



Spring 4-9-2003

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Recommended Citation

Hanna, Jeffery, "Illinois Wesleyan Presents Paper on Affirmative Action at National Meeting" (2003). *News and Events*. 4733.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/4733>

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April 9, 2003

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Illinois Wesleyan Presents Paper on Affirmative Action at National Meeting

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Elizabeth Notz, a senior political science major at Illinois Wesleyan University, presented a paper that examined the impact of affirmative action in undergraduate admissions at the Midwest Political Science Association's National Conference in Chicago on April 3.

Notz's paper was part of a session titled "Affirmative Action, Difference and University Admissions." She was the only undergraduate among those presenting in the session and one of only a handful of undergraduates who participated in the conference.

In her study, Notz examined the role that affirmative action policies and percentage plans have had in determining the admission and enrollment rates of African Americans and Hispanics at the University of California and the State University System of Florida.

With two cases against the University of Michigan for its race-conscious admissions policies currently under review by the U.S. Supreme Court, Notz's study was particularly timely. She concluded that affirmative action policies were more clearly a factor in determining undergraduate admissions rates for minority students in California than was true for Florida. Notz suggested that these findings indicate that affirmative action is an effective method to increase diversity at the most selective universities.

In addition, Notz's statistical survey discovered differences between minority groups in their decision to enroll at a specific university in the University of California system and State University System of Florida. In California, African American students are influenced in their decision to apply or enroll by the extent of diversity on the campus which they are considering. In the meantime, she found, Hispanic students' decision to attend a particular campus is based almost entirely upon the financial aid package and the institution's reputation. In Florida, the diversity of a campus is a critical factor for African Americans only.

Notz, a graduate of St. Charles East High School in St. Charles, Ill., will also present her findings at the Illinois State University's Annual Illinois Conference for Students of Political Science on April 10 as well as at Illinois Wesleyan's John Wesley Powell Undergraduate Research Conference on April 12.