



Cornell University Student Assembly

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| Originally Presented on: | (2/13/2020) |
| Type of Action: | Legislation |
| Status/Result: | New Business |

1 S.A. Resolution #36
2 Creating a Study Committee that would evaluate the ACT/SAT test requirement for
3 Cornell Admissions
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5 ABSTRACT: This resolution recommends that Cornell University convene a study group of faculty,
6 employees, and students to analyze the potential effects of making the ACT/SAT optional for
7 admissions.
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9 **Sponsored by: Debbie Nyakaru '20, Joe Anderson '20**
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11 **Whereas**, the history of standardized testing dates back to the psychologist Carl Brigham, a key
12 developer of the Scholastic Aptitude Test and prominent eugenicist¹
13

14 **Whereas**, the tests continue to reflect their biased history; for example, in the case of gender-based
15 bias, where girls on average score higher than boys in math classes, but boys consistent score higher
16 on the math sections of standardized tests²
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18 **Whereas**, a report from the College Board shows that students from a lower socioeconomic status
19 (SES) score consistently lower on standardized tests than students from higher SES³
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21 **Whereas**, SAT and ACT scores are not accurate predictors of a student's success in college
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23 **Whereas**, peer institutions have moved toward making the test requirement optional and other
24 institutions have removed the requirement completely⁴
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26 **Whereas**, when the University of Chicago removed the standardized test score requirement, along
27 with other equity-based measures, they saw a 20 percent increase in the amount of first-generation,
28 low-income students, a 56 percent increase in rural students, and 14 veterans (previously zero)
29 commit to their schools⁵
30

31 **Whereas**, the University of California released a public report on whether the UC system should
32 continue utilizing the SAT/ACT in their admissions decisions;
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1 <http://www.nea.org/home/73288.htm>

2 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelsesser/2019/12/11/lawsuit-claims-sat-and-act-are-biased-heres-what-research-says/#4a43ea73c429>

3 <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/research/2013/TotalGroup-2013.pdf>

4 <https://news.uchicago.edu/story/test-scores-dont-stack-gpas-predicting-college-success>

5 <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2019/07/22/university-chicago-test-optional-policies-are-worth-review-opinion>



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34 **Whereas**, ultimately, and shockingly, the UC Study Group did not recommend dropping the
35 SAT/ACT; however, they did note that standardized test scores may adversely affect
36 underrepresented minority applicants;

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38 **Whereas**, Cornell has a different student body and applicant pool to consider than the University of
39 California system;

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41 **Whereas**, the potential effects of having Cornell be test optional might be different than the effects
42 on the University of California system;

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44 **Be it therefore resolved**, that Cornell University create a study group of faculty, employees, and
45 students to be convened and produce a recommendation and justification to the University;

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47 **Be it further resolved**, that the report of the working group include other equity-based measures
48 that would increase the diversity of incoming classes;

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50 **Be it finally resolved**, that the report of the working group include a discussion of transfer
51 students, veterans, and other non-traditional student demographic groups.

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53 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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55 Debbie Nyakaru '20
56 *Parliamentarian, Student Assembly*

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58 Joe Anderson '20
59 *President, Student Assembly*

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61 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-0, 2/11/2020)*