DEFINING PROMISE: OPTIONAL STANDARDIZED TESTING POLICIES IN AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/nacac-research/Documents/DefiningPromise.pdf

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

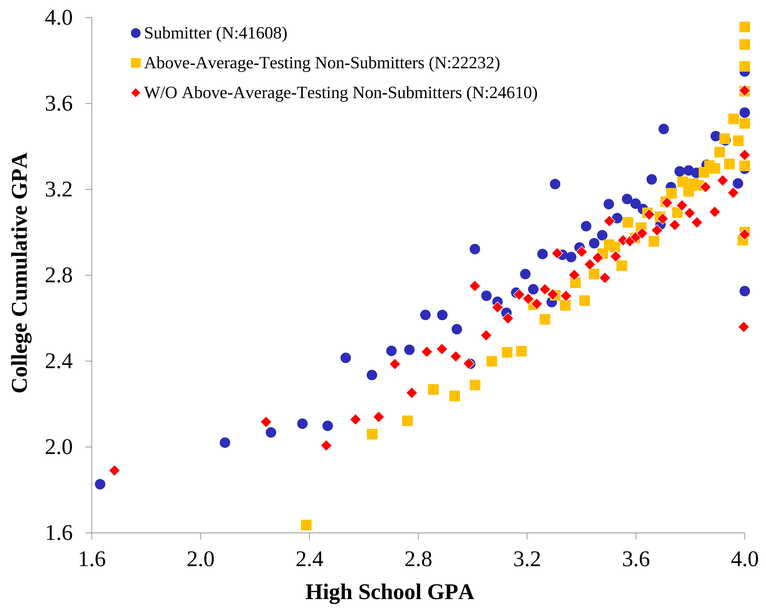
- The study examines optional standardized testing policies at 33 colleges and universities, as measured by cumulative college GPAs and graduation rates.
- Statistical analyses show no significant differences in college cumulative GPA and graduation rates between submitters and non-submitters. *Differences between submitters and non-submitters are .05 of a GPA point, and 6% in graduation rates.*
- However, the two groups have significantly large differences in their SAT / ACT scores of 113 points.
- College admissions decisions are reliable for students admitted without SAT or ACT scores. Testing may artificially truncate pools of applicants who will succeed.
- Students with strong HSGPAs generally perform well in college, despite modest testing. In contrast, students with weak HSGPAs earn lower college Cum GPAs and graduation rates, even with stronger testing. *A clear message: hard work and good grades in high school matter, and they matter a lot.*
- Non-submitters are more likely to be first-generation-to-college, minorities, Pell Grant recipients, women and LD students. But white students apply as non-submitters at rates within low single percentages of the 30% overall average, so the policy has wide appeal.
- Non-submitters strengthen enrollments in multiple ways: larger applicant pools, ED apps, diversity, geographic breadth, and successful LD students.
- Non-submitters with wide ranges of family financial capacities help balance institutional budgets.
- Non-submitters get fewer no-need merit awards, despite higher Cum GPAs and graduation rates. Institutions should examine testing criteria for merit awards.

SAMPLING OVERVIEW

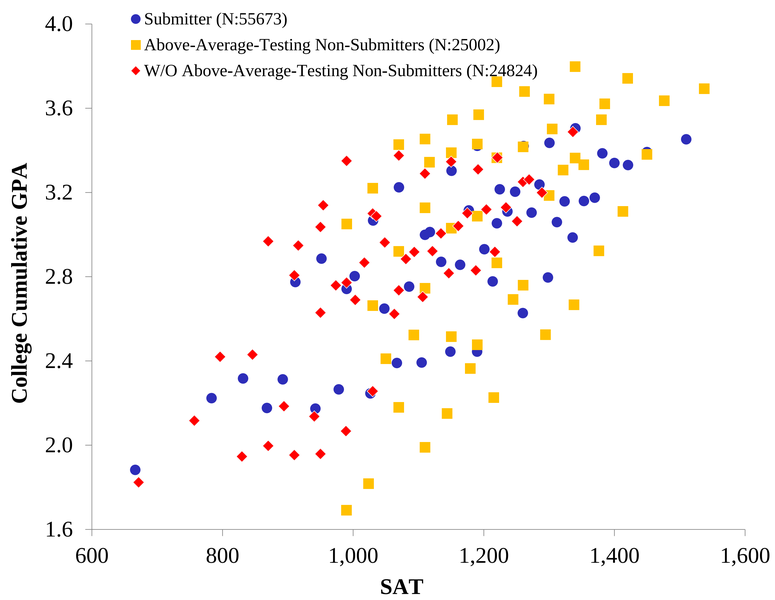
- **33 institutions** (**122,916** student/alumni records) between 2003-2010 made up of:
- **20 private** colleges and universities (**37,611**)
- **6 public** universities (**71,831**)
- **5 minority-serving** institutions (**12,691**)
- **2 arts** institutions (**783**)

HSGPA vs TESTING

Academic Overlay: College Cumulative GPA and High School GPA
(students entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)



Academic Overlay: College Cumulative GPA and SAT
(students entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Summary of Key Statistics
(students entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)

	Non-Submitters	Submitters	
n	*62067*	*60743*	
High School GPA	3.45	3.28	*Cohen's d*
SAT (See caveat below)	1129	1154	*Cohen's d*
Cumulative GPA	2.92	2.88	*Cohen's d*
Graduation Rate	65.8%	64.5%	*Chi-Square*

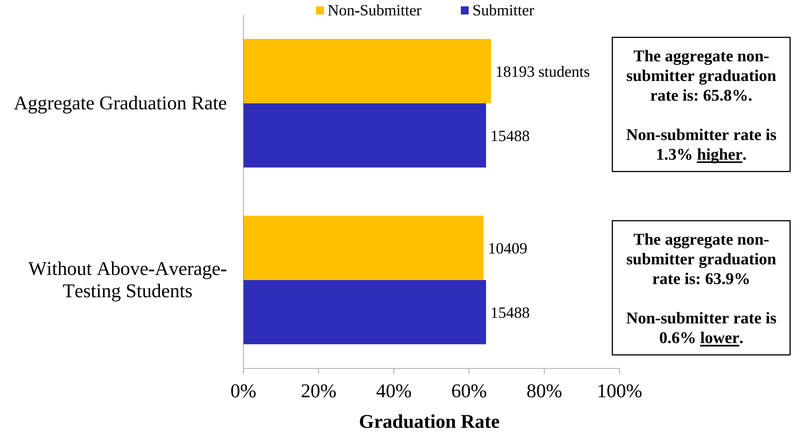
COLOR KEY
Cohen's d
- < 0.1 = trivial difference
- 0.1 - 0.3 = small difference
- 0.3 - 0.5 = moderate difference
- > 0.5 = large difference

Without Above-Average-Testing Students

n	*36648*	*60743*	
High School GPA	3.35	3.28	*Cohen's d*
SAT (See caveat below)	1041	1154	*Cohen's d*
Cumulative GPA	2.83	2.88	*Cohen's d*
Graduation Rate	63.9%	64.5%	*Chi-Square*

COLOR KEY
Chi-Square Test
- No Significant Difference
- Statistically Significant Difference p < .000

Graduation Rate Comparison Between Submitters and Non-Submitters
(Graduated Cohorts entering 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)



ANALYTIC TOOLS

- **Cohen's D:** Measure magnitude of difference between non-submitters and submitters
- **Chi-Square Test:** Statistical analysis of difference
- Other: Scatterplots, bar-graphs, R-squared

RESEARCH TEAM

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