# NHRP PIC

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#### Counterplan: In the United States, colleges and universities ought not consider standardized tests in undergraduate admissions decisions except for the PSAT and NMSQT scores of Hispanic students that qualify for National Hispanic Recognition Program.

#### It Competes: The NHRP awards high achieving Hispanic students for their scores on standardized tests, and helps them in the college admission process.

Oded Gurantz Et Al, Institute of Education Sciences fellow in the Stanford University Graduate School of Education, Michael Hurwitz, and Jonathan Smith, Boosting Hispanic College Completion, SUMMER 2017 / VOL. 17, NO. 3, <https://www.educationnext.org/boosting-hispanic-college-completion-high-school-recruiting-graduate-nhrp-college-board/> ///AHS PB

NHRP was founded in 1983 by the College Board, a nonprofit that advocates for expanded access to higher education and administers college-level exams such as the SAT. Similar in spirit to the National Merit Scholarship Program, an annual academic scholarship competition conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, the NHRP was designed to recognize outstanding Hispanic high-school students and encourage them to enroll in college. The program identifies the top 2.5 percent of Hispanic students each year based on their performance on the 11th-grade PSAT/NMSQT, which assesses skills in math, critical reading, and writing. About 5,000 students are recognized by the NHRP annually, with California and Texas having the largest numbers of NHRP scholars. To establish eligibility requirements, the College Board analyzes PSAT/NMSQT performance among Hispanic students within six different geographic regions each year, and then identifies the score that separates the top 2.5 percent of test-takers from other students in that region. The eligibility cutoffs range from the low 180s to the mid-190s out of a maximum of 240 points. Students with qualifying scores are invited to join the program. To be formally accepted, they must then verify that they are at least one-quarter Hispanic, and their high school must document that the student’s junior year cumulative GPA is at least 3.5. Almost all students who are initially deemed eligible for the program are able to satisfy both requirements. Students recognized by NHRP are more likely to live in cities and attend large high schools with significantly more low-income and Hispanic students, compared to white students with similarly strong PSAT/NMSQT scores. They are also about four times as likely to have families with incomes below $50,000 and to have parents who did not graduate from high school. Compared to their white peers, they take and pass fewer Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and are less likely to attend four-year or out-of-state colleges. The program does not provide any direct financial reward to students but has the potential to influence their college preparation and application decisions in other ways. The College Board sends a letter directly to students that congratulates them for being in the top 2.5 percent of Hispanic students nationwide—a clear and perhaps surprising recognition of academic ability. Students are encouraged to participate in the program and list it on college, scholarship, internship, and job applications. The organization also informs school counselors of newly recognized students, and asks that the staff members help the students complete the necessary paperwork and apply to top universities as well as honor them through some type of school recognition. In addition, with the student’s permission, the College Board shares a list of NHRP recipients with about 200 four-year postsecondary institutions hoping to recruit academically exceptional Hispanic students. These recruiting institutions, as measured by rankings, graduation rates, and average SAT scores published by Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges, are more competitive, on average, than other, non-recruiting four-year institutions attended by Hispanic students who fall just short of qualifying for the NHRP program. They are also slightly larger and more expensive, though the percentages of enrolled students identifying as Hispanic are comparable at recruiting and non-recruiting schools. Thus, NHRP status can affect students’ college-going decisions and degree completion through two primary mechanisms. First, research has shown that many high-performing students do not apply to elite institutions even though they are eligible, and that informing them about college options can shift where students apply and ultimately enroll. Second, recognized students often receive targeted outreach and financial incentives from colleges that actively recruit NHRP scholars as part of their efforts to increase diversity among their students.

#### This empirically helps underrepresented Latinx students get into good colleges.

Gurantz Et Al 2

Over the past decade, Hispanic students have graduated high school and entered college in growing numbers. Yet the rate of Hispanic college completion has remained persistently lower than that of whites and other ethnic groups in the United States: only 23 percent of Hispanic adults hold any postsecondary degree compared to 42 percent of all adults. Helping raise the Hispanic college graduation rate is an urgent goal, given the persistently high rate of poverty among Hispanic families, growth of the Hispanic population to account for one in five college-age Americans, and mounting concerns about racial and economic inequality. The question is, how? One potential strategy involves helping high school students broaden the set of colleges to which they apply and enroll. Hispanic students may be more constrained in their college-selection process than other groups, and are far more likely to attend two-year colleges, which typically have far lower graduation rates than four-year institutions. Just 56 percent of Hispanic college students enroll at four-year institutions compared to 72 percent of non-Hispanic white students. Hispanics are also less likely than members of other ethnic groups to earn a bachelor’s degree: 15 percent of Hispanics have a bachelor’s degree, compared to 33 percent of whites, 54 percent of Asians, and 22 percent of African Americans (see Figure 1). We examine an intervention designed to expand Hispanic students’ college exposure: the National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP), a College Board initiative that identifies top-performing Hispanic students based on their 11th-grade Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) scores. NHRP changes two key features of their high-school experience. First, the College Board notifies students and school staff, such as school counselors, about this prestigious award. Second, with the student’s permission, the College Board shares lists of NHRP honorees with postsecondary institutions looking to recruit Hispanic students. We measure the impact of this early, pre-application recognition on students’ enrollment decisions, as well as their college persistence and degree attainment rates. We find evidence that the program induces students to apply to and attend more elite institutions, shifting students from two-year to four-year institutions as well as to out-of-state and public flagship colleges, all areas where Hispanic attendance has lagged. Overall, NHRP recipients are 1.5 percentage points more likely to enroll at a four-year institution, 5 percentage points more likely to attend both an out-of-state college and a recruiting institution, and 3 percentage points more likely to attend a public flagship institution. The program’s impact on college completion is generally positive but statistically insignificant; however, we find sizable increases in bachelor’s degree completion among students who otherwise were at the highest risk for dropping out of college. Together, these findings demonstrate that college outreach can have substantial impacts on the enrollment choices of Hispanic students and can serve as a lever for institutions looking to draw underrepresented, academically talented students.

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