

'Acting white' is more about attitude

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emerged as an explanation for the educational achievement gap.

While Ferguson admits that the theory is still valid, he points to new research that show students are more likely to be accused of acting white because of their behavior rather than their academic performance.

"When people accuse others of acting white, it's not because of their high grades," he said. "It's either because they have attitudes of superiority that correlate with their high achievement that other peers resent, or it's just that they behave in ways and do things that white kids do more often."

Some of those behaviors include listening to rock music, speaking "proper English" and leisurely reading.

"Neither of these is an explicit rejection of high achievement, even though there might be the rejection or avoidance of some behaviors that can lead to higher achievement such as leisure reading or reading for fun,"

Ferguson said.

But, Ferguson argues that the acting white accusation is not as important as other socioeconomic factors and teacher preparedness when it comes to closing the gap.

"It is way down the list," he said. "If we were to talk about the importance of the acting white idea for explaining achievement gaps, it does not rank anywhere near the top."

Sue Jewell, a professor in the audience, said the lecture was important to her because it helped explain the gap.

"I thought he touched on some very important factors that contributed to the achievement gap between African Americans and European American students," she said.

Jewell also liked that Ferguson emphasized the importance of structural factors such as teacher involvement.

"I believe that he ended on a good note by placing more emphasis on the structural factors as opposed to lifestyle factors," she said.

Whites allege bias at N.C. State

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — North Carolina State unfairly favors blacks in its admissions process, complaints by a Virginia organization allege.

N.C. State would not comment on the case, but confirmed it is working with officials from the U.S. Department of Education.

The Center for Equal Opportunity, which describes itself as "uniquely positioned to counter the divisive impact of race-conscious public policies," filed the complaint.

The center's general counsel, Roger Clegg, said his organization filed it partly because it had tracked N.C. State's admissions policies in the past and also because the university responded to a 2003 request for more data under the Freedom of Information Act.

Information suggested the school was using "what in effect were quotas," Clegg said. "They had numerical quotas that they insisted be met."

Clegg said he did not know whether N.C. State still uses those guidelines.

Thomas H. Griffin, director of N.C. State's undergraduate admissions, said the universi-

ty considers various factors to decide whether to accept an applicant, such as grades, SAT scores, a student's interests and where he or she lives.

"And we also look at race," Griffin said. "We don't have a target, but we want to create diversity on campus in many forms."

N.C. State's 2005 freshman class is 80 percent white and 9.5 percent black, while U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2004 show the state's population is 72 percent white and 22 percent black.

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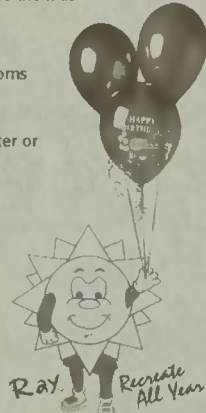
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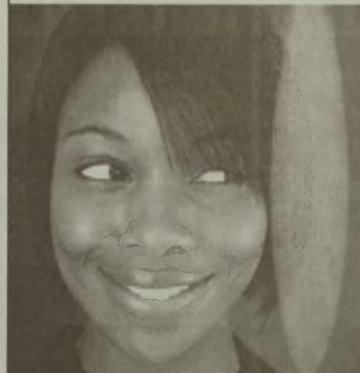
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