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Two Studies Analyze Texas Admission Systems Written

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Two studies, although not yet published, were presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in regards to race-conscious admissions and Texas' 10 percent plan, which guarantees college admission to any public college in the state for students in the top 10 percent of their class, reports the chronicle.

The study of race-conscious admissions policies was prepared by Douglas S. Massey, a professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University, and Mary J. Fischer, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Connecticut.

Examining data from 28 colleges, they set out looking for support for the two most common criticisms of race-conscious admissions: the "mismatch hypothesis," and the "stereotype-threat hypothesis." The "mismatch hypothesis" refers to admissions policies that result in students finding themselves "in over their heads academically" who were accepted under those policies. The "stereotype-threat hypothesis" refers to the policies that stigmatize students as academically inferior.

Massey and Fischer gauged weight on an applicant's ethnicity by measuring differences in SAT score of the applicant to that of the rest of the entering class. Those students were then tracked through out college, monitoring GPAs, whether they left college by their junior year, and then were given a survey about their college experience.

Their study showed evidence of the "stereotype threat." They found the more weight a college put on admissions, the lower the grade-point averages were of its minority students, the more likely they were to leave college, and express dissatisfaction with their college experience. Although, the study also found that those who benefited most from race-conscious policies actually had a slightly higher averages and were less likely to leave college compared to other students.

Massey concluded that the positive effect of affirmative action outweighed the negative, and went further to say that colleges are finding ways to curb the "stereotype threat" by hiring more minority faculty.

The second study was conducted by Marta Tienda, a professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University, and Sunny Niu, a research associate at Princeton's Office of Population Research.

They found that minority-dominated schools increased the chances of black and Hispanic students of graduating in the top 10 percent of their class, ensuring their admission to

college in Texas. The study also showed that those enrolled in a more integrated setting were less likely to attain the 10 percent status.

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