



Majority say teach evolution in Texas

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A new study finds 95 percent of science professors at Texas' public and private universities are against a state policy requiring weaknesses in the theory of evolution be covered in public school science classes.

A sociology professor at the University of Texas at Arlington surveyed 464 university biologists and anthropologists for a study by the progressive group Texas Freedom Network.

The majority surveyed said schools should teach "just evolution" in covering the origins of life on earth. The rest said children should learn both evolution and the creationist theory called "intelligent design."

"Many of these science faculty members help determine who gets into our state colleges and universities," said the study's author, Raymond A. Eve, in Monday's online edition of The Dallas Morning News. "Their responses should send parents a clear message that those who want to play politics with science education are putting our kids at risk."

Most study respondents said they believe any focus on the weaknesses of evolution theory and on alternative theories would harm students' college readiness and their ability to compete for jobs.

Survey results were released ahead of Wednesday's state Board of Education public hearing on new science curriculum standards.

A main topic of discussion is expected to be how teachers should treat Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

New science curriculum standards for Texas public school students will be voted on early next year in what is expected to be a close vote by the state Board of Education. A majority of members have said they are in favor of retaining the current mandate to cover both strengths and weaknesses of major scientific theories, notably evolution.

Standards adopted by the board will remain in place for the next decade.

Texas Freedom Network president Kathy Miller, whose group often spars with social conservatives, said it would be a mistake to ignore the beliefs of science professors from public and private universities across the state.

"This survey leaves no doubt that the political crusade against evolution and other attempts to dumb down our public school science curriculum are deeply misguided," Miller said.