Overall, affirmative action is a mechanism that has allowed historically excluded groups to attend college.?For decades, elite colleges and universities closed their doors to students of color.Race-conscious admissions practices, such as affirmative action, attempt to remedy these inequities by encouraging colleges to take a closer look at some of the nontraditional factors that could make a student successful--factors often overlooked in traditional admissions criteria.Affirmative action combats the effects of this discrimination by allowing colleges and universities to be more intentional in the ways they evaluate applicants.Students of color have long faced systemic barriers in the American education system, including exclusion, segregation, underfunding, fewer resources, and lower familial wealth.As a result, students of color remain vastly underrepresented at the country's top-tier institutions.

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