

# Exploring Impacts of Implicit Bias in Higher Education


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# My background

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- Assistant Campus Diversity Officer at UC Santa Cruz since July 2013
  - Outreach and Diversity Office at UCSF
  - Licensed Attorney since 2007
  - Areas of Practice: Civil Rights Litigation, Employment Law, Criminal Law
  - Golden Gate University School of Law, J.D.
  - UC Berkeley, B.A. English
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# Overview

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- Defining and identifying implicit bias
  - Why should we address implicit biases
  - Impacts of implicit bias in higher education / advising
  - Debiasing
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# Have We Arrived?



# Defining Implicit Bias

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**Implicit bias** refers to the *attitudes* or *stereotypes* that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an *unconscious manner*.

**Explicit biases** are those that are held or endorsed on a conscious level (overt prejudice)

Blair, 2002; Rudman, 2004a; Staats & Patton, 2013



# Defining Implicit bias

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Much of the literature suggests that these biases, which encompass both *favorable and unfavorable assessments*, are activated unconsciously, involuntarily and/or without one's awareness or intentional control.

# Defining Implicit Bias

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The implicit associations we hold arise outside of conscious awareness; therefore, ***they do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.***

# Where do implicit biases come from?

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Factors that can influence our implicit orientation:

- Early life experiences
- Media and news programming
- Cultural biases (*passive observations of who occupies valued roles and devalued roles in the community*)
- Yourself



*Our minds automatically justify our decisions, blinding us to the true source, or beliefs, behind our decisions. Ultimately, we believe our decisions are consistent with our conscious beliefs, when in fact, our unconscious is running the show.”*

Howard Ross, Kirwin Institute, 2008

# Mechanism to identify our implicit biases?

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In 1995 social psychologists Anthony Greenwald and Mahzarin Banaji proposed the idea that social behavior may not always be under a person's conscious control.

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a sorting task which reveals something about our automatic, non-deliberate, associations.

For more detailed information about the IAT and how it works please visit:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/background/index.jsp>

# Implicit Association Test (IAT)

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- 4.5 million people
- 75% of Whites and Asians demonstrated an implicit bias in favor of Whites compared to Blacks
- 80% (IAT on age bias) demonstrated a negative implicit bias against the elderly

# Why try to understand?

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- Even the most well-meaning person unwittingly **allows unconscious thoughts and feelings to influence seemingly objective decisions.**
- Understanding the nuances of implicit bias is critical for **addressing the inequities** that are byproducts of structural forces.

# Why address our implicit biases?

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*"Biases that we do not acknowledge but that persist, unchallenged, in the recesses of our minds, undoubtedly shape our society."*

Rudman, 2004



# Visual Impacts

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Entertainment media perpetuates stereotypes

Exposure to nonverbal race bias on television can influence individuals' race associations and attitudes

# TV Show: “What Would You Do?”

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[Youtube Clip](#)



ases in Higher Education



Implicit bias can permeate educational settings in several forms, all of which can yield disadvantageous consequences for students of color and other underrepresented populations.

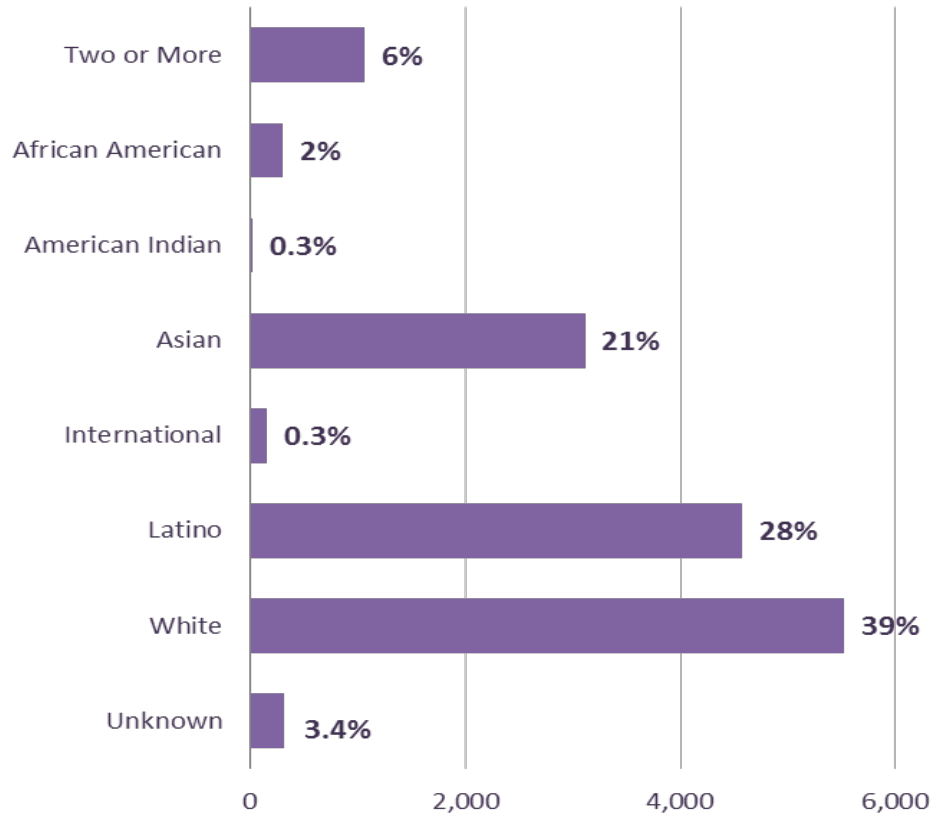
- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review



# UCSC Students, Race/Ethnicity

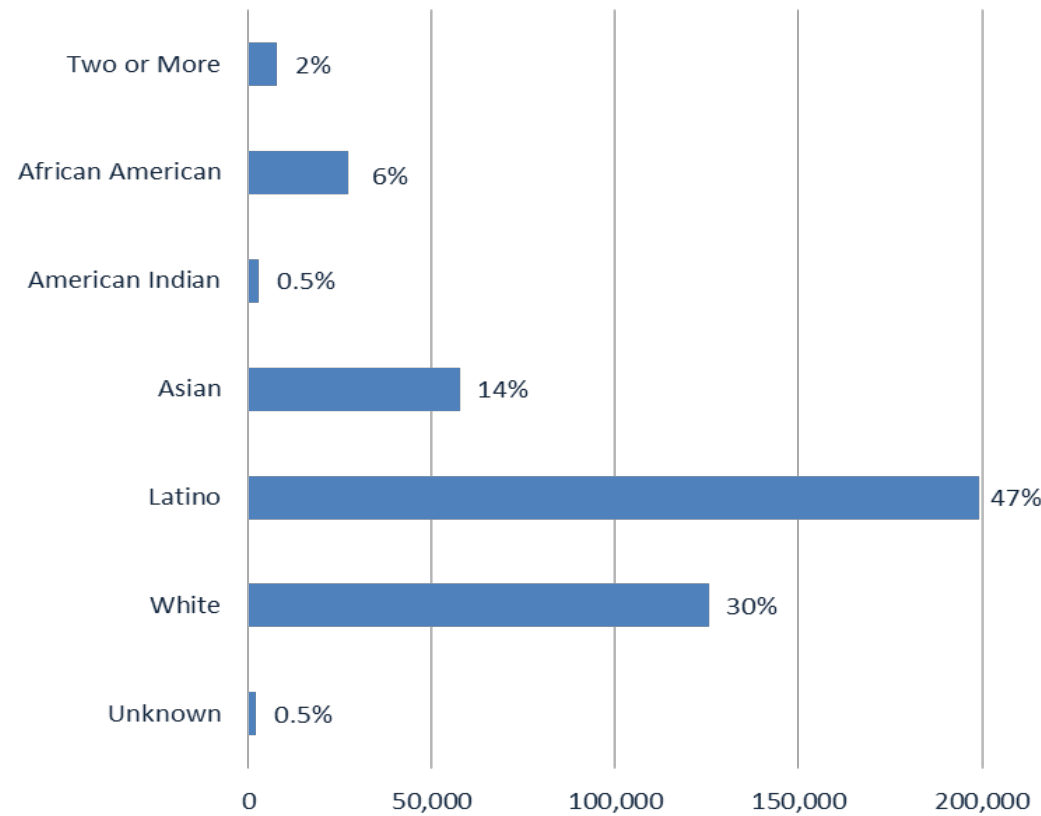
## Undergraduate Students

by Race/Ethnicity : 15,088  
3 Quarter Average : 2013 - 2014



## California Public High School Students

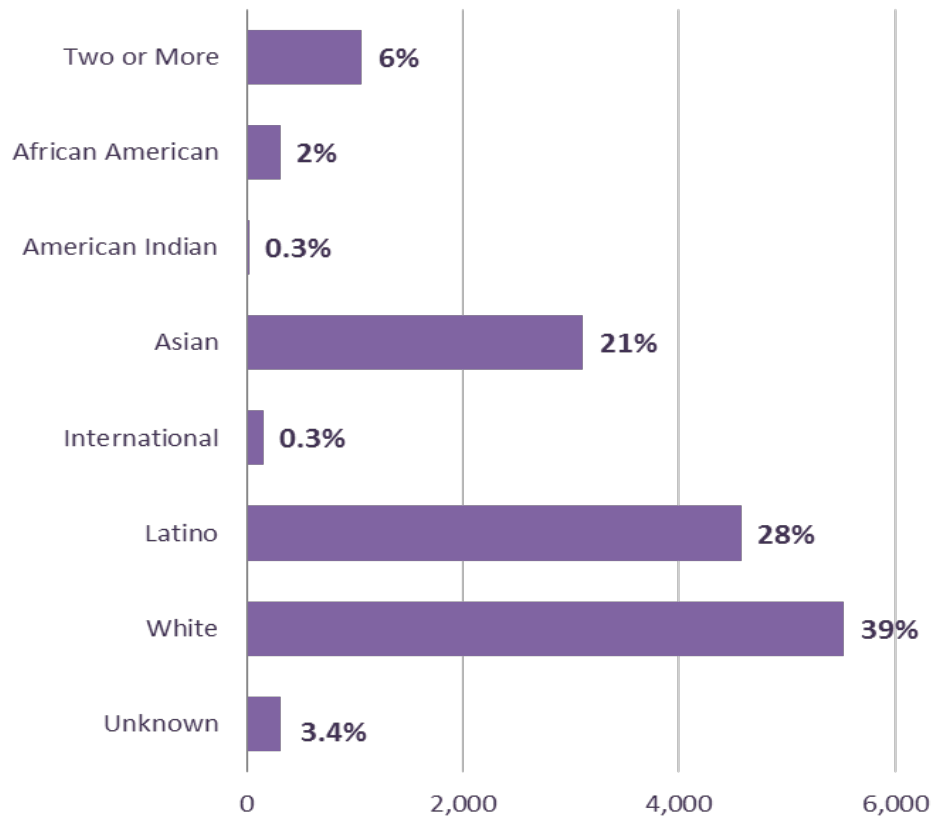
by Race/Ethnicity: 422,177  
2012 - 2013 CA Department of Education - CALPADS



# UCSC Students & Faculty, Race/Ethnicity

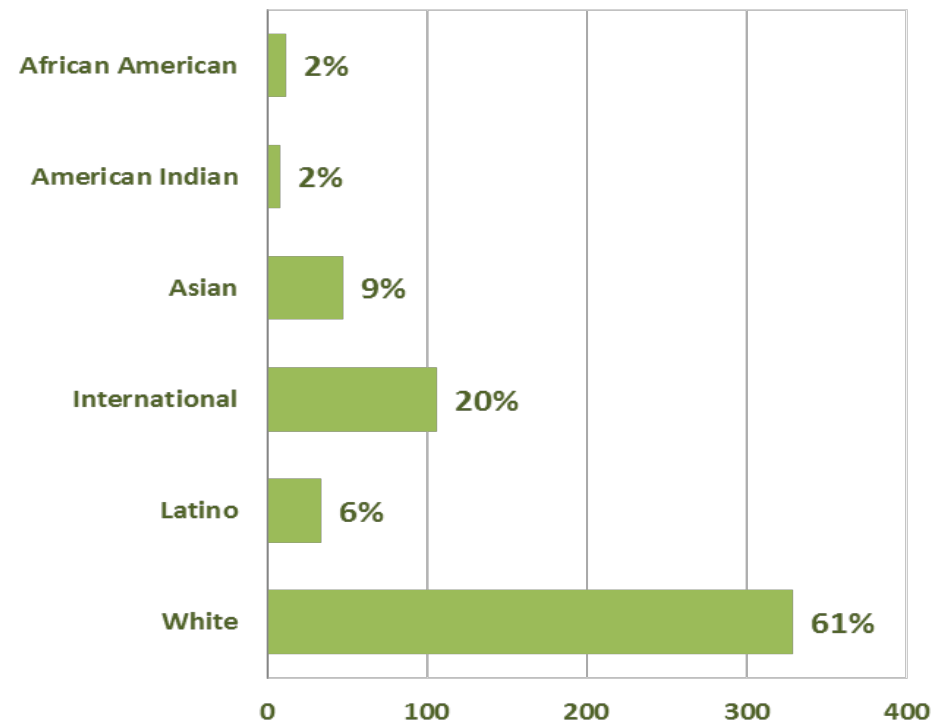
## Undergraduate Students

by Race/Ethnicity : 15,088  
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## Faculty

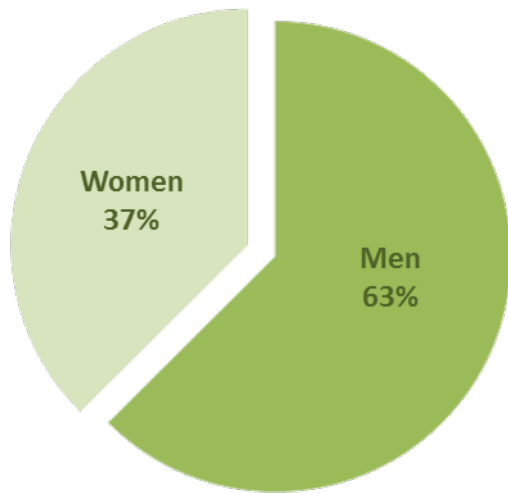
by Race/Ethnicity: 539  
July 1, 2013



# UCSC Faculty, Gender

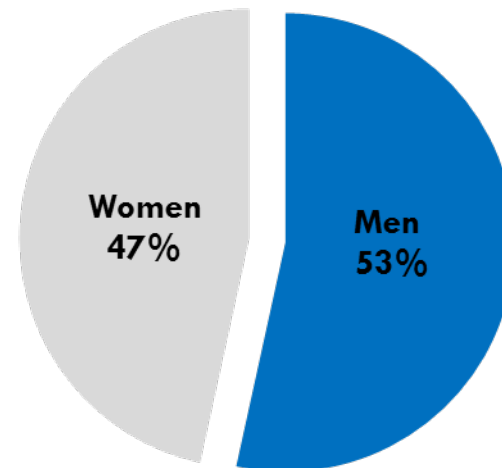
## Faculty

by Gender: 539  
July 1, 2013



## National Availability

by Gender : 435,404  
UC Office of President  
1990-2004 National Doctoral Degree Recipients



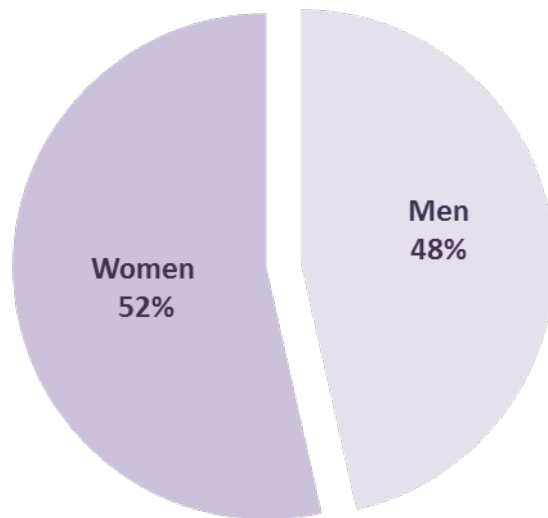
UCSC has the highest percentage of female faculty in UC system

# UCSC Student & Faculty, Gender

## Undergraduate Students

by Gender: 15,088

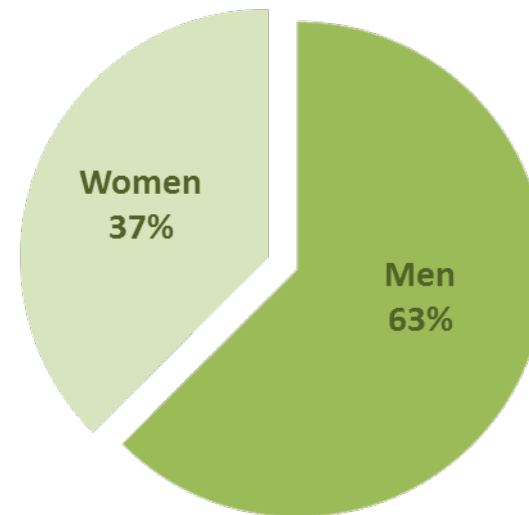
3 Quarter Average: 2013 - 2014



## Faculty

by Gender: 539

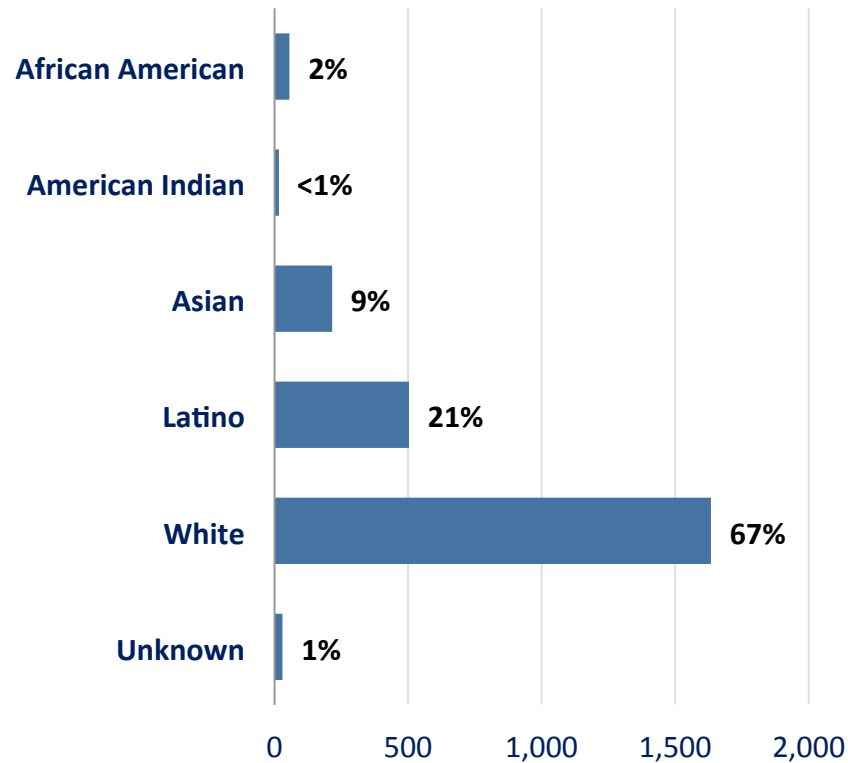
July 1, 2013



# UCSC Career Staff Race/Ethnicity

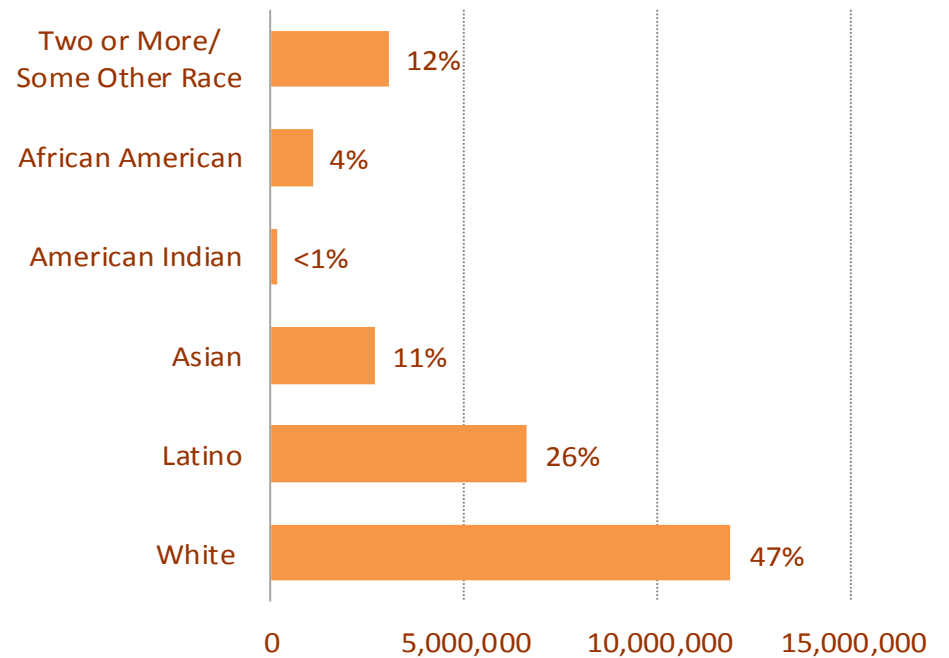
## Staff

by Race/Ethnicity: 2,458  
December 31, 2013



## California - Labor Force

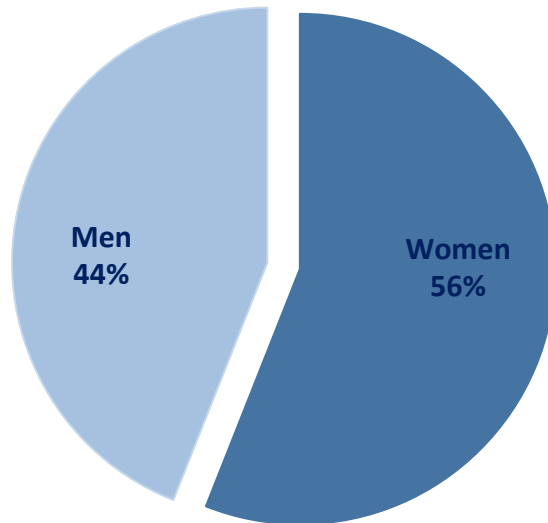
by Race/Ethnicity : 25,450,185  
2008-2012 American Community Survey - Employment Status



# UCSC Career Staff, Gender

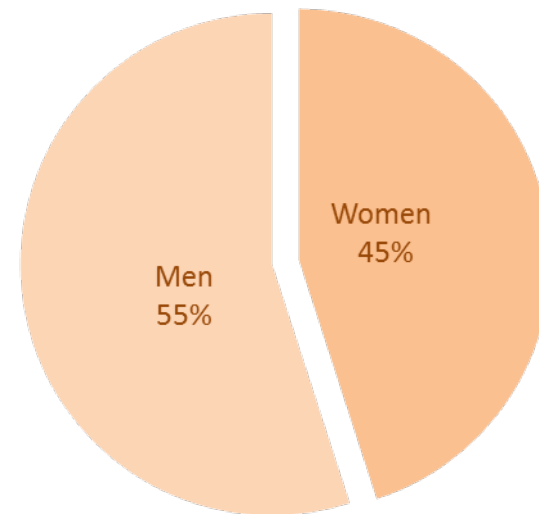
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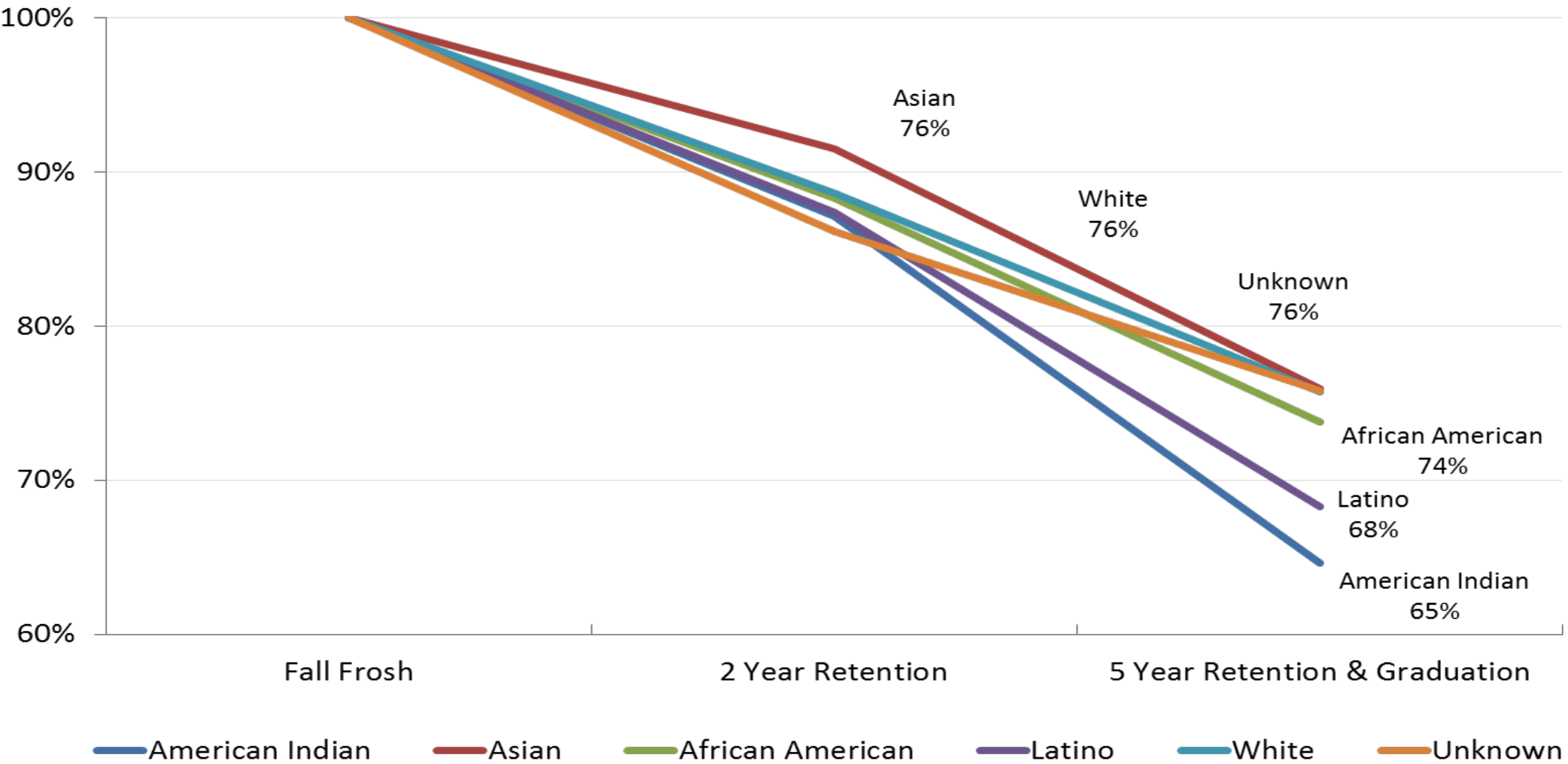


## California - Labor Force

by Gender : 25,450,185  
2008-2012 American Community Survey - Employment Status



# UCSC Retention & Graduation Rates 2008-2012 Fall Frosh Cohort by Race/Ethnicity





Explicit attitudes can significantly influence our decisions, even when we are sincerely committed to acting in an objective manner



# Teacher/Advisor Expectations of Student Achievement

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Many studies have shown that teacher expectations tend to vary based on the demographic characteristics of their students.

- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review



# Teacher/Advisor Expectations of Student Achievement

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The research asserts that teachers who hold negative prejudiced attitudes "appeared more predisposed to evaluate their ethnic minority students as being less intelligent and having less promising prospects for their school careers."

Van den Bergh, et al., 2010



# Teacher/Advisor Expectations of Student Achievement

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Teachers hold lower expectations for African American and Latino/a children compared to European American children which can affect student academic performance.

Teachers' referrals and speech patterns (i.e., positive, neutral, and negative speech) differ toward European American students as opposed to African American, Asian, or Latino/a students.

Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007





Are you less likely to help and support certain students because you underestimate their intellectual potential?

# Debiasing

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THE HOLY GRAIL OF IMPLICIT BIAS RESEARCH IS TO CHANGE THE UNDERLYING ASSOCIATIONS THAT FORM THAT BASIS OF IMPLICIT BIAS



# Debiasing

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While implicit biases are deeply entrenched in the subconscious, researchers generally agree that biases are malleable and that implicit associations may be unlearned.

# Debiasing

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Debiasing is not a simple task as it involves the construction of new mental associations. **Intention**, **attention**, and **time** are needed so that new responses are learned well enough to compete with the formerly automatically activated responses.

Devine, 1989





# Debiasing

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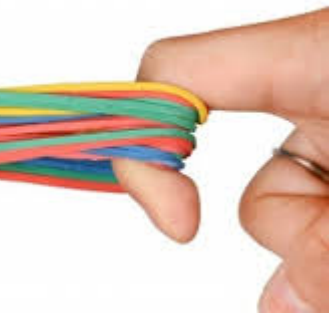
1. Openly acknowledge your biases and directly challenge and refute them
2. Counter-Stereotype Training: Conscious efforts to counter stereotypes can inhibit the activation of automatic associations
3. Intergroup contact: sharing equal status and common goals
4. Education efforts aims at raising awareness of implicit bias
5. Have a sense of accountability

Blair & Banaji, 1996



# Debiasing

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“Like stretched rubber bands, the associations modified ... likely soon return to their earlier configuration. Such elastic changes can be consequential, but they will require reapplication prior to each occasion on which one wishes them to be in effect.”

Banaji & Greenwald, 2013

## *Characteristics of Academic Advising that Contribute to Racial and Ethnic Minority Student Success at Predominately White Institutions*

Participants noted the importance of advisors who humanized the practice of academic advising.

They highlighted the impact of those who adopted a multifaceted approach to advising (*students' academic, psychological, and social problems are related issues*).

Participants emphasized the importance of proactive academic advising (*connecting minority students with the resources they need to succeed*).

D. D. Museus and Joanna N. Ravello (2010) Characteristics of Academic Advising That Contribute to Racial and Ethnic Minority Student Success at Predominantly White Institutions. NACADA Journal: Spring, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 47-58.

# Thank You!

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OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

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