

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: ACT/SAT Test Optional Consideration, Moore

SESSION TYPE:

- Work Session
- Education Session
- Information Item
- Other:

[Committee of the Whole – Items for Approval]

Attachments are provided with the narrative.

APPLIES TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Yes (select below):
 - Driving Excellence
 - Inspiring Students
 - Impacting Communities
 - High-Performing University
- No [Regular Business]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

ACT/SAT test availability has been significantly impacted due to COVID-19. This lack of ability to test has resulted in many students unable to provide the test scores required for admission to higher education institutions. UW is suggesting a consideration be made for offering Test Optional Admissions for upcoming 2021/2022 terms.

PRIOR RELATED BOARD DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS:

N/A

WHY THIS ITEM IS BEFORE THE BOARD:

Information and discussion

ACTION REQUIRED AT THIS BOARD MEETING:

Requesting approval to offer Test Optional Admission into UW for the 2021/2022AY.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move to authorize administration to allow for students to choose a Test Optional consideration for admission to the University of Wyoming for the 2021/2022 academic year.

PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION:

DATE: July 22, 2020
TO: Kyle Moore
FROM: Shelley Dodd
Debra Hintz
RE: Proposal for UW to be ACT/SAT Test Optional for Admissions and Scholarships

Issue:

Rising seniors across the country who will graduate spring 2021 are having a difficult time finding an available ACT/SAT exam date. Due to COVID, there are fewer spots available because of requirements for social distancing, which in turn requires more proctors who need time for training/hiring. In addition, many usual site hosts for these exams are cancelling because they cannot meet the health requirements and logistics required.

Schools and higher educational systems across the country are making decisions to provide “test optional” for admissions (no ACT/SAT is required for admission). Our competitors such as schools in Colorado have been directed by a legislative mandate and governor approval that Colorado state funded universities go test optional. Also, the NCAA will not require an ACT/SAT exam for the incoming fall 2021 class.

Proposal

For the incoming fall 2021 class only, we request approval to not require an ACT/SAT to determine admissibility into UW. Instead, we will review student’s curriculum and unweighted gpa.

Students who are unable to take an ACT/SAT exam will only be eligible for the following amount of award:

Cowboy Commitment=\$500 for resident students who earn a 3.0 unweighted gpa or higher

Brown and Gold Commitment=\$1,000 for non-resident students who earn a 3.0 unweighted gpa or higher

Student who are able to take the ACT/SAT exam will be evaluated on the approved grid to determine a possible higher amount of award.

Admissions:

UW assured admissions requirements require a combination of ACT/SAT and GPA. UW Regulation 2-201 Admissions for Students outlines the admission requirements for the university and while it does allow for consideration through a holistic review – (IV. Undergraduate Admission Requirements; H. Holistic Alternative Admission) – a more straightforward process might be worth considering for this fall.

Students who have;

- 3.0-4.0 unweighted gpa will be an assured admit
- 2.99-2.50 unweighted gpa will be admitted with support
- 2.25-2.49 unweighted gpa will be reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis for admission

Scholarships and Financial Aid:

UW Scholarships commitments and guarantees are also based off of ACT/SAT data points. Providing Test optional admissions requires consideration for how awarding of scholarships will be determined without test score criteria.

In researching the scholarship component in each of these institutions admission process, many have declared students need to check back with more information:

Montana State: <http://www.montana.edu/admissions/scholarships/index.html>

Colorado State University: <https://financialaid.colostate.edu/scholarships-for-entering-non-resident-freshman/>

University of Arizona: <https://financialaid.arizona.edu/types-of-aid/scholarships/incoming-transfer>

University of Colorado Boulder: <https://www.colorado.edu/scholarships/cu-boulder-scholarships>

Utah State University: <https://www.usu.edu/admissions/costs-and-aid/#scholarships>

While others offer a holistic review for scholarship awards:

University of Nebraska Lincoln: <https://admissions.unl.edu/cost/#scholarships/F>

Texas Tech: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/scholarships/incFreshman.php>

Upon further analysis of the impact of going test-optional would have on scholarship awarding, EM will bring forward a recommendation to consider.

Additional Considerations:

The Wyoming Hathaway Scholarship requires an ACT/SAT score to determine eligibility. If a test optional is adopted by UW, a Wyoming student eligible for Hathaway will need to find a test date. WDE provides testing for all HS students as juniors, so fall 2021 admits may be okay.

By the end of May, roughly 1 million fewer non-Wyoming American 11th-graders had taken the SAT for the first time than would have been expected. At this point, 3/5 of 4 year (over 1,450 or 60%) of 4 year institutions have gone test optional, including some of our strongest competitors; CSU, MSU, CU, UNL, USU, ISU, etc.

Impact:

By requiring the ACT/SAT exam for admission and scholarship eligibility, a significant number of non-resident students will be impacted. Students will be faced with the obstacle of finding an exam, and then presented with a choice of schools not requiring the exam for entry. Barriers to student entry will impact application and admission rates at the University of Wyoming.