EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October 20, 2021</th>
<th>Student Union Ballroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00 pm – 4:30 pm (EDT)</td>
<td>Knoxville, TN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AGENDA
(Special Session – Standardized Testing in Admissions)

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

II. Opening Remarks of the Committee Chair

III. Overview

IV. Campus Perspectives

V. Keynote Speaker (Li Cai, PhD)

VI. Discussion and Next Steps

VII. Closing Remarks

VIII. Adjournment

Supplemental Materials

1. Summary – News Articles

2. Summary – Journal Articles

3. The History of Standardized Testing in American Higher Education

4. The Impact of COVID on Standardized Test Submission Rates
DEFINITIONS

- **Test Mandatory**: required of all applicants for admissions decision.
- **Test Optional**: students can choose whether to submit SAT/ACT scores.
- **Test Flexible**: students have the option to submit other test scores (AP, IB).
- **Test Blind**: tests not factored into admissions even if submitted.
FIRST-YEAR APPLICANTS
Overview of Admissions Review and First-Year Profile at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

☐ TRADITIONAL
  • Application for Admission
  • Standardized test score
  • Official High School transcript
  • $30 Application Fee
  • 2.85 GPA and 18 ACT Superscore or 2.5 GPA and 21 ACT Superscore (or SAT equivalent)
  • Conditional admission by committee review

☐ TEST OPTIONAL
  • Application for Admission
  • Official High School transcript
  • $30 Application Fee
  • Academic Recommendation letter
  • ACT/SAT test scores not required for admission for students with 3.0 GPA; test scores required for merit scholarships
  • Test optional admissions practice for fall 2021 and fall 2022

ACCESS + SUCCESS METRICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Enrollment</td>
<td>2,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG GPA</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG ACT</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Retention</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 YR Grad Rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIRST-YEAR APPLICANTS
Overview of Admissions Review and First-Year Profile at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

HOLISTIC REVIEW

UTK utilizes a competitive but holistic admissions process where we evaluate every part of the application, considering student experience and preparation in academic areas as well as other factors including: rigor of high school curriculum, difficulty of senior-level coursework, optional letter(s) of recommendation, and more.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

☐ REQUIRED
• Application for Admission
• UTK Core GPA
• One Essay (choose one of seven prompts)
• Standardized Test Scores OR Test Optional Essay
• $50 Application Fee

☐ OPTIONAL
• Recommendation letters (academic, professional, or personal)
• Supporting statement

ACCESS + SUCCESS METRICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Enrollment</td>
<td>5,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG GPA</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG ACT</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Retention</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 YR Grad Rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIRST-YEAR APPLICANTS
Overview of Admissions Review and First-Year Profile at the University of Tennessee, Martin

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

☐ TRADITIONAL
  • 3.0 GPA and 19 ACT Superscore or 2.7 GPA and 21 ACT Superscore (or SAT equivalent)
  • Conditional admission by committee review

☐ TEST-FLEXIBLE
  • ACT/SAT test scores not required for admission for students with 3.0 GPA; test scores strongly encouraged for merit scholarships and class placement
  • Test-flexible admissions practice for fall 2021 and fall 2022
  • Fall 2023 test-flexible/test-optional admissions decision will come in early fall 2022

ACCESS + SUCCESS METRICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Enrollment</td>
<td>1,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG GPA</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG ACT</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Retention</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 YR Grad Rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIRST-YEAR APPLICANTS
Overview of Admissions Review and First-Year Profile at the University of Tennessee, Southern

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

☐ TRADITIONAL
  • 3.0 GPA and 17 ACT Composite or SAT equivalent
  • Fall 2023 Standards= 3.0 GPA and 18 Composite
  • Fall 2024 Standards= 3.0 GPA and 19 Composite; 2.7 GPA and 21 ACT Super score

☐ TEST OPTIONAL
  • Letter from guidance counselor confirming student can complete college level work
  • Letter from student requesting to be test optional
  • High School Transcripts and any test scores that may be available
  • Placement Test Required

ACCESS + SUCCESS METRICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2021</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Enrollment</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG GPA</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG ACT</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Retention</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 YR Grad Rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEST-OPTIONAL | TEST-FLEXIBLE PILOT

What considerations informed decisions to implement test-optional or test-flexible practices?

COVID PANDEMIC

- Limited access to standardized testing
- 700,000 fewer students took the SAT | 400,000 fewer students took the ACT (Students entering Fall 2021)

COMPETITION FOR STUDENTS

- Flexibility needed to remain competitive in a distressed and complex recruitment environment
- 1,775 (75% of US colleges and universities are test optional for Fall 2022)
- 47 of 52 Top Colleges (US News & World Report) are test optional for Fall 2022

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS + STUDENT SUCCESS

- Sustaining educational access while balancing a continued commitment to student success
- Analysis of institutional data show GPA as the best predictor of positive student success outcomes
MEASURING SUCCESS | ANNUAL EVALUATION

*How will the success and effectiveness of these programs be measured?*

**ANNUAL ASSESSMENT & MEASUREMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS**

- Annual evaluation based on the following metrics and timeline (informed by availability of outcomes):

  - First-Term GPA | Spring 2022
  - First-Term Persistence | Spring 2022
  - Math GPA + Success | Spring and Fall 2022
  - First-Year GPA | Fall 2022
  - First-Year Retention | Fall 2022
  - Completion Ratio (Credits Earned/Credits attempted) | Fall 2022
  - D-F-W Rates (Grades of D, F or Withdrawal from the Course) | Fall 2022
  - Graduation Outcomes | Degree Completion | Spring 2024/25

  + Additional student success markers as determined by Administration, Division of Student Success and Faculty Advisory Group
### YEAR 1 PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES | KEY TAKEAWAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>TAKEAWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chattanooga</td>
<td>• Test optional accounted for 29% of all first time freshman applicants and 28% of enrolled freshman in Fall 2021&lt;br&gt;• Test optional applicants from 18 different states&lt;br&gt;• 74.4% of students who applied test optional provided a test score before the start of the semester. 93% provided test scores overall&lt;br&gt;• UTC historical data has shown that high school grade point averages are a strong, relevant predictor of college success and student readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knoxville</td>
<td>• Test optional had a broad reach &amp; impact; applications received from across Tennessee (79 of 95 counties) and 49 states&lt;br&gt;• Record applications (+18% overall) with 32% of students applying test-optional&lt;br&gt;• Record first-year enrollment (+8% overall) with 28% test-optional enrollees. Gains included increases among first-gen and students of color&lt;br&gt;• Test Optional policies may be here to stay, requiring us to reassess the competitive landscape especially in terms of desired enrollment growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>• Test-flexible allowed students to move through funnel more quickly&lt;br&gt;• 44% of students first admitted without test scores; 87% submitted by start of term&lt;br&gt;• 97% of enrolled students submitted scores by start of term&lt;br&gt;• Record admitted students (+11.7%); Enrollment decrease (-6%)&lt;br&gt;• Increased melt rate (+12%)&lt;br&gt;• GPA more predictive historically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Methodist</td>
<td>• Martin Methodist offered the Associate degree for 152 years, admitting students using community college standards&lt;br&gt;• ACT sub-scores very helpful in determining placement at the lower ends&lt;br&gt;• GPA somewhat unreliable due to grade inflation in regional high schools, as internal studies have shown&lt;br&gt;• Many students who sought test optional had scores that they didn’t want to provide&lt;br&gt;• Small number of students were admitted as test optional&lt;br&gt;• Must serve Southern rural population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Tennessee System
CAMPUS PERSPECTIVES

1. What are the benefits and/or advantages of test optional/flexible admissions practices for the UT campuses? Students? State of Tennessee?

2. What are the challenges associated with test-optional or test-flexible admission policies?
What questions remain with regards to the use of testing, test-optional, and/or test-flexible practices in admissions?
**TEST OPTIONAL PILOT PROGRAM**

**October 13, 2021**

**TEST OPTIONAL TIMELINE**

**August 2020** The high school Class of 2021 seniors had limited access to take standardized testing due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to the current testing shortages, submitting standardized test scores (ACT/SAT) for admission consideration would be optional for the fall 2021 admissions cycle.

**April 2021** UTC Admissions requested an extension of test optional admissions criteria for upcoming fall 2022 applicants based on continued limited availability of testing. Faculty Senate and Executive Team Leadership approved continuation of test optional Admissions criteria for fall 2022 applicants.

**PEER INSTITUTION COMPARISON**

Comparison peers who are currently offering test optional admission criteria
- University of Central Arkansas
- Stephen F. Austin State University
- Murray State University
- Jacksonville State University
- Southeast Missouri State University

Comparison Peers who are not currently offering test optional admission criteria
- University of Nebraska Omaha
- Valdosta State University
- Northeastern State University
- Georgia College and State University
- University of West Georgia
- Tennessee Tech
- Florida Gulf Coast University

Aspirational Peer Institutions that are offering test optional admission criteria
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Appalachian State University
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington
- College of Charleston

Aspirational Peer Institutions that are not offering test optional admission criteria
- University of Arkansas Little Rock
- University of North Florida

**UTC ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS**

Traditional Admissions Requirements

- 2.85 GPA and 18 ACT or 2.5 GPA and 21 ACT (or SAT equivalent)
- ACT/SAT Superscore
- Conditional admission by committee review
- Test optional admissions requirements
- ACT/SAT test scores not required for admission for students with 3.0 GPA; test scores required for merit-based scholarships and course pre-requisites
- Academic letter of recommendation
TEST OPTIONAL TAKEAWAYS

- Test optional accounted for 29% of all first time freshman applicants and 28% of enrolled Freshmen for Fall 2021.
- Test optional applicants from 18 different states.
- 74.4% of students who applied test optional provided a test score before the start of the semester; 93% provided test scores overall.

FALL 21 FIRST YEAR PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Enrollment</th>
<th>2076</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average ACT</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year Retention</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>4-Yr 35.0% 6-Yr 53.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIRST YEAR STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>9366</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>6537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>2059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEST OPTIONAL APPLICANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>2711</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BREAKDOWN OF ENROLLED TEST OPTIONAL STUDENTS

- 187 Males
- 380 Females
- 461 In State
- 105 Out of State

OUT OF STATE BREAKDOWN

- 74 Georgia
- 4 California
- 3 Alabama
- 3 Indiana
- 2 Students Each
  - Florida
  - Illinois
  - Kentucky
  - Michigan
  - South Carolina
  - Texas
  - Virginia
- 1 Student Each
  - Arkansas
  - Arizona
  - Iowa
  - Maryland
  - Massachusetts
  - North Carolina
  - Puerto Rico

TOP INSTATE COUNTIES REPRESENTED

- Hamilton 149
- Shelby 40
- Davidson 38
- Rutherford 27
- Williamson 27
- Sumner 15
- Knox 15
MEASURING SUCCESS

Regular evaluation based on the following metrics and timeline will measure the effectiveness of the Test Optional Pilot Program.

- First-term GPA: Spring 2022
- First-year GPA: Fall 2022
- First-year Retention: Fall 2022
- Completion Ratio (Credits Earned/Credits Attempted): Fall 2022
- D-F-W Rates (Grades of D, F, or Withdrawal from the Course): Fall 2022
- First-term Persistence: Spring 2022
- Graduate Outcomes/Degree Completion: Spring 2024/26

SUPPORTING DATA AND METRICS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

Freshmen High GPA and Test Scores Information

- High school GPA has been a long-time predictor of success on our campus, and retention rates increase with higher high school GPA ranges. There are clear differences in the averages for retained versus not retained students over the past several years (Tables 1 & 2).
- DFW rates in first semester English and Math courses decrease by ~20% for students with a 3.00 HS GPA or higher (Table 3). There are also decreases in DFW rates by ACT subject score, but our traditional “college-ready” benchmark (score of 19-22) shows only a 1-6% difference from the 15-18 range students. The noticeable decrease in DFW rates based on ACT scores is more evident at scores of 23+.
- An overview of the 2019 first-time freshmen cohort is included to show a breakdown of enrolled students by ACT and GPA. A large percentage of students had a 3.00 HS GPA or higher (92%) and a 19+ higher ACT composite score (87%). There were 118 students in this cohort with below a 19 composite ACT score. Of this population, 29% (n=34) had above a 3.5 HS GPA.
- Math readiness and potential access to college-level courses for many majors remains a concern for students with below a 19 Math ACT and potentially impacts a large number of first year students each year. 25% of the FA19 cohort (n=545) had less than a 19 Math sub-score.

Table 1: First-time Freshmen average high school GPA and ACT composite scores based on retention for 2017-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HS GPA</th>
<th>ACT Comp.</th>
<th>ACT Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FA19 Retained*</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA18 Retained</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA18 Non-Retained</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA17 Retained</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA17 Non-Retained</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Retention for FA19 cohort is projected rate based on 8/26/20 enrollment information.
Table 2: Retention Rates by High School GPA Range for the First-time freshmen in 2017 - 2019 Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HS GPA Range</th>
<th>Total Number in FTF 2017 - 2019 Cohorts</th>
<th>Total Retained</th>
<th>Total Not Retained</th>
<th>Total retention % of sub- population that returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 2.49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 - 2.99</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 - 3.49</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1289</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50 - 4.00</td>
<td>3960</td>
<td>3206</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Retention for FA19 cohort is projected rate based on 8/26/20 enrollment information.

Table 3: DFW Rates in first semester English and Math Courses in 2017 - 2019 cohorts based on HS GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017-20 FTF Cohorts</th>
<th>English by high school GPA</th>
<th>Math by high school GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>A,B,C DFW DFW% Total</td>
<td>A,B,C DFW DFW% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 2.0</td>
<td>2 1 33.3% 3</td>
<td>1 1 50.0% 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>24 19 44.2% 43</td>
<td>6 23 79.3% 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5-2.99</td>
<td>384 249 39.3% 633</td>
<td>177 288 61.9% 465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0-3.49</td>
<td>1410 369 20.7% 1779</td>
<td>911 591 39.4% 1502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-4</td>
<td>1904 177 8.5% 2081</td>
<td>1908 360 15.9% 2268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>3724 815 18.0% 4539</td>
<td>3003 1263 29.6% 4266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: DFW Rates in first semester English and Math Courses in 2017 - 2019 cohorts based on ACT subject score for English and Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017-20 FTF Cohorts</th>
<th>English by ACT subject score</th>
<th>Math by ACT subject score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT Scores</td>
<td>A,B,C DFW DFW% Total</td>
<td>A,B,C DFW DFW% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>28 8 22.2% 36</td>
<td>1 6 85.7% 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>382 98 20.4% 480</td>
<td>385 231 37.5% 616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>1208 284 19.0% 1492</td>
<td>1113 512 31.5% 1625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>1230 210 14.6% 1440</td>
<td>1189 312 20.8% 1501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>815 140 14.7% 955</td>
<td>928 181 16.3% 1109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30</td>
<td>68 14 17.1% 82</td>
<td>95 21 18.1% 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3703 746 16.8% 4449</td>
<td>3710 1257 25.3% 4967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Fall 2019 Cohort HS GPA and ACT Composite Score Ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 19 Cohort</th>
<th>HS GPA</th>
<th>ACT COMP</th>
<th>UNDER 2.0</th>
<th>2.0-2.49</th>
<th>2.50-2.99</th>
<th>3.0-3.49</th>
<th>3.50-4.00</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1406</td>
<td>2217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1406</td>
<td>2217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students with no reported HS GPA or ACT score are excluded.

### Table 6: Fall 2020 First-time Freshmen Applicants by Race, HS GPA, and ACT Composite Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fa20 Applicants</th>
<th>ACT Composite Score Range</th>
<th>&lt; 15</th>
<th>15-18</th>
<th>19-22</th>
<th>23-25</th>
<th>26-30</th>
<th>&gt; 30</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.5-2.49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.0-2.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.5-2.99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.0-3.49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.5-4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
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*Freshmen applicants without an ACT test score or reported high school GPA are excluded. Race/ethnicity categories with less than 15 applicants are excluded. Students who were denied admission are included.
**GPA Correlations**

Additional analysis was performed to further explore additional relationships between variables. Outputs support a correlation with moderate relationship between Highschool GPA and Spring GPA. However, the strongest relationship was found to be between Fall GPA and Spring GPA, suggesting that Fall GPA is a bigger indicator of Spring GPA than Highschool GPA for the sampled population.

### Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Highschool_GPA</th>
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<th>Spring_GPA</th>
<th>Engl.ACT</th>
<th>Math.ACT</th>
<th>ACT_Score</th>
<th>EFC</th>
<th>First_Gen</th>
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*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UTK TEST OPTIONAL PILOT | TIMELINE
- July 2020 — UTK announced a test-optional admission review process for the 2020-2021 application cycle to remain competitive in a distressed and complex recruitment environment impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and nation-wide limited access to standardized testing.
  - 700,000 fewer students took the SAT | 400,000 fewer students took the ACT
- February 2021 — UTK Division of Enrollment Management proposed an extension of its test optional pilot program through Fall entering 2025 to include a robust annual review process and flexibility to revise and/or discontinue pilot based on program effectiveness and student success outcomes.
- Spring 2021 — Test Optional Pilot Program extension unanimously approved by Academic Policy Group, Undergraduate Council and Faculty Senate.

YEAR 1 OF TEST-OPTIONAL PILOT (A Record Year on Rocky Top)
- 29,908 Applications → +18% vs. Fall 2020 (+3% TN and +29% OOS)
- 5,948 Enrolled → +8% +436 Headcount
- 1,147 Students of Color → +12%
- Test-Optional Applications → 32% of total first-year applications
- Test-Optional Enrollment → 28% of total first-year enrollment
- 4.04 Avg. HS GPA → 3.93 in Fall 2020
- 3.88 Avg. TO HS GPA → N/A Fall 2020

CONTINUED CASE FOR TEST-OPTIONAL | CONSIDERATIONS
- Enrollment Growth and UTK Talent Pipeline — A change in admissions policy could negatively impact UTK’s ability to sustain continued enrollment growth among first-year students.
- Competitive Recruitment and Enrollment Landscape — While many colleges instituted new policies in response to the pandemic, test-optional policies are likely here to stay.
- Student Success and Educational Access — Institutional data and national research reinforces GPA as the single strongest predictor of student success. Research on standardized test scores cites inequities based on income, gender and race.

BENCHMARKS | PEER ASSESSMENT
- 100% of UTK institutional peer set will offer test-optional admissions for Fall 2022 entering.
- 1,775 Colleges and Universities (75%) will not require standardized test scores for Fall 2022 entering applicants.
- 47 of US News and World Report’s Top 52 Public Universities offer test-optional admissions for Fall 2022 entering applicants.
- The NCAA extended its test optional policy for student-athlete eligibility through the 2022-2023 cycle and is evaluating longer term policies.
- Most colleges, including state flagships, adopted test-optional policies for the Fall 2021 entering cohort.

TEST-OPTIONAL | NATIONAL PROGRAM FINDINGS
- Adoption of well-executed test-optional admission policies led to an increase in overall applications (Syverson, Franks, Hiss, 2018).
- Students who did not submit test scores generally had lower first-year GPAs than students who submitted test scores, but graduated at about the same, or slightly better, rates (Syverson, Franks, Hiss, 2018).
- First-generation, low-income, and students of color were more likely to apply to a school for the 2021 cycle specifically because it was test optional (EAB Application Survey, 2021).
ENROLLMENT GROWTH | APPLICATION + ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES

UTK RECEIVED TEST-OPTIONAL APPLICATIONS FROM ACROSS TN AND THE US

- 2021 marked a record application and enrollment year with nearly 30,000 first-year applications and a record first-year class of 5,948 students
- 79 of 95 Tennessee counties submitted test-optional applications for Fall 2021 (2,113 | 19.9% TN test optional applicants)
- Test-optional applications received from all states except North Dakota
- Test-optional applications encompassed 32% of UTK total apps and 28% of total first-year enrollees

79/95
TN Counties Submitted Test-Optional Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TN Counties with 2021 Test-Optional Applicants</th>
<th>States with 2021 Test-Optional Applicants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee Applied: 10,635</td>
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<td>Tennessee TO Applied: 2,113</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee Enrolled: 3,567</td>
<td>Total Enrolled: 5,948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee TO Enrolled: 696</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
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</table>

TEST-OPTIONAL AS APPLICATION DRIVER | NATIONAL FINDINGS

- The choice to apply test-optional was more impactful for low-income, first-generation, and students of color nationally and at UTK

Percentage of Students Who Applied to a School Specifically, Because It Was Test-Optional

Source: EAB Application Survey 2021

For the student who takes more challenging classes (AP and IB) and is extremely successful in the classroom, having to submit an ACT score that is not reflective of their potential causes stress and a "why even apply" attitude. For these students, being able to apply test optional is a game changer.”

— Sarah Bast
College & Career Counselor
West High School (Tennessee, Knox County)
TEST-OPTIONAL AS APPLICATION DRIVER

- UTK received a record number of first-year applications including gains among first-generation (+0.9%) applicants and students of color (+6.6%). High percentages of both groups and Pell eligible students chose to apply test-optional.

Test Aware: Submitted test scores as part of the admission review process
Test Optional: Applied without test scores as part of the admission review process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Pell by Test Optional</th>
<th>First-Gen by Test Optional</th>
<th>Student of Color by Test Optional</th>
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<tr>
<td>Test Aware Admitted</td>
<td>Test Optional Admitted</td>
<td>Test Aware Enrolled</td>
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<td>Test Aware Enrolled</td>
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<td>34.4%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
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<td>27.1%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
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</table>

RESEARCH HAS FOUND HIGH TEST SCORES ARE MAGNIFIED BASED ON INCOME, GENDER, AND RACE

- High test-scores (1,400+ SAT OR 31+ ACT)

TENNESSEE TESTING LANDSCAPE

- As the number of high school graduates and the college-going rate drop, UT will need continued flexibility to compete for qualified college-bound students across multiple demographics. Students are likely to be heavily recruited by competitors offering test-optional pathways to admission.
- In Tennessee across key demographics (Pell Eligible, Black, Hispanic, White) nearly all students already score below UT’s average ACT.
- Among Tennessee students who score at UT’s average or above, Pell Eligible, Black, and Hispanic students have lower shares of high scores.

Financial Access — Students with family incomes of at least $100,000 are more than twice as likely as students with a family income under $50,000 to have combined SAT test scores of 1400 to 1600.

Gender — Male students are 42% more likely to have combined SAT test scores in the 1400 to 1600 range than female students.

Students of Color — White students are three times more likely than Black or African-American students and twice as likely as Hispanic or Latino students to have combined SAT test scores of 1400 to 1600.

Source: Kantrowitz, May 2021

Test Optional Summary | Fall 2021 // 3
ENROLLMENT GROWTH | TENNESSEE PIPELINE + STUDENT SUCCESS

TENNESSEE HIGH SCHOOL PIPELINE
- Gains in applications will be critical to UTK’s continued enrollment growth as the number of in-state high school graduates is declining as are Tennessee’s college going rates.
- Tennessee traditional high school graduates are projected to decline by -15,158 (-16.5%) between the 2016 peak and the 2030 low.

Tennessee High School Graduate Projections | 2021-2035

TEST OPTIONAL PROGRAMS | ENROLLMENT GROWTH + STUDENT SUCCESS
Research has suggested thoughtfully planned and executed test optional programs can serve as both application and enrollment drivers as well as support student success outcomes.

STUDENT SUCCESS & COMPLETION | GPA AS STRONGEST PREDICTOR
- High school GPA is five times stronger than ACT scores at predicting college graduation based on a Chicago Public Schools study including 55,000+ high school graduates (Allensworth & Clark, 2020).
- College Board (SAT, Advanced Placement) research has determined that high school GPA is the strongest single factor correlated to first year GPA, and adding test scores improves correlation by 0.08 over the high school GPA alone (College Board, May 2019).
- UTK data identified high school GPA as the strongest predictor of first term GPA - adding test scores narrowly increased prediction by 0.16 over high school GPA alone.
ENROLLMENT GROWTH | UTK TALENT PIPELINE

NATIONAL TRENDS | TEST OPTIONAL POLICIES
- **Test Optional States**: orange states offer test optional admission pathways at home-state flagships and/or land-grant institutions
- **Top Feeder States**: orange states represent those from which UTK receives 200+ applications (comprise 91.2% of all out-of-state applications and 58.1% of total first-year applications)

UTK FIRST-YEAR ENROLLMENT GROWTH DRIVEN BY OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS
- UTK experienced a +179% increase (+1,429) in out-of-state first-year students following key investments in recruitment and enrollment growth (2016: Strategic Enrollment Plan baseline)

UTK TALENT PIPELINE | TENNESSEE DRIVE TO 55
- Over the last 4 years, 37.5% of UTK’s out-of-state employed graduates have a job in the state of Tennessee
- Over the last 4 years, 34.7% of UTK out-of-state graduates pursuing graduate school note attending a school in Tennessee
- Meeting the state’s goal of 55% of Tennesseans having a degree or certificate will lead to: less unemployment, higher benefits, larger tax base, and increased civic engagement (College Board, 2020)

---

UTK has always been a dream of mine. The (Beacon) merit scholarship helped me make my decision to attend UTK, which I didn’t get from any other school. UTK was always my number one but receiving this scholarship helped me make a definite decision to attend.”

— Jacob Dixon
Chemical Engineering major
Grundy County High School
$5,000 Annual Beacon Scholarship
4.09 High School GPA

Test Optional Summary | Fall 2021 // 5
COMPETITION FOR STUDENTS | RECRUITMENT LANDSCAPE

MOST COLLEGES WILL KEEP TEST OPTIONAL POLICIES | Janet Godwin, ACT CEO
- “It is somewhat unlikely that institutions who adopted temporary or pilot test use policies in response to COVID will return to test-required in the near term… We know we can’t go back to the way we did things before the pandemic. We must learn from this watershed moment, and we must all come together to fight for fairness for all students, to give them a world where they can realize their full potential.” (Inside Higher Ed, March 1, 2021)

UTK INSTITUTIONAL PEERS | ALL RETAIN TEST-OPTIONAL POLICIES FOR FALL 2022

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Iowa State</th>
<th>Michigan</th>
<th>Missouri</th>
<th>Nebraska</th>
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<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>LSU</td>
<td>University of Michigan—Ann Arbor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clemson</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 OF THE TOP 52 PUBLICS (US NEWS) ARE TEST-OPTIONAL FOR FALL 2022
- Orange schools represent institutions utilizing a test-required admission policy

| 1. University of California—Los Angeles |
| 2. University of California—Berkeley |
| 3. University of Michigan—Ann Arbor |
| 4. University of Virginia |
| 5. University of California—Santa Barbara |
| 6. University of Florida |
| 7. University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill |
| 8. University of California—San Diego |
| 9. University of California—Irvine |
| 10. Georgia Institute of Technology |
| 11. University of California—Davis |
| 12. University of Texas at Austin |
| 13. William & Mary |
| 14. University of Wisconsin—Madison |
| 15. University of Illinois—Urbana-Champaign |
| 16. University of Georgia |
| 17. Ohio State University—Columbus |
| 18. Purdue University—West Lafayette |
| 19. Florida State University |
| 20. University of Maryland—College Park |
| 21. University of Pittsburgh—Pittsburgh Campus |
| 22. University of Washington |
| 23. Pennsylvania State University—University Park |
| 24. Rutgers University—New Brunswick |
| 25. University of Connecticut |
| 26. Indiana University—Bloomington |
| 27. Texas A&M University |
| 28. University of Massachusetts—Amherst |
| 29. University of Minnesota—Twin Cities |
| 30. Clemson University |
| 31. Virginia Tech |
| 32. North Carolina State University |
| 33. Binghamton University—SUNY |
| 34. Colorado School of Mines |
| 35. Michigan State University |
| 36. University of California—Riverside |
| 37. University of Iowa |
| 38. Stony Brook University—SUNY |
| 39. University at Buffalo—SUNY |
| 40. University of California—Merced |
| 41. University of Delaware |
| 42. Auburn University |
| 43. University of Colorado Boulder |
| 44. University of Oregon |
| 45. University of Utah |
| 46. Miami University—Oxford |
| 47. New Jersey Institute of Technology |
| 48. Temple University |
| 49. University of Arizona |
| 50. University of California—Santa Cruz |
| 51. University of Illinois—Chicago |
| 52. University of South Florida |

9 OF TOP 10 COMPETITORS FOR NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS ARE TEST-OPTIONAL
- Students entering in fall 2022 (bold schools in the chart represent those that are not test-optional)
- Competitors are defined as students offered admission to UTK who enrolled elsewhere

| 1. Georgia |
| 2. South Carolina |
| 3. Auburn |
| 4. Clemson |
| 5. Virginia Tech |
| 6. Alabama |
| 7. Kentucky |
| 8. NC State |
| 9. Ohio State |
| 10. Penn State |
ANNUAL ASSESSMENT & MEASUREMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

- UTK’s test-optional pilot will be evaluated annually based on the following metrics and timeline (informed by availability of outcomes):
  - First-Term GPA | Spring 2022
  - First-Year GPA | Fall 2022
  - First-Year Retention | Fall 2022
  - Math GPA + Success | Spring and Fall 2022
  - Completion Ratio (Credits Earned/Credits attempted) | Fall 2022
  - D-F-W Rates (Grades of D, F or Withdrawal from the Course) | Fall 2022
  - First-Term Persistence | Spring 2022
  - Graduation Outcomes | Degree Completion | Spring 2024/25
  - Additional student success markers as determined by Administration, Division of Student Success and Faculty Advisory Group

RESEARCH + RESOURCES

1. DEFINING ACCESS: How Test-Optional Works
   National Association for College Admission Counseling
   By: Steven T. Syverson, Valerie W. Franks, William C. Hiss
   March 2018

   SUMMARY
   - Non-Test-Submitters were often admitted at lower rates than Test-Submitters, but, on average, enrolled (yielded) at substantially higher rates.
   - While Non-Test Submitters high school GPAs were modestly lower than Submitters, and, upon entering college, first-year GPAs and cumulative GPAs were comparably lower they ultimately graduated at rates equivalent to, or marginally higher than, Submitters, the ultimate proof of success.
   - URM, First-Generation-to-College, and Pell recipients were more strongly represented among non-Submitters. Similarly, women chose to be non-Submitters at higher rates than men
   - A well-executed test-optional admission policy can lead to an increase in overall applications as well as an increase in the representation of underrepresented students (both numeric and proportionate) in the applicant pool and the first-year class


   "The high school students that I work with are so much more than a test score. Test optional opens doors and creates financial opportunities for academically motivated students and students talented in areas beyond test-taking.”
   — Sara Schmitt
   College & Career Counselor
   Houston High School
   (Tennessee, Shelby County)
2. Research Finds that High School GPAs Are Stronger Predictors of College Graduation than ACT Scores

American Educational Research Association
By: Elaine M. Allensworth and Kallie Clark, University of Chicago
January 2020

SUMMARY
- Research finds that student’s high school GPAs are five times stronger than their ACT scores at predicting college graduation
- The data reveals that GPAs measure a wide variety of skills and behaviors needed for success in college, where students will encounter varying content and expectations
- Standardized tests only measure a small set of skills needed to succeed in college

Link: https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/High-School-GPAs-and-ACT-Scores-as-Predictors-of-College-Completion-Examining-Assumptions-about-Consistency-across-High-Schools

3. Validity of the SAT® for Predicting First-Year Grades and Retention to the Second Year

College Board Validity Research
By: Paul A. Westrick, Jessica P. Marini, Linda Young, Helen Ng, Doron Shmueli, and Emily J. Shaw
May 2019

SUMMARY
- College Board research has determined that high school GPA is the strongest single factor correlated to first year GPA
- Adding test scores improves correlation slightly (0.08) over the high school GPA alone
- These findings are consistent with findings from the most recent national SAT validity study examining the previous version of the SAT


4. Test-Optional Takeaways for Enrollment Leaders from the 2021 Admissions Cycle

EAB Research
By: Madeleine Rhyneer
September 2021

SUMMARY
- In 2020, 5 times the number of institutions adopted test optional policies than the previous four years combined
- These data points show that test-optional policies materially impact equity and access for a growing segment of the high school population
- First-gen, low-income, and students of color were more likely to apply to a school for the 2021 cycle specifically because it was test optional

Link: https://eab.com/insights/blogs/enrollment/test-optional-takeaways-for-enrollment-leaders/?x_id=003C0000026nDJrIAM&utm_source=eabdb&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eabdb&mkt_tok=NzMyLUdLV02NTUAADF_rD_FN2escCYBxxi82a16jqjR70oKm1hULSPqmDb5mo_0FspA-9nPbT6gYQok0ZkSnCvZu4YGXxdO5LV-Ewa1E8zvlnhAp0_vL5qjnWMfW7ynw

Test Optional Summary | Fall 2021 // 8
5. The Covid Effect: Most Colleges Will Keep Test-Optional Policies for Good  
The Chronicle of Higher Education | ACT Inc. Survey  
By: Eric Hoover  
February 2021  

**SUMMARY**  
- Most institutions that adopted test-optional policies as a result of COVID-19 did not anticipate making policy changes prior to 2020 and have adopted temporary or pilot policies  
- These institutions indicate being somewhat unlikely to return to test-required, with significant uncertainty remaining. Institutions that adopted test-optional policies prior to COVID-19 are highly unlikely to return to test-required  
- Institutions of all types of admissions policies are unlikely to become test-blind, citing that students should be allowed to choose to submit test scores and that test score data is too useful to abandon altogether  


6. 700,000 Fewer Took the SAT  
Inside Higher ED  
By: Scott Jaschik  
September 2021  

**SUMMARY**  
- 700,000 fewer students took the SAT due to a lack of access caused by the pandemic  
- More than 1 million test registrations were cancelled as schools and test centers had to close or reduce capacity  
- The Common Application reported that while only 43 percent of those who used its application submitted SAT or ACT scores, the numbers were greater for those applying to more competitive colleges  


7. ACT Composite Score by Family Income  
ACT Inc.  
By: Krista Mattern, Justin Radunzel, and Matt Harmston  
August 2016  

**SUMMARY**  
- There is a positive relationship between family income and test scores  
- Average ACT scores are 4 points higher for students with family incomes over $80,000  
- The achievement gap between higher and lower income students has increased slightly over the last five years.  

8. Admissions Tests Discriminate Against College Admission of Minority and Low-Income Students at Selective Colleges
Inside Higher Ed
By: Mark Kantrowitz
May 2021

**SUMMARY**
- Male students are 42% more likely to have combined SAT test scores in the high 1400 to 1600 range than female students
- White students are three times more likely than Black or African-American students and twice as likely as Hispanic or Latino students to have combined SAT test scores of 1400 to 1600
- Students with family income of $100,000+ are more than twice as likely as students with a family income under $50,000 to have combined SAT test scores of 1400 to 1600


9. Education Pays 2019
College Board, Trends in Higher Education Series
By: Jennifer Ma, Matea Pender, and Meredith Welch
January 2020

**SUMMARY**
- In 2018, the median earning of a bachelor’s degree recipient with no advanced degree working full time was $24,900 higher than those of high school graduates. Bachelor’s degree recipients paid an estimated $7,100 more in taxes and took home $17,800 more in after-tax income than high school graduates
- More educated citizens have greater access to health care and retirement plans. They are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors, be active and engaged citizens, and be in a position to provide better opportunities for their children
- Bachelor degree attainment leads to increases in wages, generate higher tax payments at the local, state, and federal levels. In 2018, four-year college graduates paid, on average, 82% more in taxes than high school graduates and, for those with a professional degree, average tax payments were more than three times as high as those of high school graduates

UT Martin Test-Flexible Admission Pilot | Timeline

- **June 2020** - UT Martin announced a test-flexible admissions process for the Fall 2021 cycle in response to ACT/SAT test cancelations, limited access to testing, and regional competitors' movement to test-optional admissions
- **April 2021** - UT Martin Admissions proposed an extension of the test-flexible admissions pilot program through Fall 2022 due to data indicating ACT/SAT testing rates declining and benchmarking with regional competitors; Test-flexible pilot program extension approved by Provost, President of Faculty Senate, and Chair of Undergraduate Council

UT Martin Admissions Requirements

- **Traditional Admissions Requirements**
  - 3.0 GPA and 19 ACT or 2.7 GPA and 21 ACT (or SAT equivalent);
  - ACT/SAT Superscore
  - Conditional admission by committee review
- **Test-Flexible Admissions Requirements, Fall 21 and 22**
  - ACT/SAT scores not required for admission for students with 3.0 high school GPA
  - ACT/SAT scores strongly encouraged for merit scholarships and class placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FALL 21 FIRST YEAR PROFILE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fall 2021 First-Year Students by the Numbers

- **Admitted Students**
  - Record number of admitted students (+11.7%)
  - 44% first admitted without test scores;
  - 84% of all admitted students submitted scores by start of term
  - Test-flexible admissions policy allowed students to move through funnel more quickly by not making them wait on tests that were delayed to learn of admissions status
• **Enrolled Students**
  o Enrollment Decline (-6%)
  o 38% first admitted without test scores
  o 97% submitted scores by start of term
  o 22.2 Average ACT for Fall 21 compared to 23.3 Average ACT for Fall 20

• **Melted Students**
  o Melted students calculated based on students who indicated on a non-binding *Intent to Enroll* survey that they plan to enroll but who ultimately did not enroll; UT Martin does not have an enrollment deposit
  o Student melt increased 12 percentage points for Fall 2021 compared to Fall 2020
  o 12% of melted students did not have test scores on file

**Retention Considerations**

• First-year student retention historically more favorable when considering high school GPA alone compared to ACT/SAT alone
• It is important to note that this is not an apples-to-apples comparison for test-flexible vs. regular admissions since the students with a 3.0 GPA were required to submit test scores for admission for the comparison years of Fall 18 through Fall 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0+ GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
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</tbody>
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**Measuring Success**

• Regular evaluation based on the following metrics and timeline will measure the effectiveness of the Test-Flexible Pilot Program
  o First-Term GPA | Spring 2022
  o First-Year GPA | Fall 2022
  o First-Year Retention | Fall 2022
  o Completion Ratio (Credits Earned/Credits Attempted) | Fall 2022
  o D-F-W Rates (Grades of D, F, or Withdrawal from the Course) | Fall 2022
  o First-Term Persistence | Spring 2022
  o Graduate Outcomes | Degree Completion | Spring 2024/26

**Next Steps**

• Evaluate success of test-flexible admission students in spring 2022 after one semester of students enrolled at UT Martin
• Benchmark regional competitors in early spring 2022 regarding test-optional/test-flexible admissions policies for fall 2023
• Make final recommendation for test-flexible admissions moving forward in spring 2022
Reflections on the fading standardized testing requirement in college admissions*

Li Cai
UCLA

* With a lot of intellectual debt owed to my colleagues who served on the University of California Standardized Testing Task Force and to Dr. Rebecca Zwick.
* Views expressed in this presentation are my own, and do not reflect those of the University.
A Brief History

1. Widely understood that the ancient Chinese (Sui Dynasty, 581-618AD) started the tradition of high-stakes standardized testing through its civil service examinations system.

2. Until late 1800s, evaluation not systematized. University of Michigan’s system of feeder schools (1870s) was an unlikely exception.

3. Elite universities used their own exams.

4. College Entrance Examination Board (1900-)

5. The first SAT (1926)
A Brief History (cont’d)

6. 1930-1950 technological improvements (scanners)
7. Formation of ETS (1947-) and ACT (1959-)
9. UC STTF, Smith vs. UC Regents, Regental Vote on Test Blind until 2025
10. Varity Blues, COVID-19, and a national focus on racism and inequity
Key Criticisms

1. Test content is biased
2. Predictive validity issues
3. Tests not aligned with what is taught in high schools
4. Coaching and cheating issues
5. Large differences in average scores across ethnicity and SES-based groupings imply test bias and disparate impact
But not all agreed...

1. Item and test bias can be addressed

2. Often in comparison against the only other quantitative factor, HSGPA, which has its own problems

3. Alignment better now, after UC President Atkinson’s push, NCLB standardized testing and later Common Core, etc.

4. Generally true of any test with stakes
But not all agreed... (cont’d)

5. First-order (i.e., Group A- Group B) observed differences to not necessarily imply cause-and-effect relationship;

6. What about all the additional data that are available?

7. Yield management?

8. The sorting and selection process to universities (both sides) can be analyzed as a market. What improves efficiency?
Standardized Testing Task Force (2018-2020)

STTF Co-Chairs
Henry Sánchez, Pathology (UCSF)
Eddie Comeaux, Education (UCR)

Members
Eva Baker, Education (UCLA)
Julian Betts, Economics (UCSD)
Li Cai, Education (UCLA)
Darlene Francis, Public Health (UCB)
Patricia Gandara, Education (UCLA)
Jonathan Glater, Law (UCI)
James Griesemer, Philosophy (UCD)
Andrea Hasenstaub, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck (UCSF)
George Johnson, Mechanical Engineering (UCB)
Mona Lynch, Criminology, Law & Society (UCI)
Andrew Maul, Education (UCSB)
Yolanda Moses, Anthropology (UCR)

Kip Tellez, Education (UCSC)
Haim Weizman, Chemistry & Biochemistry (UCSD)
Anne Zanzucchi, Writing Studies (UCM)
Wendy Rummerfield, Graduate Student Representative (UCI)

Staff
Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Analyst
Ken Feer, Academic Senate Analyst
Select Results from the STTF Report

From Figures 3A2, 3A-3
2010-2012 admissions data
Larger dots = more students
Select Results from the STTF Report

From Figure 3A-3
2010-2012 admissions data
Larger dots = more students
Select Results from the STTF Report

Most UC campuses (including UCB and UCLA) are likely to admit URM students with lower test scores, but not with low HSGPAs.
An Excellent Resource

Who Gets In?
Strategies for Fair and Effective College Admissions
Rebecca Zwick
An Ideal Situation (and the Inevitable Compromises)

1. HS students are presented with the opportunity to learn, and more than one opportunity to be assessed and to grow (with cost remedies and assistance to help reduce barrier to access). $$$

2. Assessments are used first to inform learners and teachers to improve, and then used to select. $

3. High-stakes test score use is in the context of the applicant’s background, and not as hard thresholds. (Additional data necessary) $$

4. Outreach to schools to build pipelines and to know them better. $
An Ideal Situation (and the Inevitable Compromises) (cont’d)

5. Conduct comprehensive evaluation of each application, especially making good use of transcript information. $$

6. Prepare the readers and admissions offices. $ 

7. Provide and evaluate academic/social support programs once enrolled. $ 

8. Evaluate outcomes longitudinally. $
Recommendations of the STTF

1. **Review and update** components of the statewide eligibility index

2. **Expand** eligibility in the local context (ELC)

3. **Further analyze** factors contributing to disproportionate representation

4. **Study and expand** student academic support services

5. Obtain test item data to **perform item-level analysis** of current standardized tests
Recommendations of the STTF (cont’d)

6. **Develop a new assessment** that will be continuously accessible to students and will assess a broader array of student learning and capabilities than any currently available standardized tests.

7. **Do not adopt Smarter Balanced** in lieu of current standardized tests.

8. **Do not go test optional**

Additional Senate recommendation:

A. **Re-examine issue in 5 years with similar analyses**
Li Cai, PhD

EDUCATION

2001  BA (with distinction), Business Communication (Finance minor), Nanjing University.
2003  MA, Journalism, The Ohio State University.
2006  MS, Mathematical Statistics, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.
2008  PhD, Psychometrics, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

Li Cai is a Professor of Education and Psychology in the Advanced Quantitative Methodology program within the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. He also serves as Director of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). In addition, he is affiliated with the UCLA Department of Psychology in the quantitative area. His research agenda involves the development, integration, and evaluation of innovative latent variable models that have wide-ranging applications in assessment research in educational, psychological, and health-related domains of study.
Annotated Bibliography of Relevant News Articles on Standardized Testing for Admissions


The coronavirus pandemic pushed hundreds of colleges to stop requiring prospective students to submit their scores. Most colleges are leaving it up to students to decide whether to submit their scores. Leaders often say the institution is doing so to become more socioeconomically and racially diverse. Students from affluent families don’t really believe that their odds of being accepted at a selective college are just as good whether they submit test scores or not. Many wealthy families have gone to extraordinary lengths to have their children take the SAT/ACT during a deadly pandemic, with some jetting around the country to find open testing sites. Many test-optional schools choose to do so because it allows them to artificially inflate their average SAT/ACT scores, a key component in the *U.S. News* college rankings, since generally only students with good scores submit them.


Cornell became the first Ivy League to waive SAT and ACT requirements in April 2020 for first-year applicants in any of its seven colleges. Cornell’s decision to extend this policy acknowledged the ongoing risks of COVID-19 in testing centers across the globe. Cornell is also entering a two-year “deliberate experimental review” period to guide future admissions testing policy requirements. “We will engage both in self-study about the role of testing in promoting access and success at Cornell and systematically review admission assessments in partnership with other universities and higher education organizations,” the statement reads.


The University System of Georgia will reinstate its ACT/SAT requirement after a one-year suspension, the system announced on Wednesday. Students applying for admission for the spring of 2022 and beyond will be required to submit standardized-test scores. The pandemic prompted many colleges and state systems to waive their ACT/SAT requirements permanently or temporarily. Georgia’s public universities won’t be the only state institutions requiring ACT/SAT scores in 2022. Notably, the State University System of Florida didn’t suspend its testing requirements during the 2020-21 admissions cycle, and won’t do so now.


EAB analyzed nearly 42,000 applications at 57 test-optional institutions: Just 45% of students had sent a test score. Women were 15% less likely than men to send scores. Black and Hispanic students were 25% less likely than white students to submit. And students with lower median family incomes were less likely than more-affluent students to do the same. Those findings should raise concerns in a world where a) many colleges are for the first-time evaluating applicants sans test scores, and b) some institutions that no longer require scores for admission continue to require them for at least some institutional scholarships. “Merit policies that heavily rely on test scores will only exacerbate issues of equity further.” EAB has heard from many students who were confused by colleges’ explanations of admissions plans.
Hoover, E. (2021, May 19). Test-free in Texas: Inside one college’s decision to cut out the ACT and SAT.

St. Mary’s is becoming test-free, removing the ACT/SAT from all admissions and aid decisions. In its first full year without an ACT/SAT requirement, St. Mary’s doubled down on applicants’ high-school transcripts, looking carefully at their grades, their course selection, and the connection between those courses and their chosen major. The admissions staff factored class rank into the scoring of applicants. If an applicant didn’t submit scores, the university considered everything else for both. For 80-85% of first-time students at St. Mary’s, test scores provided no additional predictive value in first- to second-year retention beyond what an applicant’s high-school transcript revealed. For a small group of students with lower GPAs and higher test scores — the scores were helpful on that count.


Most colleges that temporarily suspended their ACT/SAT requirements do not plan to reinstate them. A mass movement to adopt test-blind policies is unlikely in the near future. About 60% of respondents had no plans to drop ACT/SAT requirements before the pandemic. More than 60% of respondents said their college uses the ACT/SAT to a moderate or considerable degree in the “sourcing and recruitment” of students. Just under 60% use test scores to a moderate or considerable degree for merit scholarships.

Hoover, E. (2021, Mar. 15). This STEM college will stop looking at ACT and SAT scores. Its admissions dean explains why. The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute announced on Monday that it will adopt a “test-blind” admission policy. The institution will no longer consider ACT/SAT scores as part of an eight-year pilot. This policy has nothing to do with Covid and everything to do with the inequities that standardized tests reinforce in college admissions. There’s no statistical difference in terms of the retention and graduation rates between a test-score submitter and a non-submitter. We have more than enough information in admissions to determine who will be successful. As much as we’ve grounded these conversations in data, they need to be equally grounded in values. Each institution needs to take a long, hard look at how their admissions practices and requirements, in general, match up with their mission, values, and goals.

Hoover, E. (2021, Mar. 18). Why this popular college guide will stop publishing ACT and SAT score ranges. The Chronicle of Higher Education.

The Fiske Guide to Colleges, a widely used source of information for applicants and parents, will stop publishing ACT/SAT score ranges for all 325 institutions listed in its pages. Previously, the Fiske Guide listed the range of test scores for the middle half of enrolled freshmen at each college, a standard practice in the admissions realm. SAT/ACT scores closely track with socioeconomic data and may say more about a student’s ZIP code than about their academic potential.” Though the ACT/SAT were created to measure an applicant’s potential, test scores long ago insinuated themselves into a whole set of products designed to measure the quality of a given institution.

Only 13 of more than 125 graduate programs at the University of California, Berkeley, will require the Graduate Record Examination for admission next year, the university announced this week. Most departments eliminated GRE requirements last year due to difficulties applicants had in taking the exam during the COVID-19 pandemic. But the majority of Berkeley’s departments this year again chose not to require the GRE.


Actions have been taken in CA, CO, IL, MT, NY, NC, and WA. In CO, Gov. Jared Polis, (Dem.), signed legislation to make all of the state’s public colleges and universities test-optional in admissions. The bill ended, permanently, a state requirement that all applicants submit ACT or SAT scores. In NY, the CUNY System suspended SAT and ACT requirements for the fall 2022 and spring 2023 admission cycles. IL General Assembly has sent to Gov. J. B. Pritzker (Dem.) legislation that would require all public colleges and universities in the state to be test-optional in admissions. The MT System voted to make SAT and ACT scores optional, permanently--except ACT scores will be required for honors scholarships. UNC System’s Board of Govs. voted to extend a test-optional policy through next year. In WA, all public colleges have gone test optional, permanently.


A new tally finds that more than 1,600 four-year colleges and universities will not require students to submit ACT or SAT scores to be considered for fall 2022 enrollment. That is more than two-thirds of the 2,330 bachelor-degree institutions in the United States.


University of CA had earlier announced a record-breaking number of applicants. It also has a record in admitted students from racial and ethnic minority groups. Students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups comprise 43% of admitted California freshmen at University of California campuses this year, the highest proportion of an incoming undergraduate class and the greatest number in UC history. This was also the first class admitted without required SAT or ACT scores, which the university abandoned last year.


The College Board and ACT were unable to administer the exams when many testing centers closed. Many colleges and universities in turn decided not to require testing -- in some cases for a year or two, in other cases changing their policies permanently. Reporting was “far higher ... among applicants living in more affluent communities,” Reporting rates “were highest in several Southern and Midwestern states and lowest in several Northeastern and Western states.” Underrepresented minority students and first-generation students were less
likely to report than were other students. More selective member institutions more often received test scores with applications than did less selective colleges.”


Tufts ranked 28th on the 2022 U.S. News & World Report Best National University ranking, rising two positions from the 2021 list. The annual rankings, released on Sept. 13, assess 1,466 U.S. bachelor’s degree-granting institutions and factor in 17 different academic measurements. These include graduation and retention rates, social mobility, undergraduate academic reputation, and student selectivity. Standardized test score ranges reflect admissions data from 2019 and 2020.


 Critics argue that standardized tests are really “wealth tests” that measure affluence more than achievement. They propose a more “holistic” admissions process—assessing prospective students as persons rather than as a compilation of numbers. But the purported flaws of the SAT and ACT are overstated—often vastly so.


In Jan. 2021, the College Board announced that it would discontinue the SAT Subject Tests and the optional essay section. Many of the nation’s most selective colleges once required or encouraged applicants to submit scores from these exams, though a growing number of institutions have moved away from this, as they presented a “costly barrier for many low-income students.” By 2016, only 1 in 10 colleges required the optional essay.


What if the conversation around college admissions didn’t have to address concerns over unfair practices due to a student’s socioeconomic status or racial background? What if, instead, educational opportunities were so equalized in the lower grades that when it came time for students to take the SATs, the scores didn’t show a discrepancy between ZIP codes? What if we could talk about keeping the bar of success in testing high for all students instead of taking the bar away altogether?
Annotated Bibliography of Relevant Journal Articles on Standardized Testing for Admissions


There is substantial evidence of the potential for class bias in the use of standardized tests to evaluate college applicants, yet little comparable inquiry considers the written essays typically required of applicants to selective US colleges and universities. We utilize a corpus of 240,000 admissions essays submitted by 60,000 applicants to the University of California in November 2016 to measure the relationship between the content of application essays, reported household income, and standardized test scores (SAT) at scale. We quantify essay content using correlated topic modeling (CTM) and the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software package. Results show that essays have a stronger correlation to reported household income than SAT scores. Essay content also explains much of the variance in SAT scores, suggesting that essays encode some of the same information as the SAT, though this relationship attenuates as household income increases. Efforts to realize more equitable college admissions protocols can be informed by attending to how social class is encoded in non-numerical components of applications.


The test-optional movement in the United States emerged largely in response to criticism of standardized admissions tests as inadequate and potentially biased measures of postsecondary promise. Although anecdotal reports suggest that test-optional policies have improved campus diversity, empirical research has not yet confirmed this claim. Consequently, this study employs quasi-experimental techniques to assess the relationship between test-optional policy implementation and subsequent growth in the proportion of low-income and minority students enrolling at adopting liberal arts colleges. It also examines whether test-optional policies increase institutional standing through greater application numbers and higher reported Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. Results show that, on average, test-optional policies enhance the perceived selectivity, rather than the diversity, of participating institutions.
**Annotated Bibliography of Relevant Journal Articles on Standardized Testing for Admissions**


https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312211003526

This study examines a diverse set of nearly 100 private institutions that adopted test-optional undergraduate admissions policies between 2005–2006 and 2015–2016. Using comparative interrupted time series analysis and difference-in-differences with matching, I find that test-optional policies were associated with a 3% to 4% increase in Pell Grant recipients, a 10% to 12% increase in first-time students from underrepresented racial/ethnic backgrounds, and a 6% to 8% increase in first-time enrollment of women. Overall, I do not detect clear evidence of changes in application volume or yield rate. Subgroup analyses suggest that these patterns were generally similar for both the more selective and the less selective institutions examined. These findings provide evidence regarding the potential—and the limitations—of using test-optional policies to improve equity in admissions.


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2004.01.001

The primary purpose of the study is to assess the degree to which SAT scores, high-school GPA (HSGPA) and class rank predict success in college. Data collected from students enrolled in several sections of Principles of Economics at the University of South Carolina in 2000 and 2001 are used to study the relation between college GPA (the dependent variable) and high-school rank, HSGPA, and SAT scores (the key independent variables). We also investigate whether there are race–sex differences in the likelihood of success in college. Further, we study the degree to which students with varying backgrounds are likely to be eligible for statewide scholarships and to retain them after enrollment.

Analyses provide answers to the four questions posed in the Introduction to this paper:

- More students are predicted to earn a college GPA of 3.0 or better when higher eligibility criteria are employed. Still, when an SAT requirement is not present, nonwhite students are least likely to obtain a college GPA of 3.0.
- Results suggest that relying on low thresholds of HSGPA and relative high-school class rank is likely to cause much frustration, especially among nonwhite students, because many will be unable to satisfy the college GPA requirement (3.0) for scholarship renewal.
Annotated Bibliography of Relevant Journal Articles on Standardized Testing for Admissions

- When an SAT requirement is present, predicted college GPAs are higher for nonwhite females than for white males. The reverse is true when an SAT requirement is not present.
- Comparing white and nonwhite males, we find that predicted college GPAs are higher for nonwhite males for the old LIFE scholarships and current LIFE scholarships with HSGPA and SAT requirements. Predicted college GPAs are similar for the two groups for the current LIFE scholarships with relative high-school class rank and SAT requirements. Nonwhite males have lower predicted college GPAs than white males for the current LIFE scholarships with HSGPA and rank requirements as well as for the HOPE scholarships.


This article examines the rise of “test-optional” college admissions policies since the 1990s. I argue that the rationalization of college admissions policies after World War II contributed to the rise of “meritocratic” stratification (in policy) and standardized tests, like the SAT, but it also led to the expansion and legitimation of the roles of student and school personhood in the admissions process. Schools more committed to enlarged conceptions of student personhood are more likely to adopt a test-optional policy, in order to recruit students who fit the distinctive characteristics of their school identity. To test the argument, I use a comprehensive data set of 1,640 colleges and universities in the United States and discrete-time event history models from 1987 to 2015. I also assess alternative arguments that emphasize economic or prestige-driven motives. Liberal arts colleges and schools committed to several dimensions of student personhood are more likely to adopt test-optional policies, net of other factors.

A clear pattern emerges: a school’s emphasis on personhood differs dramatically at the tails of the distribution. Schools in the top 15 percent of the distribution (i.e., schools with an acceptance rate lower than 50 percent) are much more likely to emphasize the importance of student personhood in their admissions policies, whereas schools in the bottom 15 percent of the distribution (i.e., schools with an acceptance rate higher than 85 percent) are much less likely to consider student personhood in the student selection process. There is surprisingly little variation, however, between the 15th and 85th percentiles of selectivity.


The methods used in most SAT validity studies cannot be justified by any sample selection assumptions and are uninformative about the source of the SAT’s predictive power. A new omitted variables estimator is proposed; plausibly consistent estimates of
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the SAT’s contribution to predictions of University of California freshman grade point averages are about 20% smaller than the usual methods imply. Moreover, much of the SAT’s predictive power is found to derive from its correlation with high school demographic characteristics: The orthogonal portion of SAT scores is notably less predictive of future performance than is the unadjusted score.


A growing number of postsecondary institutions in the United States have removed standardized testing as a requirement for admission. Researchers, however, have suggested that these “test-optional” policies may not benefit underrepresented populations as intended, but instead serve as an additional revenue source for the institution. In this study, we utilize a synthetic control method to extend this research by considering whether a more nuanced “test-flexible” policy, which allows qualifying students to decide whether to submit test scores instead of an institution-wide policy, influences student enrollment demographics at a public university.

Although proponents of test-optional and test-flexible policies argue that these policies can increase student diversity, in line with previous research, findings from this study suggest GMU’s test-flexible policy has had a statistically insignificant influence in increasing the racial and socioeconomic diversity of its student body. This result is in accordance with the college access and choice models that guide this study. In particular, this literature notes standardized tests are only one of the many obstacles underrepresented populations must navigate prior to enrolling at a postsecondary institution.


In this article, I review the role of college admissions tests in the United States and consider the fairness issues surrounding their use. The two main tests are the SAT, first administered in 1926, and the ACT, first given in 1959. Scores on these tests have been shown to contribute to the prediction of college performance, but their role in the admissions process varies widely across colleges. Although test scores are consistently listed as one of the most important admissions factors in national surveys of postsecondary institutions, an increasing number of schools have adopted “test-optional” policies. At these institutions, test score requirements are seen as a barrier to campus diversity because of the large performance gaps among ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Fortunately, the decentralized higher education system in the United States can accommodate a wide range of admissions policies. It is essential,
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however, that the impact of admissions policy changes be studied and that the resource implications of these changes be thoroughly considered.

Some institutions have chosen to “go test-optional” as a way to encourage the admission of students from groups that have typically been underrepresented in higher education. It is worthwhile to note that achieving diversity does not require the elimination of admissions; nor is elimination of tests the most direct way to increase diversity. Diversity goals can be pursued in a proactive way through explicit preferences or by recruiting intensively and offering generous scholarship packages to members of underrepresented groups. Nevertheless, administrators have reported favorably on the effectiveness of test-optional programs in increasing campus diversity. Research findings have been mixed.
The History of Standardized Testing in American Higher Education
Overview

I. An overview of standardized tests & why we use them

II. High-stakes standardized testing in college admissions

III. The recent politicization of standardized testing
Introduction

- **Standardized testing**: when test-takers answer established questions in the same format and conditions, which better facilitates more objective/fairer evaluation and comparison among them.

- **Test development**: integrates expertise in cognitive development, cultural/linguistic differences, curriculum/content, statistics, and psychometrics.

- **A key difference among standardized tests** is whether they are high-stakes or low-stakes—or how significant the result is.

- **Standardized testing is ubiquitous** in education and career.
# Low-Stakes vs. High-Stakes Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOW-STAKES TESTING</th>
<th>HIGH-STAKES TESTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures</strong></td>
<td>Assess academic achievement or learning problems; inform instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate specific knowledge of a subject or skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consequences</strong></td>
<td>Little to no broad significance or consequence; not damaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant impact; determines major outcomes for individuals and schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses</strong></td>
<td>Assessing instructional effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher evaluations, admissions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

"The challenge to motivate our students to give their best effort when there are few or no personal consequences is probably the most vexing assessment problem we face" (Erwin & Wise, 2002, p. 71).
Landmarks in the History of High-Stakes Standardized Testing

- 1890: Harvard's president proposes the use of common entrance exam
- 1926: Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) developed from the US Army's IQ test
- 1932: 1,300+ tests were developed across numerous domains
- 1959: American College Test (ACT) developed
- 2001: No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) expands all state-mandated standardized testing
- 2000s: FairTest* increased efforts and attention to campaign against over-reliance on standardized testing
- 2020: COVID-19 drastically changes the use of these tests

*The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, founded 1985
Current State of Testing in Admissions

MANDATORY
REQUIRER OF ALL APPLICANTS FOR ADMISSIONS DECISION

TEST OPTIONAL
STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE WHETHER TO SUBMIT SAT/ACT SCORES

TEST FLEXIBLE
STUDENTS HAVE THE OPTION TO SUBMIT OTHER TEST SCORES (AP, IB)

TEST BLIND
TESTS NOT FACTORED INTO ADMISSIONS EVEN IF SUBMITTED

More than two-thirds of the 2,330 bachelor-degree institutions in the United States will not require students to submit ACT or SAT scores to be considered for fall 2022 enrollment.

(Jaschik, 2021)
Reasons and Rationales for Implementing Alternative Test Policies

- Increasing racial/ethnic diversity
- Promoting fairness among applicants
- Emphasizing holistic admissions
- Improving US News ranking
Factors Influencing the Politicization of High-Stakes Testing

NCLB 2001/Race to the Top 2009: Increased attention, higher stakes

COVID-19: Closures, lost revenue, and new thinking

Influential Systems/Institutions; (e.g., UC)
Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of High-Stakes Standardized Tests

**Advantages**

- Scores and trends tend to be more reliable than low-stakes tests
- More likely to be administered fairly, securely, and without bias
- Measuring students against a universal standard makes it easier to evaluate, compare, and rank them
- HEIs can use standardized test scores to balance out areas of the application where students may not be as strong

**Disadvantages**

- Inadequate measure of broad skills/abilities
- Perceived disadvantages for ELL, low-income, and special needs students
- “Measures wealth, not knowledge”: higher-SES families can access courses and retake the test multiple times
- Research is mixed regarding whether SAT/ACT scores are strong predictors of future academic success
Key Takeaways

I. Standardized tests make it possible to sort, rank, and compare test-takers; the U.S. has a long history of using such exams from kindergarten through career

II. Most colleges abandoned standardized tests in admissions decisions due to Covid-19 closures

III. Standardized testing has become increasingly political, with the discussion touching on issues of diversity and inclusion
The Impact of COVID on Standardized Test Submission Rates
Overview

2. Impact of COVID on test-optional application rates.
3. Trends in test-optional applications in underrepresented minorities, first-generation students, and low-income students.
2020-21 Test-Optional Application Rates

• When transitioning to a test-optional policy pre-COVID schools saw an average increase of 3.1 to 4.0% in applications.

• Schools that are more selective had a much higher increase in the number of applications during 2020-2021. In some cases, less selective schools saw a decrease in the number of applications. This may be a result of the perception of barriers to application being lowered.
US Test Score Submission Rates

• In 2019-20, 77% of undergraduate applicants submitted a test score with at least one of their Common App applications. This number fell to 43% of applicants in 2020-21.

• 4% of applicants in 2019-2020 reported their test scores in some, but not all, of their applications. That number increased to 24% in 2019-2020.

• Applicants in underrepresented groups reported test scores at lower rates than their peers.
Tennessee Submission Rate

Students in Southeastern states submitted test scores at a higher rates than average.

• The number of Tennessee residents who submitted test scores with their applications in 2020-21 dropped approximately 10% from 2019-20.

• 7 of the top 10 states where residents submitted test scores were in the Southeast.
UTC Peer & Aspirational Peer Test Policies*

**PEERS**
- **Test-Optional (Temporary)**
  - University of Central Arkansas
  - Stephen F. Austin State University
  - Tennessee Technological University

- **Test-Optional**
  - University of Nebraska Omaha
  - Murray State University
  - Northeastern State University
  - Jacksonville State University
  - Southeast Missouri State University

- **Test-Required**
  - Valdosta State University
  - Georgia College and State University
  - University of West Georgia
  - Florida Gulf Coast University

**ASPIRATIONAL PEERS**
- **Test-Optional (Temporary)**
  - University of North Carolina Wilmington
  - College of Charleston
  - Appalachian State University
  - University of North Carolina at Greensboro

- **Test-Optional**
  - Lamar University

- **Test-Required**
  - University of Arkansas at Little Rock

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*2020
UTK Peer & Aspirational Peer Test Policies*

**PEERS**
- Test-Optional (Temporary)
  - North Carolina State University
  - Virginia Tech
  - Auburn University
  - Iowa State University
  - University of South Carolina
  - Clemson University
  - University of Kentucky
  - University of Missouri
  - University of Alabama

- Test-Optional
  - Louisiana State University
  - University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**ASPIRATIONAL PEERS**
- Test-Optional (Temporary)
  - Purdue University-Main Campus
  - University of Georgia
  - University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
  - University of Wisconsin-Madison

- Test-Optional
  - Michigan State University

- Test-Required
  - University of Florida

*2020
UTM Peer & Aspirational Peer Test Policies*

**PEERS**
- **Test-Optional (Temporary)**
  - Arkansas State University
  - Austin Peay State University
  - Frostburg State University
  - Western Carolina University

- **Test-Optional**
  - West Texas A&M University
  - Midwestern State University
  - The University of Texas at Tyler
  - Morehead State University
  - Arkansas Tech University
  - McNeese State University

- **Test-Required**
  - Auburn University at Montgomery

**ASPIRATIONAL PEERS**
- **Test-Optional (Temporary)**
  - Marshall University
  - Stephen F Austin State University

- **Test-Optional**
  - Southeast Missouri State University
  - Murray State University

- **Test-Required**
  - University of Central Arkansas

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*2020
Key Takeaways

1. Although the total number of college applications increased from 2019 to 2020, the number of students submitting test scores dropped heavily.
   - Evidence shows that COVID had a strong impact in the drop when compared to historical trends of test-optional applications.

2. Students in Tennessee and other Southeastern states submitted scores at a higher percentage than students in other regions of the US.

3. The peer and aspirational groups for each UT campus were predominantly test-optional during 2020.