

# College Readiness and Completion: *UW's Redefined Categories of Admission*

Offices of the President, Academic Affairs, & Student Affairs  
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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# UW's goal: higher college completion rates

UW and national data show that better-prepared students persist and complete degrees at a higher rate.

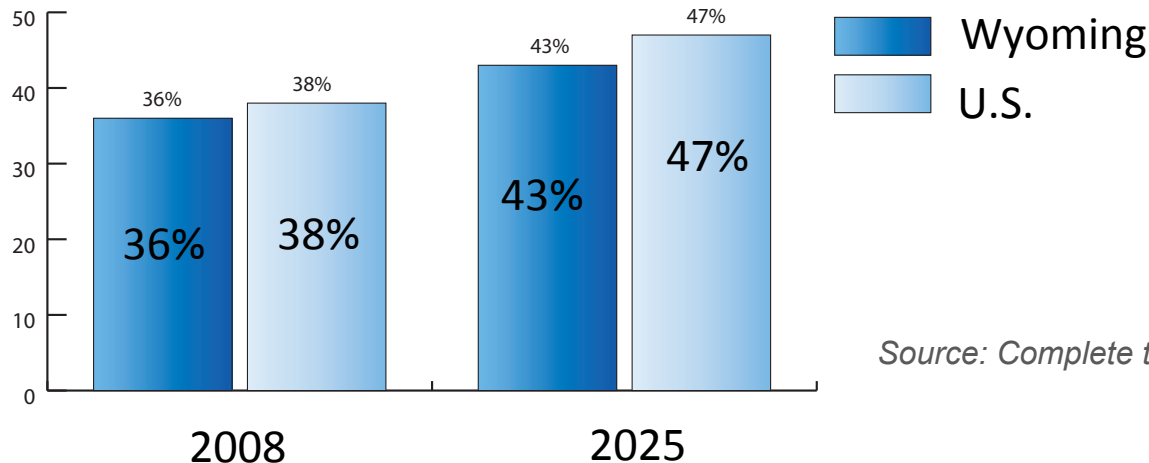
In November 2011, UW redefined its admission categories to promote good preparation for college, and to identify those students who will benefit from additional academic support when they enter the University.

***All students who would be admitted under the current admissions standards will continue to be admitted under the redefined categories of admission, which take effect in 2013.***



# Wyoming's education challenge

- The Center on Education and Workforce projects that by 2018, 63% of jobs will require some college education.
- Wyoming lags behind the national average in percentage of adults with an associates degree or higher.



Source: Complete to Compete; Nat. Gov. Assoc.

- The University of Wyoming can help to improve Wyoming students' college readiness and completion, preparing them to enter an increasingly knowledge-based economy.



# Goal 1:

## Prepare more Wyoming students for college

### Wyoming compared to states with high college completion rates

State	9 <sup>th</sup> graders	High school graduates	Enter college anywhere in U.S.
Iowa	100	84	54
Massachusetts	100	77	58
<b>Wyoming (numbers of students)</b>	<b>100 (7355)</b>	<b>75 (5494)</b>	<b>44 (3262)</b>

Source: HigherEdInfo.org (2008 data)

Challenge



## Goal 2:

### *Retain & graduate students who enter UW*

**Wyoming compared to states with high college completion rates**

State	Enter college	Full-time students still enrolled sophomore yr.	Graduate within 150% of time
Iowa	100	78	61
Massachusetts	100	83	69
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>53</b>

UW loses students in the first year

UW needs to retain students who persist into the sophomore year



# Keys to improving the K-12 to College Graduate Pipeline

- **Academic rigor in high school**
- **Aspirational culture in K-12 students**
- **Informed families**
- **Financial aid and scholarships, including Hathaway**



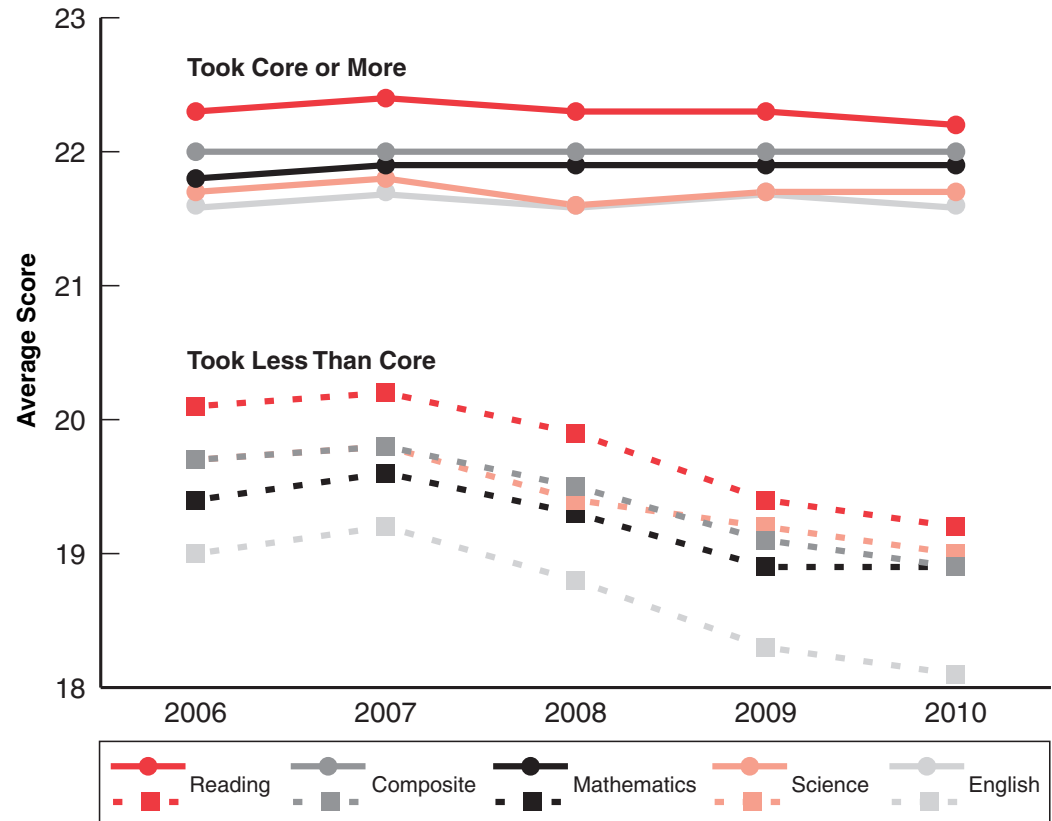
# ACT score correlates with rigor of high school curriculum

On average, high school students who completed a core curriculum\* scored **2.2 to 3.1 points higher** on the ACT than those who did not.

Students who took advanced math, biology, chemistry and physics do even better.

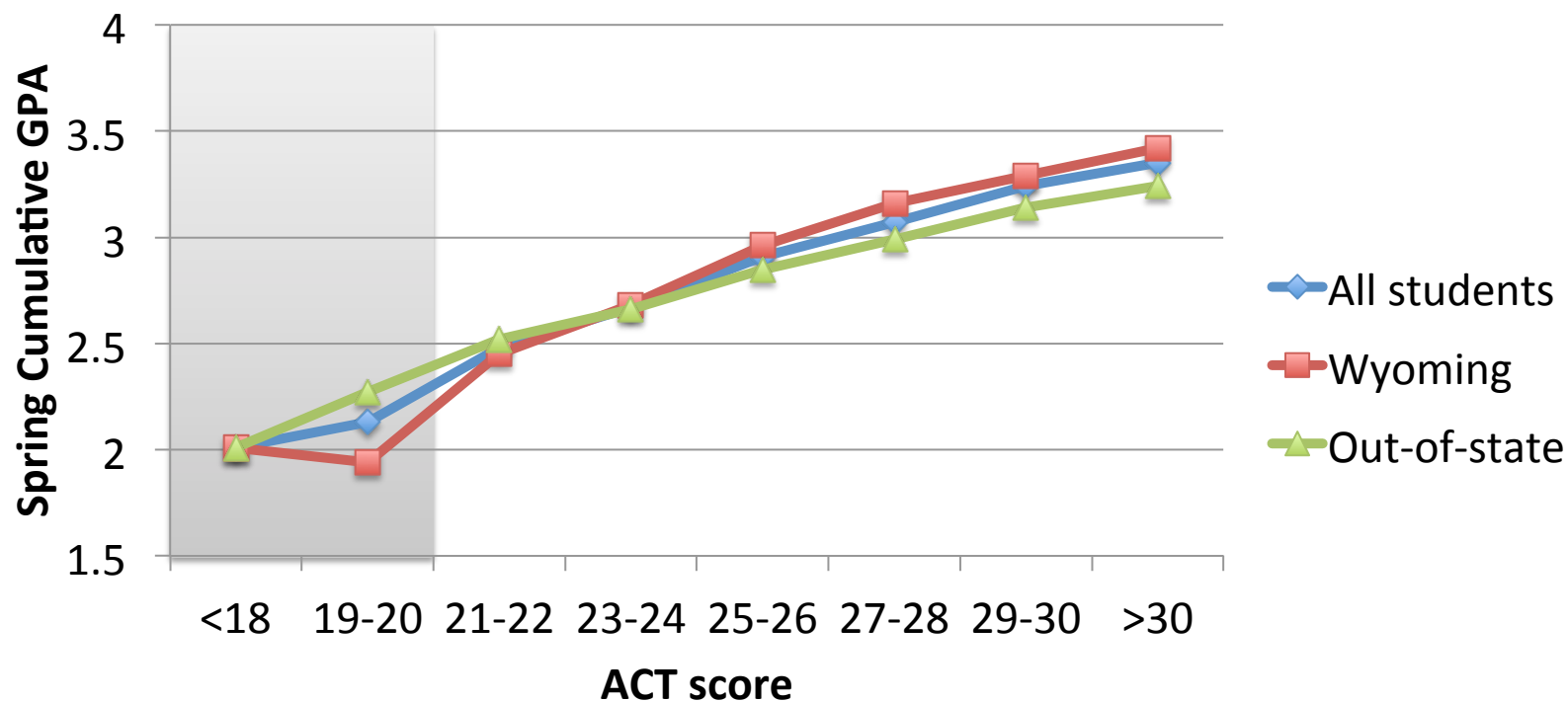
\*4 years English, 3 years Math, Science, Social Studies

Average ACT Scores by  
Core Curriculum Completion Status, 2006–2010



# ACT is a predictor of 1<sup>st</sup> year academic performance at UW

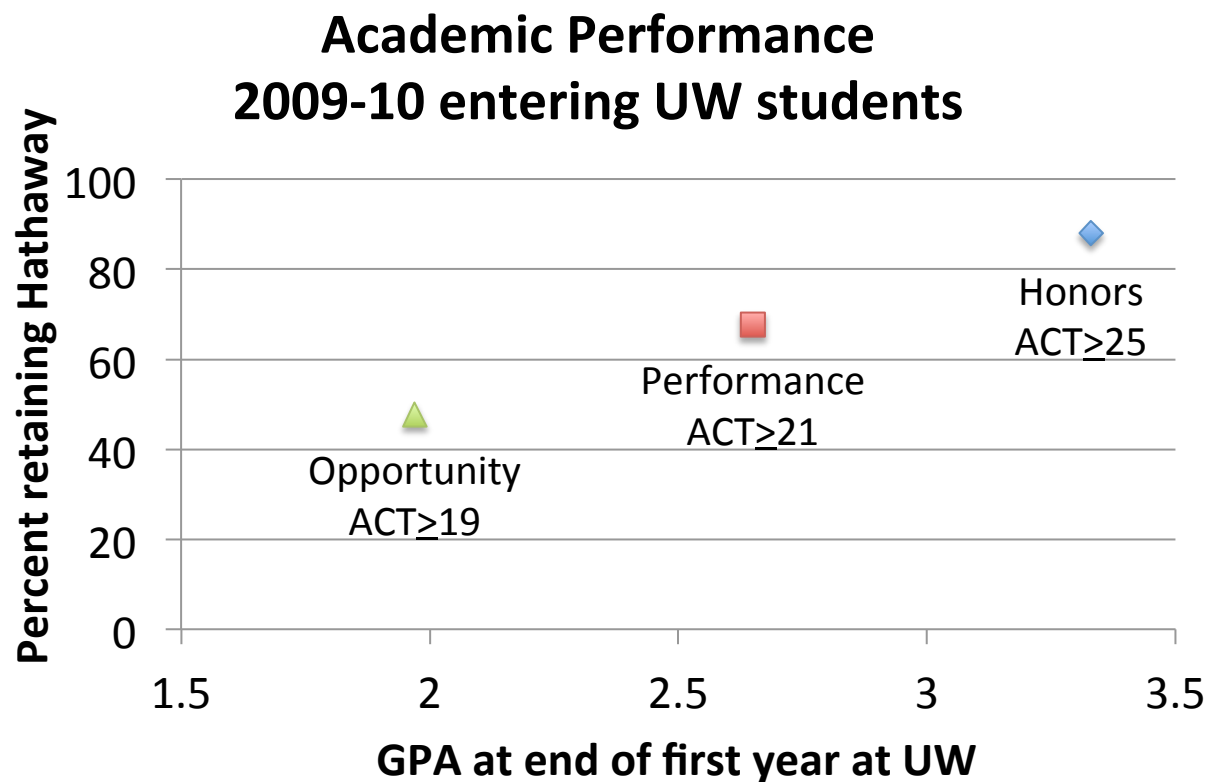
UW first year cumulative GPA



Sources: UW OIA, Fall 2009 data



# 1<sup>st</sup> year academic performance is the most important factor in retention



# High standards improve college success:

## **LIFE 1010: General Biology**

Prerequisites: grade of C or better in MATH 0921 (Basics of Algebra)  
or level 2 on the Math Placement Exam  
or math ACT of 21

### ***Prior to prerequisite of Math ACT score of 21 for LIFE 1010:***

73% of students with Math ACT of <21 earned D, F, or withdrew

### ***After instituting prerequisite:***

Students with Math ACT <21 take Math 921 in the fall

72% of these students earned A, B, or C in LIFE 1010 in the spring



# UW will guide students on college preparation through its admissions categories

**Assured admission:** for students who have the proposed high school coursework, GPA, and test scores showing they are likely to succeed in college.

**Admission with support:** for students whose high school transcripts, GPA and test scores suggest they may need additional support to succeed in college. UW will tailor support to the specific needs of each student.

***All students who would be admitted under the current admissions standards will continue to be admitted under the redefined categories of admission.***



# UW admission standards effective 2013:

***Assured admission*** for students prepared with:

1. 4 years of English, Math (including Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry), and Science; 3 years of Social Studies; and 2 years of a single Foreign Language,
2. A minimum high school GPA of 3.0, and
3. An ACT score of 21 or higher ( $SAT \geq 990$ ).
4. Two additional years of coursework chosen from fine and performing arts, social and behavioral studies, humanities, additional foreign language, or career-technical courses.

***Admission with support*** for those not meeting these standards;  
require participation in Synergy or other transition program

***No change in transfer student admission*** requirements; encourage  
completion of associates degree or ~60 credits prior to transfer



# UW assured admission - element #1

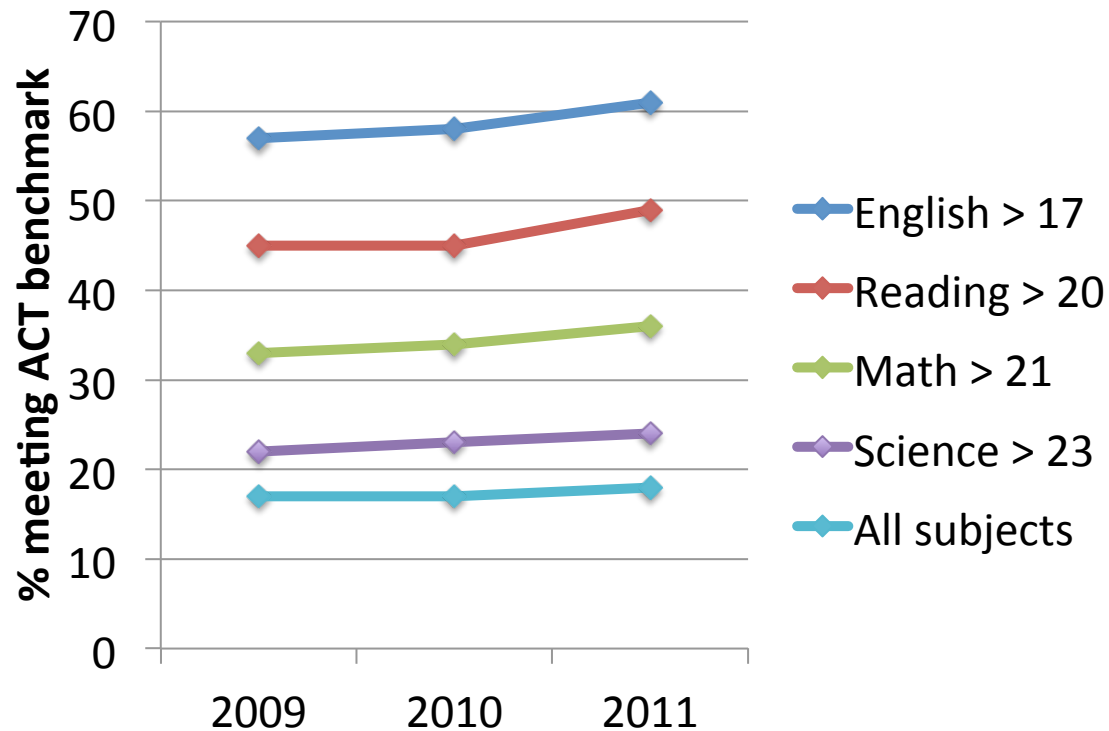
Reflect research and match Hathaway Success Curriculum:

	Wyoming HS graduation/ current UW admissions	Proposed UW assured admissions	Hathaway Success Curriculum	US Dept of Ed and College Board recommendations
English	4	4	4	4
Math	3	4	4	4
Science	3	4	4	3
Social Studies	3	3	3	3
Foreign Language		2	2	3
Arts		*		1
Honors/AP				yes

\*2 additional years of coursework may include fine and performing arts

# Curricular standards improve college readiness

Improving ACT scores reflect increasing rigor of Wyoming high school preparation



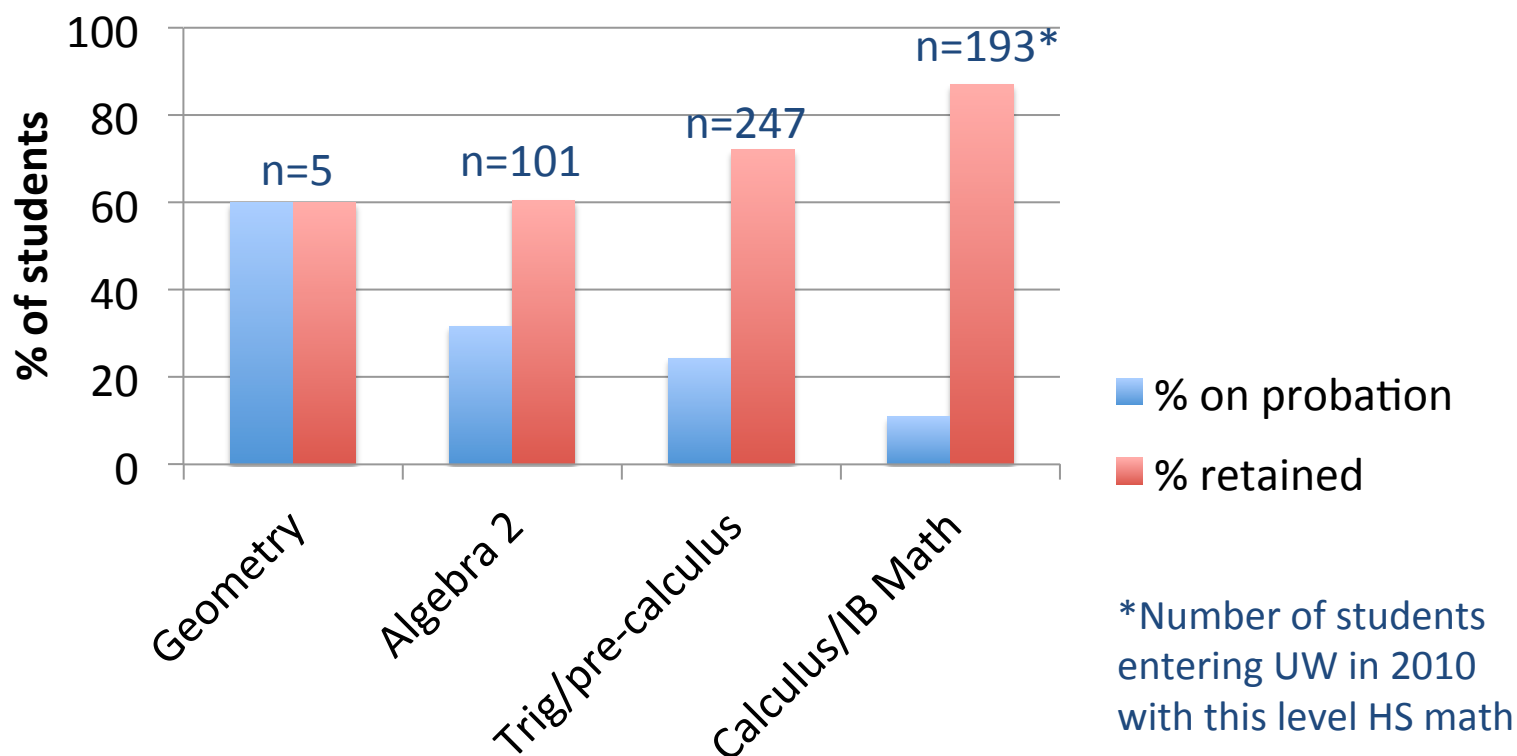
*(First students completing Hathaway Curriculum entered UW Fall 2011;  
All Wyoming 11<sup>th</sup> grade students have taken ACT since 2009)*





# Highest math taken in Wyoming high schools correlates with performance at UW:

*Those taking Algebra I + II, Geometry, and one or more additional math classes do well at UW*



**Highest level math taken in high school**

Source: UW OIA—Fall 2010 first-time first-year students



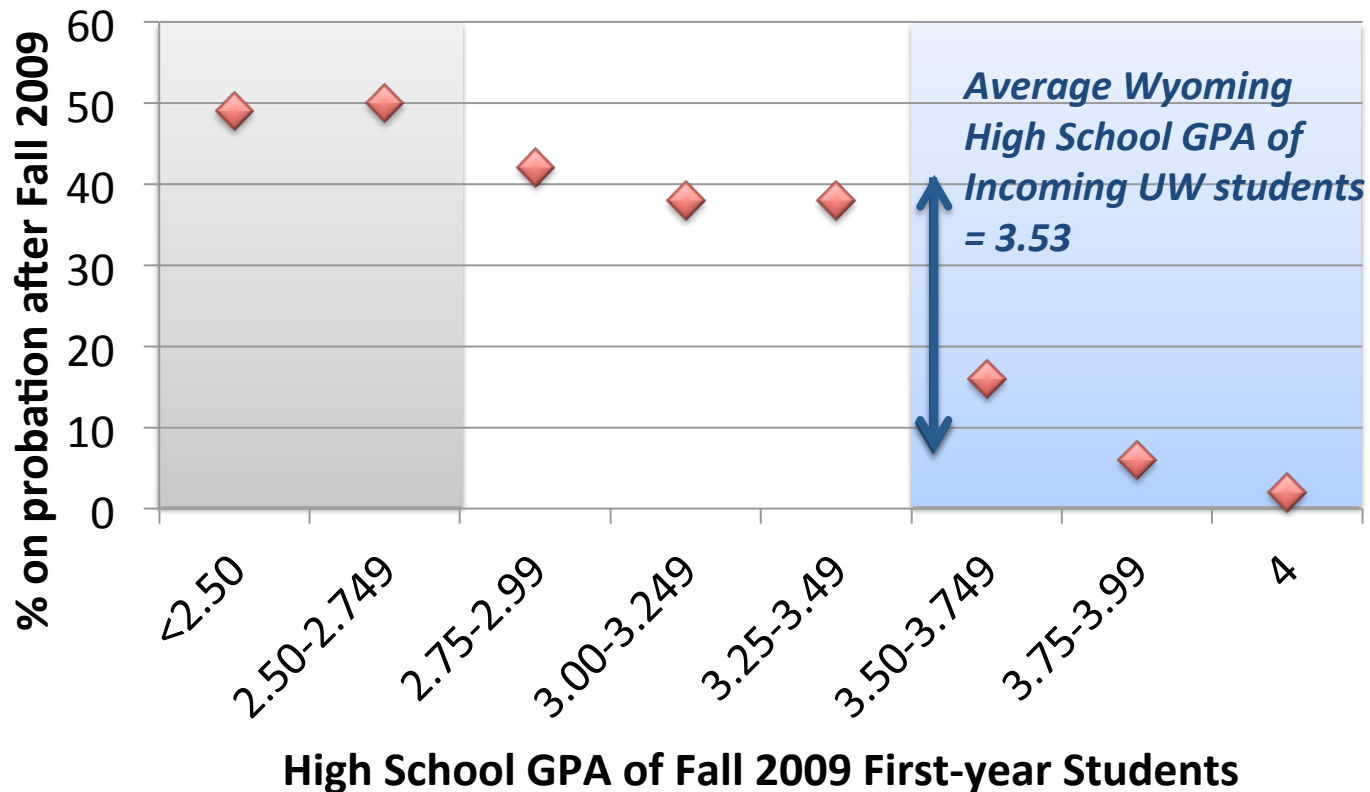
## UW assured admission - element #2

Require a:

- **High school GPA of 3.0** (*3.0 GPA is required now for non-resident applicants*)



# Success is correlated with high school GPA



## UW assured admission - element #3

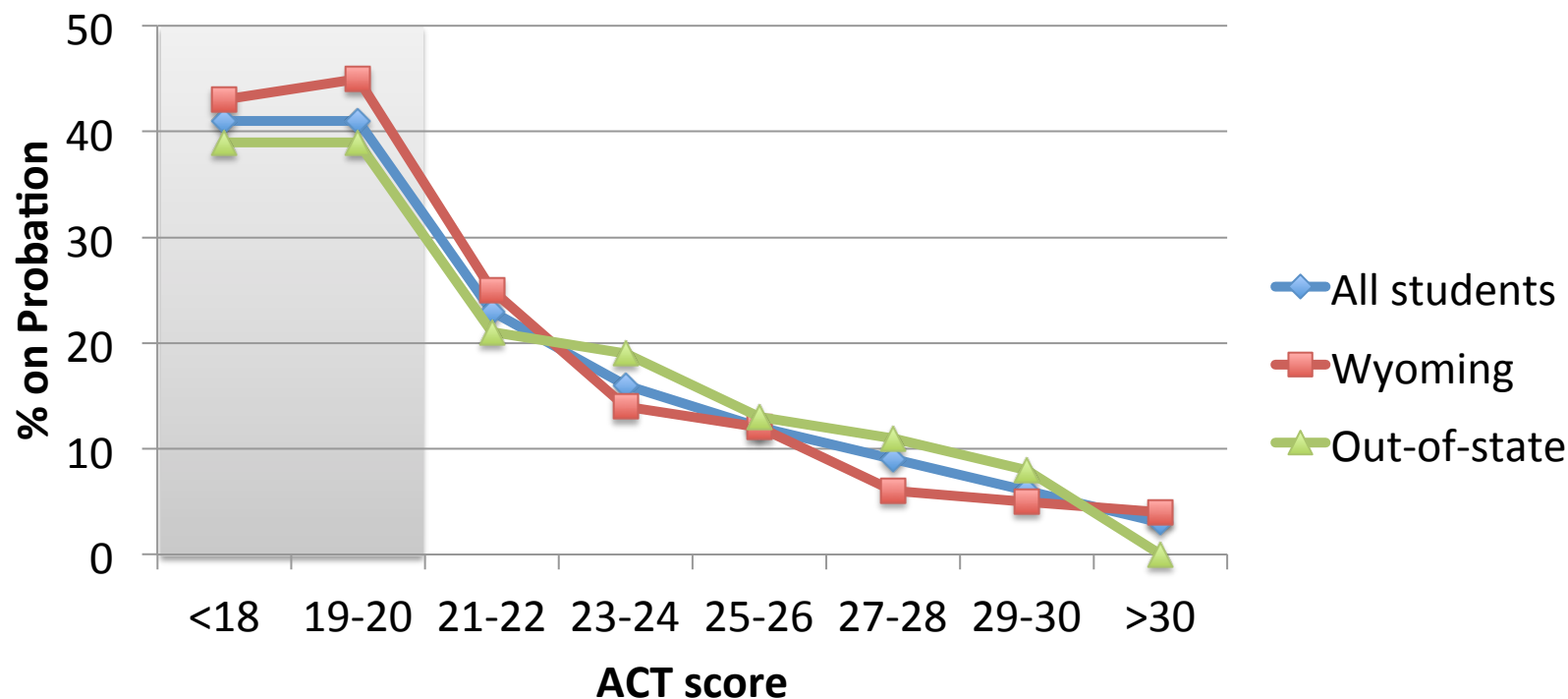
Require an:

- **ACT of 21 or higher (or SAT  $\geq$  990)**



# ACT is a predictor of 1<sup>st</sup> year academic performance at UW

UW first semester 1st year probation rates



# UW Academic Support

UW will provide:

- **“Admission with support” for students not meeting “assured admission” category**
- **Offer participation in Synergy program or other support programs such as an academic transition course**





# Synergy: an intensive college success program

Students enroll in special sections of:

ENGL 1010: English composition

UWYO 1450: Intellectual community

POLS 1000: Political Science

COJO 1010: Communications

And receive peer mentoring, supplemental instruction, cohort community

**Compared to conditionally admitted students without Synergy, Synergy students demonstrate:**

- **higher first semester GPA (2.14 vs. 1.78),**
- **lower probation rates (40% vs. 60%) and**
- **higher fall-to-fall retention (55.6% vs. 51.8%).**

The program currently serves ~150 students per year.



# UW admission of transfer students

For transfer students to UW:

**No change to UW's admission requirements; encourage students to complete an associates degree or ~60 credits prior to transferring to UW**

Transfer students with  $> 30$  college credits are admitted if they have a college GPA of  $\geq 2.0$

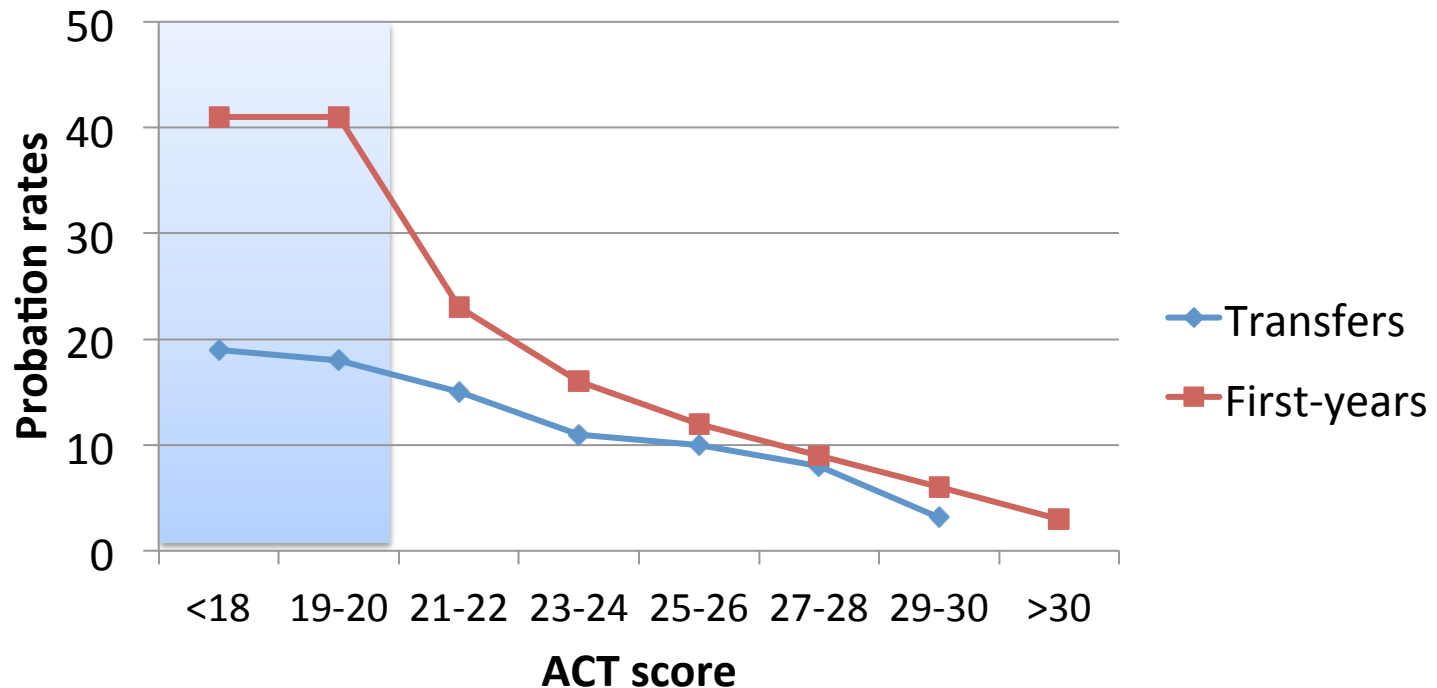
Transfer students with  $< 30$  college credits and high school diploma are admitted if they also meet the requirements for 1<sup>st</sup> year, first-time student applicants.



# Transfer students

Transfer students with low ACT are less likely to go on probation than are students with similar ACT who start at UW

Students entering Fall 2009

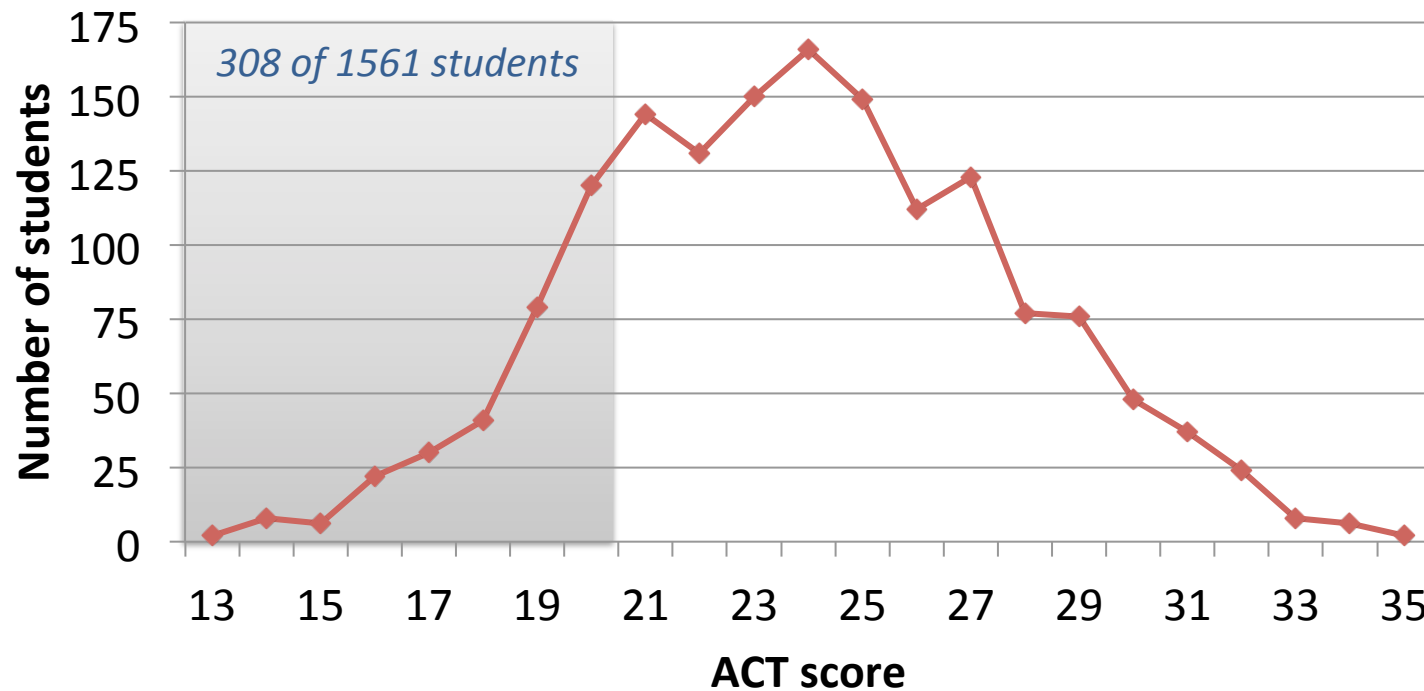


# Wyoming's proposed admission standards compared to neighboring universities

Institution	ACT	GPA	Minimum Curriculum: English/Math/Science/ Soc.Stud./Foreign language
Black Hills State	18	2.6	4/3/3/3/0
University of Nebraska	20	--	4/4/3/3/2
New Mexico State	21	2.5	4/3/2/0/1
North Dakota State	21	2.5	4/3/3/3/0
Oregon State	--	3.0	4/3/3/3/2
<b>University of Wyoming new standards</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4/4/4/3/2</b>
Montana State-Bozeman	22	2.5	4/3/2/3/0
University of Nevada-Reno	22	3.0	4/3/3/3/0
Colorado State	--	3.25	4/4/3/3/2
University of Arizona	Top 25% of class		4/4/3/2/2
Washington State	--	3.5	4/3/2/3/2
University of Denver ( <i>average student</i> )	28	3.74	4/4/4/4/4
Colorado College ( <i>average student</i> )	31; top 5% of class		20 solid academic courses

# Estimated number of students admitted with support under proposed redefined categories of admission

- *Projected increase from ~150 to ~308 students*
  - *Should drop over time as entering students become better prepared*
- Fall 2009 first-time 1st-year student ACT scores**



# The future: improved completion rates

*If UW's new assured admission criteria had been applied in 2004:*

2013 admissions criteria	# of students	% graduating in 6 years
Overall	1481	53%
Assured admission*	925	66%
Admission with support	556	33%

High performing states	
Iowa	61%
Massachusetts	69%

\*High school GPA 3.0 and ACT 21 or higher

