

CEO PRESS RELEASE

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RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

New Studies Document Racial Preferences in Undergrad, Law, and Med School Admissions

(Sterling, VA) Three studies released today by the Center for Equal Opportunity document evidence of severe discrimination based on race and ethnicity in undergraduate, law, and medical school admissions at the University of Michigan.

The studies are based on data supplied by the University itself, pursuant to freedom-of-information requests filed by CEO and the Michigan Association of Scholars. The studies were prepared by Dr. Althea Nagai, a research fellow at CEO, and can be viewed on the organization's website, www.ceousa.org. Highlights of the studies are attached.

CEO president Roger Clegg will answer questions about the studies when they are formally released at a press conference on Tuesday, October 17, at 10:00 a.m. ET in Detroit at the Hilton Garden Inn (351 Gratiot Avenue).

CEO chairman Linda Chavez will discuss the study at another press conference on Thursday, October 19, at 2:00 p.m. ET at the University of Michigan student union (Pond Room) in Ann Arbor.

Ms. Chavez will also discuss the issue at Grand Valley State University (Allendale campus) on Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. ET. Mr. Clegg plans to discuss the study in Ann Arbor at debates on Wednesday at 5 p.m. and Thursday at 12:15 p.m., at the University of Michigan and Ave Maria law schools, respectively; and at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law on Thursday at a 4:30 p.m. debate there.

Linda Chavez said: "Racial discrimination in university admissions is always appalling. But what is really remarkable is that the weight given to race by the University of Michigan in its undergraduate admissions is actually heavier now than under the system that was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2003. If the old system was too heavy-handed to pass legal muster, then how can the new system be defended? The Supreme Court has obviously had no effect on stopping UM's discrimination."

Roger Clegg agreed. "It is clear that, left to their own devices, universities will not end the racial discrimination that Justice O'Connor said she expected to end in 25 years. Fortunately, in Michigan, the voters will have the opportunity in a few weeks to 'Vote yes on 2' and require that taxpayer-supported, public institutions like UM treat all Michiganders without regard to their skin color or what country their ancestors came from."

The Center for Equal Opportunity is a nonprofit research and educational organization that studies issues related to civil rights, bilingual education, and immigration and assimilation nationwide.

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Highlights of Center for Equal Opportunity Studies on Racial and Ethnic Admissions Discrimination at the University of Michigan

General

Severe discrimination favoring African American applicants over white and Asian applicants was found at all three schools in all four years for which data were received (1999, 2003, 2004, and 2005, the most recent year for which data were available). Hispanics were also favored, but by less; frequently whites were given preferences over Asians, although to a still smaller extent. In all three studies, the data received from the university were analyzed to calculate: (1) the gaps in academic qualifications among admitted students; (2) the number of nonblack students who were rejected even though they had better academic qualifications than the median black admittee; (3) the odds ratios for the three minority groups relative to whites; and (4) the probabilities of admission for students of different races but with the same academic credentials (test scores and grades) and background (in particular, in-state applicants with no parental alumni/ae). For the undergraduate and medical school students, the subsequent academic performance of students after admission to UM was analyzed (the law school did not provide the data needed for such an analysis).

Undergraduate Admissions

In the most recent year (2005), the median black admittee's SAT score was 1160, versus 1260 for Hispanics, 1350 for whites, and 1400 for Asians. High school GPAs were 3.4 for the median black, 3.6 for Hispanics, 3.8 for Asians, and 3.9 for whites.

In the four years analyzed, UM rejected over 8000 Hispanics, Asians, and whites who had higher SAT or ACT scores *and* GPAs than the median black admittee--including nearly 2700 students in 2005 alone.

The black-to-white odds ratio for 2005 was 70 to 1 among students taking the SAT, and 63 to 1 for students taking the ACT. (To put this in perspective, the odds ratio for nonsmokers versus smokers dying from lung cancer is only 14 to 1.)

In terms of probability of admissions in 2005, black and Hispanic students with a 1240 SAT and a 3.2 high school GPA, for instance, had a 9 out of 10 chance of admissions, while whites and Asians in this group had only a 1 out of 10 chance.

These disparities are reflected in subsequent academic performance at the University of Michigan, where blacks and Hispanics earn lower grades, and are less likely to be in the honors program and more likely to be on academic probation, than whites and Asians.

It is noteworthy that race and ethnicity are apparently more heavily weighted in admissions now than in the system declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Law School Admissions

Black admittees had lower LSAT scores and undergraduate GPAs than the other three ethnic groups. Whites and Asians had the highest LSATs and grades (whites' grades were slightly higher than Asians'); Hispanics' were higher than blacks but lower than whites' and Asians'.

During the four years for which we received data, 4415 Hispanic, Asian, and white students who earned higher undergraduate GPAs *and* scored higher on their LSATs than the median black admittee were nonetheless rejected.

The odds ratio favoring black applicants over whites was 18 to 1 in 2005, the most recent year for which data were available.

In terms of the probabilities of admission that year, an in-state male candidate, with no parents having attended the law school and with an LSAT score and GPA equal to the black admittee median of that year, would have had a 7 out of 10 chance of admission if black, but only a 3 out of 10 chance if Hispanic, and a 1 out of 10 chance if white or Asian.

Medical School Admissions

Black admittees had substantially lower MCAT scores and undergraduate science GPAs compared to other groups; Hispanic admittees' scores and grades were higher; and whites' and Asians' the highest (with Asian GPAs slightly higher than whites').

During the four years for which we received data, 11,647 Hispanic, Asian, and white students (or nearly 3000 students each year) who earned higher undergraduate grades *and* scored higher on the MCAT than the median black admittee were nonetheless rejected.

(more)

The odds ratio favoring black applicants over whites was 21 to 1 in 2005.

Likewise, differences in probabilities of admission in 2005 were dramatic. For instance, students with an MCAT total of 41 and an undergraduate science GPA of 3.6 have these probabilities of admission: 74 percent if black and 43 percent if Hispanic, but only 12 percent if white and 6 percent if Asian. For those with a 42 MCAT and 3.7 GPA: 85 percent if black and 59 percent if Hispanic, but only 21 percent if white and 11 percent if Asian. Finally, for those with a 43 MCAT and at 3.8 GPA, black applicants have a 9 out of 10 chance of admission (91 percent) and Hispanics a 3 out of 4 chance (73 percent), but whites have only a 1 out of 3 chance (33 percent) and Asians only a 1 out of 5 chance (19 percent).

Gaps in USMLE Step 1 scores--this is a licensing exam taken after the first two years of medical school--parallel racial/ethnic differences in entering qualifications. White and Asian median scores are substantially higher than 75th percentile black scores.