph 1. Admission of Black Quota Students at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (2013-2018)



Source: EVANGELISTA (2020)

In Graph 1, it can be observed that the admission of Black quota students to UFMS increased significantly over the years selected for this discussion: in 2013, 63 students were admitted; in 2014, 234; in 2015, 449; in 2016, 782; in 2017, 1,206; and finally, in 2018, 1,352 Black quota students were admitted.

Thus, it was identified that during this period, a total of 4,086 students entered through the quota policy for Black students. Although Graph 1 clearly shows the growth in access for Black quota students at UFMS, when compared to the number of students admitted through open competition, the disparity remains significant. According to Evangelista (2020), 20,966 students were admitted through open competition during the same period.

Nevertheless, it is understood that without the Quota Policy, the number of Black students admitted to UFMS would be considerably lower. Furthermore, this type of admission has contributed to enabling these young people to access undergraduate programs that were once perceived as spaces of white supremacy. In this way, the quota system constitutes a mechanism aimed at democratizing access to higher education.

When analyzing the programs in which Black quota students at UFMS were most frequently admitted, the results showed that these were not necessarily evening or part-time programs, and that, in most cases, admission was not limited to teaching degrees (licenciaturas), as previous studies on the access of Black students to higher education had suggested. The findings of Garcia (2007), conducted at another institution and prior to the implementation of the Quota Law, had pointed out that “[...] socioeconomic conditions, and the availability of evening programs compatible with professional activity are some of the limiting factors in the ‘choices’ made by Black students when applying for university entrance exams” (GARCIA, 2007, p. 74). Indeed, these social markers remain relevant, but it is possible to observe that the Quota Policy has contributed to reducing their influence on students’ program choices.

Thus, it is understood that the Quota Policy has contributed to this changing landscape in program selection and aligns with Garcia’s (2007) assertion that socioeconomic factors are markers influencing the programs students “choose.” This is because the way educational curricula are structured and defined plays a determining role in shaping who gains access to specific programs and, subsequently, to earning a degree.

Table 2 shows the programs with the highest number of admissions between 2013 and 2018 at the Campo Grande campus of UFMS.

Table 2. Programs with the Highest Number of Admissions of Black Quota Students at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (2013-2018)

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-----|---|-------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1.º | Law | Law | Law | Law | Law | Law |
| 2.º | Civil Engineering | Medicine | Civil Engineering | Civil Engineering | Administration | Medicine |
| 3.º | Computer Science, Systems Analysis and Development, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, and Dentistry. | Dentistry and Chemistry | Systems Analysis and Development Computer Engineering | Computer Engineering | Computer Engineering | Administration |

Source: EVANGELISTA (2020).

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Table 2 highlights the programs with the highest number of admissions, revealing that these are socially prestigious programs, some of which are offered as full-time, evening, or both. Accordingly, the following is noted: the Law program, which was the most frequently chosen by Black quota students at UFMS across all years, is offered in both evening and full-time formats; the Business Administration, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Civil Engineering, Computer Science, and Computer Engineering programs are offered as full-time; and the Systems Analysis and Development and Chemistry programs are offered exclusively in the evening.

It is worth noting that the most selected programs by Black quota students are, for the most part, full-time. It is also important to highlight that some quota categories are limited to students with a per capita family income of up to 1.5 minimum wages and that, according to Evangelista (2020), working students were identified among the admitted students every year. This underscores the need to promote policies that support the retention of these students in their programs, since in this study, access to higher education is considered to have occurred only when the student completes the chosen degree.

Although access and retention are shaped by distinct policies, according to Veloso and Maciel (2015), the connection between the two is essential for students to be able to enter the university and complete their chosen program,

The definitions concerning the understanding of access and retention highlight such contradictions: access is conceived merely as entry, rather than as a process that includes admission, retention, and academic success. As a result of this limited view, specific programs have been developed to support retention. The separation between these different strategies reveals either the absence of policies that strengthen higher education institutions or a lack of a comprehensive policy for higher education one that treats access and retention as inseparable since the ultimate goal should be academic success, that is, the completion of undergraduate programs (VELOSO; MACIEL, 2015, p. 245).

UFMS offers retention policies through its Office of Student Assistance (PROAES). Nevertheless, some student assistance programs are characterized as universal policies, as they provide support to all undergraduate students. Other programs, however, establish specific criteria to serve particular groups of students, such as those in socially vulnerable situations.

Based on the various retention programs developed within a single higher education institution, it is important to highlight the need for both targeted and universal policies to support student assistance. For instance, there is a need for actions that promote the retention of students admitted through the Quota Policy, taking into account their socioeconomic profile and the broader historical and social trajectories of Black, Indigenous, and disabled students.

Similarly, it is necessary to implement retention measures for students admitted through open competition who may also require different types of support to ensure their retention and graduation from undergraduate programs.

In light of this, gaps in educational policies are identified. The discussion touches on how higher education institutions (HEIs) identify the target audiences of student assistance and how they design retention strategies that address the various dimensions of students' lives—pedagogical, social, and economic. According to Maciel (2011, p. 59), “[...] the discourse of inclusion is ambiguous because it enables a certain social appeasement by ‘benefiting’ people who require affirmative action, while at the same time preserving the power of those who hold privileged positions within the class structure.

This condition of socioeconomic inequality, stemming from the way social classes are structured, has a direct impact on students’ motivation to choose a higher education program, as well as on their expectations upon graduation. The socioeconomic profile form provided by AGETIC/UFMS included ten questions regarding motivations for choosing a course. From these, the most frequently selected motivations by Black quota students in each analyzed year were identified.

The questions included in the UFMS socioeconomic profile form were as follows: “Why did you choose this program? (Rate from 0 to 10): 1 – Personal aptitudes? 2 – Influence of family members and/or others? 3 – Already working in the profession? 4 – Better understanding of the world? 5 – Possibility of personal fulfillment? 6 – Low competition? 7 – Availability of job opportunities in the labor market? 8 – Job-oriented training? 9 – Salary prospects? 10 – Earning a higher education diploma?

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Table 2. Main Motivations for Choosing the Program (2013-2018)

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2013 | The main motivations for choosing a higher education program included: earning a higher education diploma (14.3%); job-oriented training (12.69%); the possibility of personal fulfillment and a better understanding of the world (11.11%); and personal aptitudes (9.5%). |
| 2014 | In another set of responses, personal fulfillment (9.5%), a better understanding of the world (6.93%), and personal aptitudes (5.9%) stood out. |
| 2015 | Further data showed job-oriented training (9.2%), personal fulfillment (8.9%), personal aptitudes (6.68%), and a better understanding of the world (6.45%) as key motivations. |
| 2016 | Additional responses highlighted earning a diploma (9.24%), market-oriented training (7.54%), personal fulfillment (7.1%), and both a better understanding of the world and personal aptitudes (6,0%). |
| 2017 | The possibility of personal fulfillment (17.67%), job-oriented training (16%), a better understanding of the world (15.6%), personal aptitudes (13.36%), salary prospects, and earning a higher education diploma (6.72%) were among the main motivations reported |
| 2018 | Earning a higher education diploma (32%), the possibility of personal fulfillment (28.47%), job-oriented training (26.92%), a better understanding of the world (22.94%), personal aptitudes (21.81%), and the availability of job opportunities in the labor market (13.9%) were the main motivations indicated. |

Source: EVANGELISTA (2020).

The results presented in Table 3 shows the options most frequently selected by the students. It is important to note that, in this section, the choices made by Black quota students reflected the relevance each option held for them personally. Thus, it was found that the main motivations were related to factors such as the labor market, personal aptitudes, earning a higher education diploma, and salary prospects. According to Evangelista (2020),

These results highlight the desire of Black quota students to enter the job market and work in the profession for which they were trained, as well as their aspiration to improve their economic conditions, particularly when the attainment of a diploma is associated with salary prospects (p. 115).

In the studies by Biase (2008), which discuss the motivations behind choosing undergraduate programs, the author addresses motivations similar to those already mentioned here. Her analyses indicate that young people's career choices are aligned with the capitalist context, as the value attributed to a profession is socially constructed certain professions tend to be more highly regarded and, consequently, better paid than others and this factor can be decisive in motivating course selection.

Finally, it is understood that access to education continues to be associated with the possibility of economic advancement or, at the very least, an improvement in living conditions for these future professionals. Nevertheless, other factors still pose obstacles in the social, academic, and professional lives of these Black quota students, beyond the racial barrier imposed by structural and institutional racism, which is reproduced on a daily basis.

The Admission of Quota Students with Disabilities at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul

Brazil bears a rigid and exclusionary historical legacy, marked by widespread prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities. In this context, mechanisms have been developed over time to enable the inclusion of this group in society through public policies.

The quota policy is an affirmative action measure and has, among its objectives, the reduction of discrimination and marginalization that these groups face on a daily and historical basis. Affirmative actions are aimed at individuals who have historically been excluded from the right to education and who share certain characteristics, such as ethnic, racial, social, or other traits.

Currently, when viewed in relation to the historical past, the achievement of quotas in higher education is considered a major advancement, since, given the context in which they lived, excluded groups did not always have access to education and when they did, it was limited.

Education is a right for all, guaranteed by law, and this right does not end with basic education it extends to higher education, as it is essential to ensure access to education in its various forms. According to Law No. 9394/1996, education is the duty of both the family and the State, inspired by the principles of freedom and the ideals of human solidarity. Its aim is the full development of the student, preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and qualification for work.

Maciel and Anache (2017) state that researching public inclusion policies in higher education means understanding a political action aimed at questioning whether access to education, as a human right, is being respected. In today's context, the educational process combines equality and difference as inseparable values and advances the idea of guaranteeing basic rights by contextualizing the specific conditions of all students, especially students with disabilities.

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Regarding the access of persons with disabilities through the quota policy at UFMS, the main body responsible for actions related to this implementation process is the Division of Accessibility and Affirmative Actions (DIAAF), which is part of the Office of Student Assistance (PROAES).

As of March 27, 2019, this Division was reorganized into three sections: a) **Accessibility Section** – responsible for students who are the target audience of special education, b) **Affirmative Action Section** – responsible for initiatives developed as a result of the quota policy at UFMS, and c) **Libras Section** – responsible for coordinating sign language interpreters, both for students admitted through the quota system and for policies developed to support their admission and retention.

To be admitted to the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul through the quota policy, persons with disabilities must meet several requirements. One of them is the submission of a self-declaration and a medical report, both evaluated by a committee composed of institutional staff members, including administrative and teaching personnel, always in an odd number to avoid ties in decision-making.

To uncover how the quota policy for persons with disabilities is organized at UFMS, two managers from DIAAF were interviewed. This article highlights two key questions: 1. What is the significance of the Quota Policy for persons with disabilities? 2. What is your opinion on the verification committees for self-declarations and medical reports?

When asked about the significance of the Quota Policy for persons with disabilities, one of the interviewees emphasized the importance of the policy but did not explain how it is organized, as can be seen in the following quote:

To understand the quota policy, it is necessary to trace the historical context of the situation, recovering the broader positioning of persons with disabilities within the realms of citizenship and society. Persons with disabilities have always been treated as a minority, just like the other groups included in the quota system: Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. Thus, the quotas for persons with disabilities aim to address a history of denied opportunities and a lack of recognition of their potential. All of this is part of the historical context, and the quota policy seeks to redress it, based on the understanding that individuals should be valued for their potential, for their abilities, and not for their disabilities. First and foremost, a person with a disability is a person. The quota system has helped people begin to see this reality. Some people oppose quotas, while others support them. “I want to believe that we could treat the institutionalization of quotas as a transitional period, envisioning a future where quotas

would no longer be necessary, because people would then truly be recognized for their potential, without bearing the weight of having had their rights historically denied simply for being who they are (LARISSA, 2019).

The quota policy represents a right won through the efforts of social movements. It is a public policy that establishes the reservation of seats, but with specific criteria, and its use does not imply a lack of merit. The notion of merit, often cited as a negative aspect of quotas by those who oppose affirmative action, reflects a mistaken belief that the quota policy diminishes or devalues the quota student.

However, understanding that there is a historical, social, political, and economic context that shapes one's opportunity or lack thereof to access higher education is fundamental to grasping the true meaning of the quota policy in higher education.

Furthermore, an important point raised by the interviewees is that the verification committees and self-declaration processes are currently receiving more attention than the actual support provided to students. This is evident in the statement by interviewee Gabriela, who noted that, at the moment, the focus is on quality control measures for the evaluation committees that assess medical reports for disability-based quota admissions, as well as ongoing debates about the very definition of disability. There are “legal loopholes” that allow both individuals with relative limitations and those with significant impairments affecting daily life, academic performance, and professional activities to fall under the same category (GABRIELA, 2019).

There is a clear concern with documentation; however, there is no significant emphasis on ensuring the retention of students. Those who are admitted receive no guarantee of support or assistance from DIAAF. The division is not adequately prepared to welcome students or meet their needs, which often leads to student dropout.

In Brazil, data on the access and retention of persons with disabilities in higher education also point to significant inequality. The struggle for access to higher education by this group was officially recognized in 2016, with the inclusion of persons with disabilities among the groups covered by the quota policy.

For persons with disabilities, the nature of discrimination differs in certain aspects from the discrimination faced by Black individuals (Black and Brown), yet both groups share a history of systemic exclusion and discrimination.

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To provide an overview of the access of persons with disabilities to UFMS, below is a list of quota students with disabilities who were admitted to UFMS campuses and programs in 2017.

Table 3. List of Quota Students with Disabilities at UFMS in 2017 by Campus and Program

| Year | Campus | Program Name | Number of quota students with disabilities |
|------|--------|--------------------|--|
| 2017 | CPTL | Law | 1 quota student |
| 2017 | CPTL | Medicine | 8 quota students |
| 2017 | FADIR | Law | 1 quota student |
| 2017 | FAENG | Civil Engineering | 2 quota students |
| 2017 | FAENG | Civil Engineering | 1 quota student |
| 2017 | FAED | Pedagogy | 1 quota student |
| 2017 | FAED | Physical Education | 1 quota student |

Source: GUEDES (2020).

Table 4 shows that a small number of persons with disabilities gained access to UFMS through the quota policy in 2017. A notable aspect is the medicine program at the Três Lagoas Campus, which had a relatively higher number of students compared to the other programs listed. Although Medicine is among the most sought-after and competitive programs, such a significant discrepancy should be investigated further to better understand the motivations behind these results.

The data compiled in Table 5 represent the number of quota students with disabilities admitted to UFMS campuses and programs in 2018.

Table 4. List of Quota Students with Disabilities at UFMS in 2018 by Campus and Program

| Year | Campus | Program Name | Number of quota students with disabilities |
|------|--------|----------------|--|
| 2018 | CPTL | Law | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPTL | Medicine | 7 quota students |
| 2018 | CPAR | Administration | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FADIR | Law | 1 quota student |

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------------------|------------------|
| 2018 | FAENG | Civil Engineering | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAED | Pedagogy | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | CPAQ | Administration | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | CPAQ | Geography | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAQ | Pedagogy | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | Law | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | Administration | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | CPAN | Accounting | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | Geography | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | History | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | Biological Sciences | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | Pedagogy | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPAN | Information Systems | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPTL | Law | 3 quota students |
| 2018 | CPTL | Administration | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAMED | Medicine | 6 quota students |
| 2018 | FAODO | Dentistry | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAMEZ | Veterinary Medicine | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAMEZ | Animal Science | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPCS | Forest Engineering | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPCS | Administration | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | CPNA | Accounting | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPNA | History | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPNV | Pedagogy | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPPP | Mathematics | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPPP | Information Systems | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | CPPP | Pedagogy | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FACOM | Computer Science | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FACOM | Computer Engineering | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FACOM | Software Engineering | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | FACOM | Information Systems | 1 quota student |

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| | | | |
|------|--------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 2018 | FADIR | Law | 5 quota students |
| 2018 | FAENG | Architecture and Urbanism | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | FAENG | Civil Engineering | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAENG | Electrical Engineering | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAENG | Building Construction | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FAENG | Geography | 2 quota students |
| 2018 | INFI | Physics | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | ESAN | Accounting | 3 quota students |
| 2018 | ESAN | Managerial Processes | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FACFAN | Nutrition | 1 quota student |
| 2018 | FACFAN | Food Science | 1 quota student |

Source: GUEDES (2020).

At first glance, there is a noticeable increase in the number of quota students with disabilities admitted to UFMS academic units: in 2017, 15 students were admitted, while in 2018, this number jumped to 72.

Another noteworthy aspect is that these students are admitted into a wide variety of UFMS programs, meaning they are not concentrated in specific areas. This encourages the institution to promote democratic access for these students across all courses, spaces, and buildings within the university.

However, the data also highlight the ongoing need to establish and improve policies for persons with disabilities in higher education. Admission must be accompanied by retention policies, and the university infrastructure must be adequately prepared not only in terms of physical accessibility, but also in ensuring that the entire staff is equipped to make students feel welcomed and supported so that they can complete their degree programs.

Final considerations

This discussion highlighted the importance of the creation of Law No. 12.711/2012 and Law No. 13.409/2016 for at least two of the target groups of affirmative action policies: Black students

(Black and Brown) and students with disabilities. The results presented reveal important aspects, showing that the implementation of the quota system at UFMS contributed to an increased number of admissions of Black students and students with disabilities into higher education.

However, the contradictions in the way these policies are implemented must be acknowledged and analyzed, so that political strategies can be developed not only to ensure access but also to support the retention and graduation of these students in their chosen programs. Therefore, it is essential to promote further studies on retention policies in higher education, especially for Black students and students with disabilities. It is worth noting that some universities have already begun developing additional retention initiatives, aiming to ensure that students not only enter but also remain in the institution and ultimately earn their degrees.

The results indicate a significant increase in the admission of Black students and students with disabilities at UFMS; however, retention efforts must keep pace with this expansion by developing programs that take into account the specific needs of the groups addressed in this study.

Regarding Black quota students, it can be affirmed that the Quota Policy has helped to promote changes in Brazilian universities with respect to access to undergraduate programs, which were previously occupied predominantly by self-declared white students. Moreover, for Black quota students, access to higher education is still associated with improved living conditions and the possibility of mitigating their situation of vulnerability, although it is understood that access to higher education alone is not sufficient to overcome the structural social barriers that continue to pose obstacles in their lives.

With regard to quota students with disabilities, it is evident that the lack of understanding about the specific needs of this group affects the organization of retention efforts, as was clear in the statements given by the DIAAF managers. Nevertheless, the interviewees expressed genuine interest and willingness to gain further knowledge about the admission of students with disabilities through reserved seats.

It can be concluded that the Quota Policy has contributed to the access of these students to higher education, and that they associate this opportunity with the possibility of improving their quality of life. However, it is essential to recognize that affirmative action policies aimed at expanding

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access to higher education must be accompanied by targeted student assistance policies that ensure retention and completion of degree programs.

Furthermore, it is understood that these policies should not be seen as the sole solution to the challenges faced by historically marginalized and vulnerable groups. It is hoped that increased access to higher education for these students will eventually help reduce the reproduction of historical, socioeconomic, and racial inequalities that have been perpetuated for centuries throughout Brazilian history.

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