DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

The DIAMOND project

An overview of DePaul's introduction of Non-cognitive measures in Freshman Admission

prepared for

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April 17, 2014

Outline for today

- What is the DIAMOND project ?
- How is it implemented ?
- What are the preliminary results ?

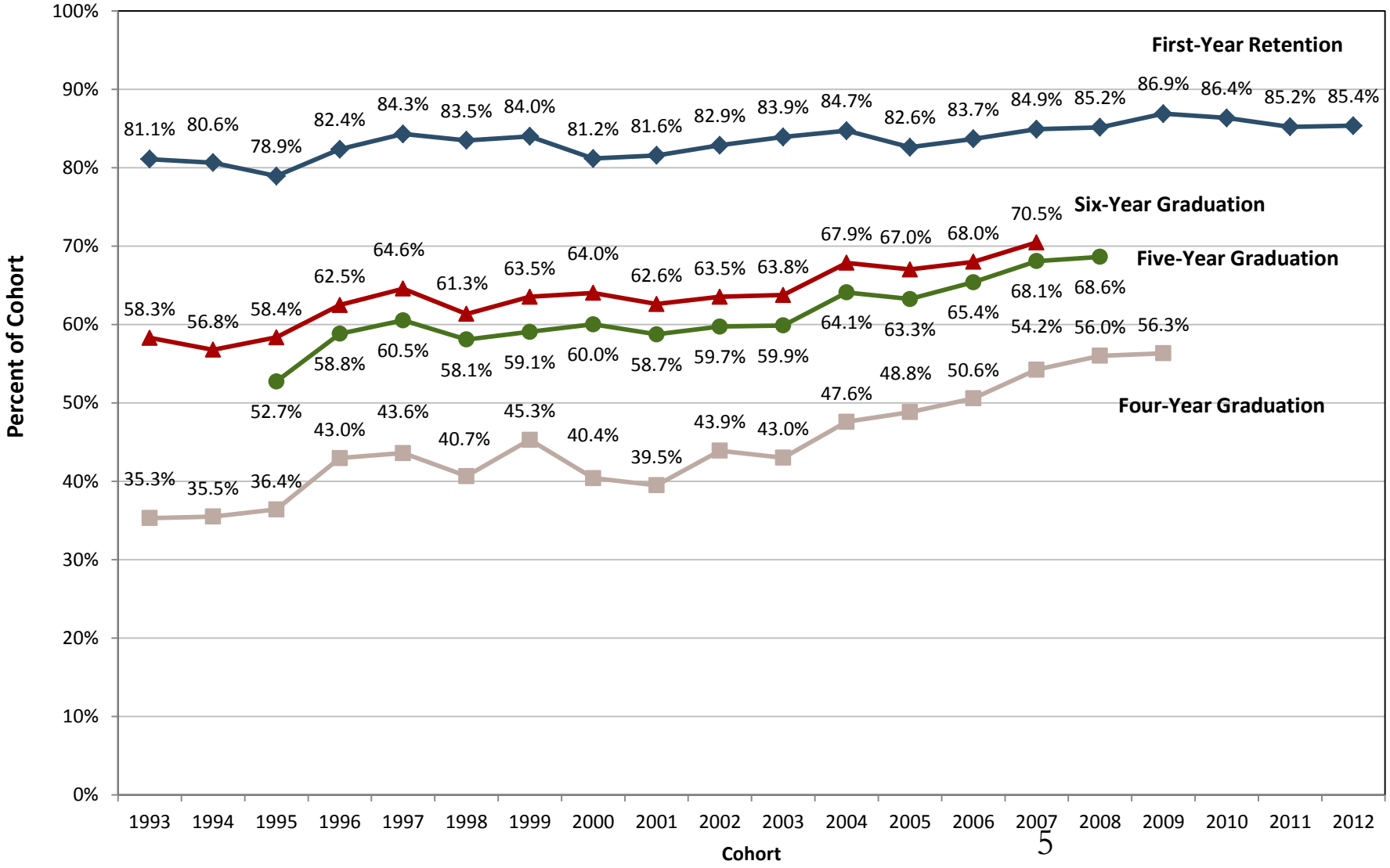
DePaul Context

- Fall 2013 Freshman – 2,425 students
- 34% students of color*
- 33% first-generation
- 33% Pell-eligible
- 12% Chicago Public Schools
- Mean HSGPA 3.65
- Mean ACT 25.4

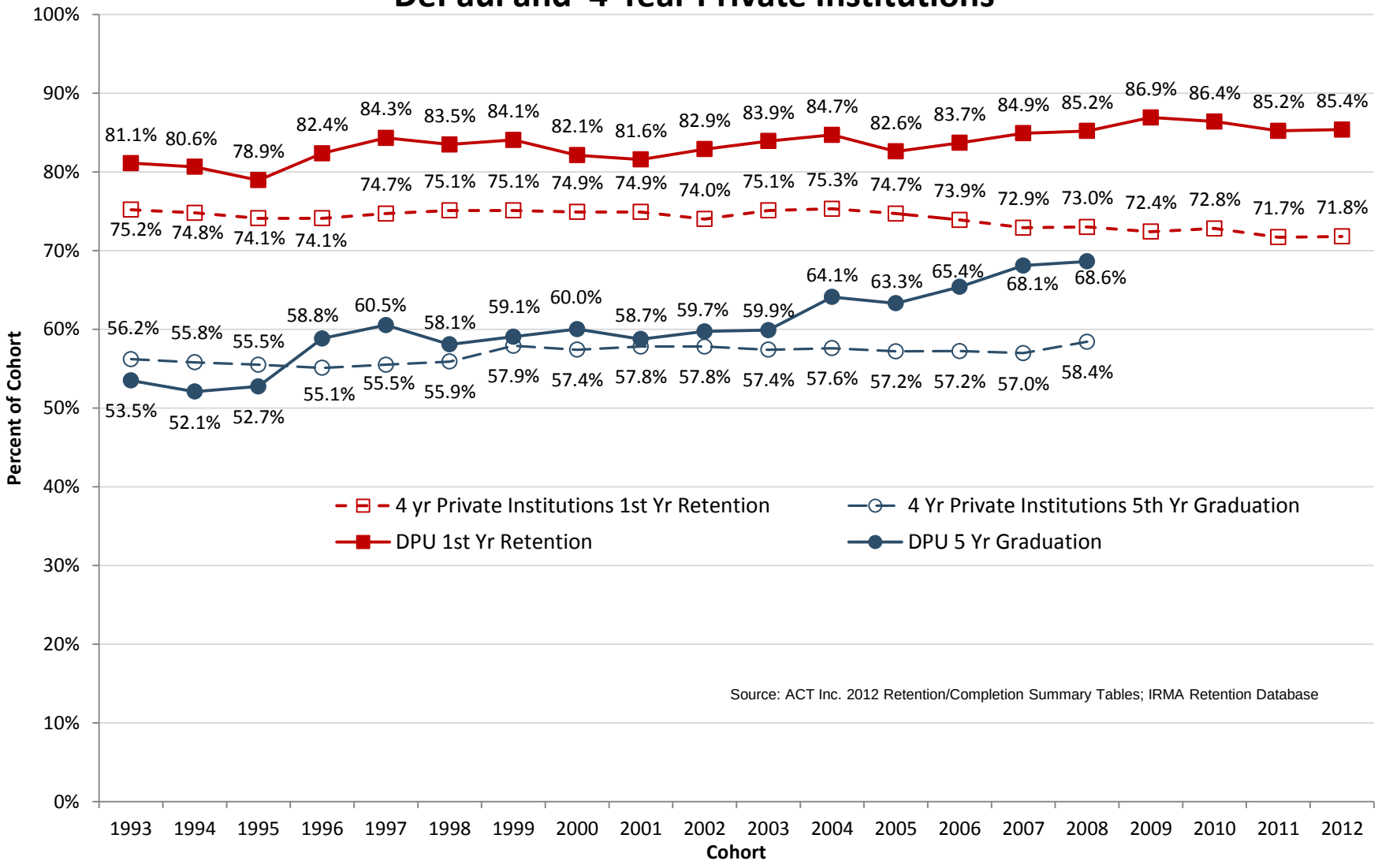
- 2,113 Undergraduate Transfer Students enrolled (2012)

*students of color include American Indian, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islanders, & Multiracial

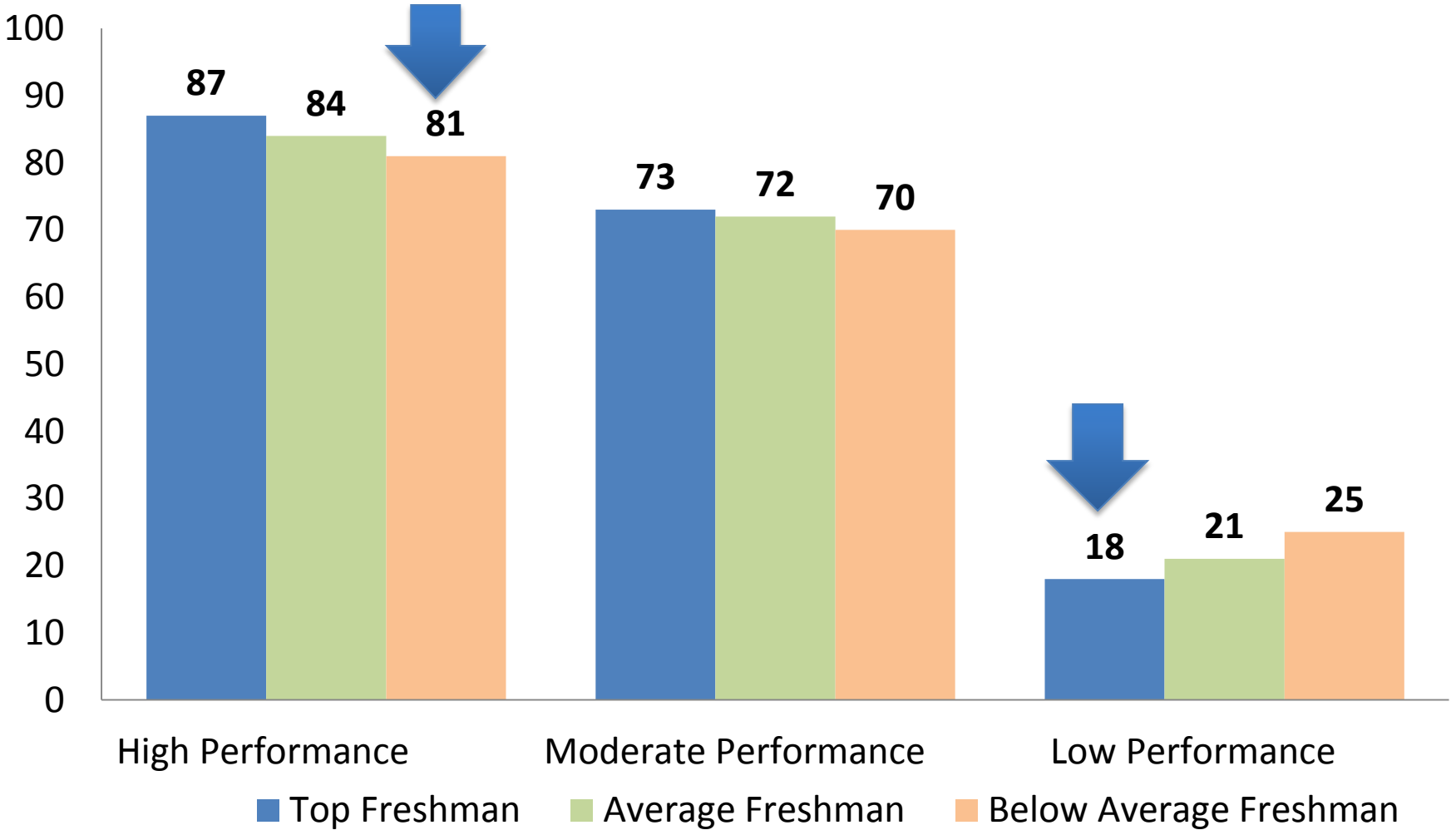
First-Year Retention, Four-Year Graduation, Six-Year Graduation Rates 1993-2012



First-Year Retention and Five-Year Graduation Rate Comparison: DePaul and 4-Year Private Institutions



Will I Graduate? First-year performance is key.



6 Year Graduation Rates - 2002-2011 Fall cohorts

From The Mission Statement:

"Originally founded for students from the greater Chicago area, and still serving them predominantly, DePaul continues its commitment to the education of **first generation college students**, especially those from the **diverse cultural and ethnic groups in the metropolitan area**."

http://mission.depaul.edu

Mission and Market Realities
Increasing Selectivity

- DePaul's Traditional Response:
  - Grow
  - The high tide lifts all boats
- New Realities
  - Increasing applications
  - Increasing selectivity
- Normally, institutions following a pure "quality" agenda would celebrate limited capacity against growing demand; they simply skim the best applicants off the top.
- ***However, first-generation, low-income, and minority students would likely be affected in greater proportions.***

Non-Cognitive Variables

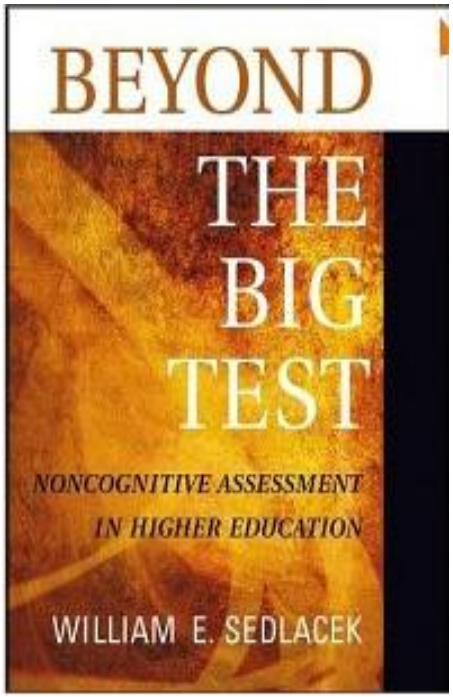
Developing **I**nsights for
Admission through the **M**ining **o**f **N**on-traditional **D**ata

DIAMOND

Non-cognitive Model

Addresses what is missing from standardized test scores and adds to the range of attributes that are considered in the admissions process.

- Positive self-concept
- Realistic self-appraisal
- Successfully handling the system
- Preference for long-term goals
- Availability of strong support person
- Leadership experience
- Community involvement
- Knowledge acquired in field



*"Beyond the Big Test" 2004 by William Sedlacek

Implementing the DIAMOND Project

- Establishing the committee and leadership
- Developing and scoring the essays
- Building the web-based scoring and management tool
- Recruiting & training the readers
- Creating diagnostics to assess the process

The Basics

- Four essay questions (average 100 words) to measure eight dimensions of Sedlacek's model. (In 2009 replaced two existing short essays in the current application.)

- Reader gives one score for each of the eight non-cognitive dimensions; sums to one overall score.

- Each set of essays read by two readers; where the difference of the scores is greater than 4, essays are read a third time.

Sample DIAMOND Questions

- Describe your short and long term goals and how you plan to accomplish them.
- **Describe a personal challenge you have faced, or a situation which you found to be particularly difficult. How did you react and what conclusions did you draw from the experience? Were you or others treated unfairly? Were you able to turn to others for support?**
- Discuss how involved you have been with your community through volunteer, neighborhood, place of worship, or other activities. Describe why community is or is not important to you. Give examples of playing a leadership role in your school or community.
- Think about the interests you have pursued outside of your high school classes (e.g. independently or through a student organization, part-time work, sports, playing a musical instrument, volunteering, independent study, etc.) Describe any knowledge or mastery of skills you have gained as a result.

Sample DIAMOND Scoring Rubric

Leadership Experience

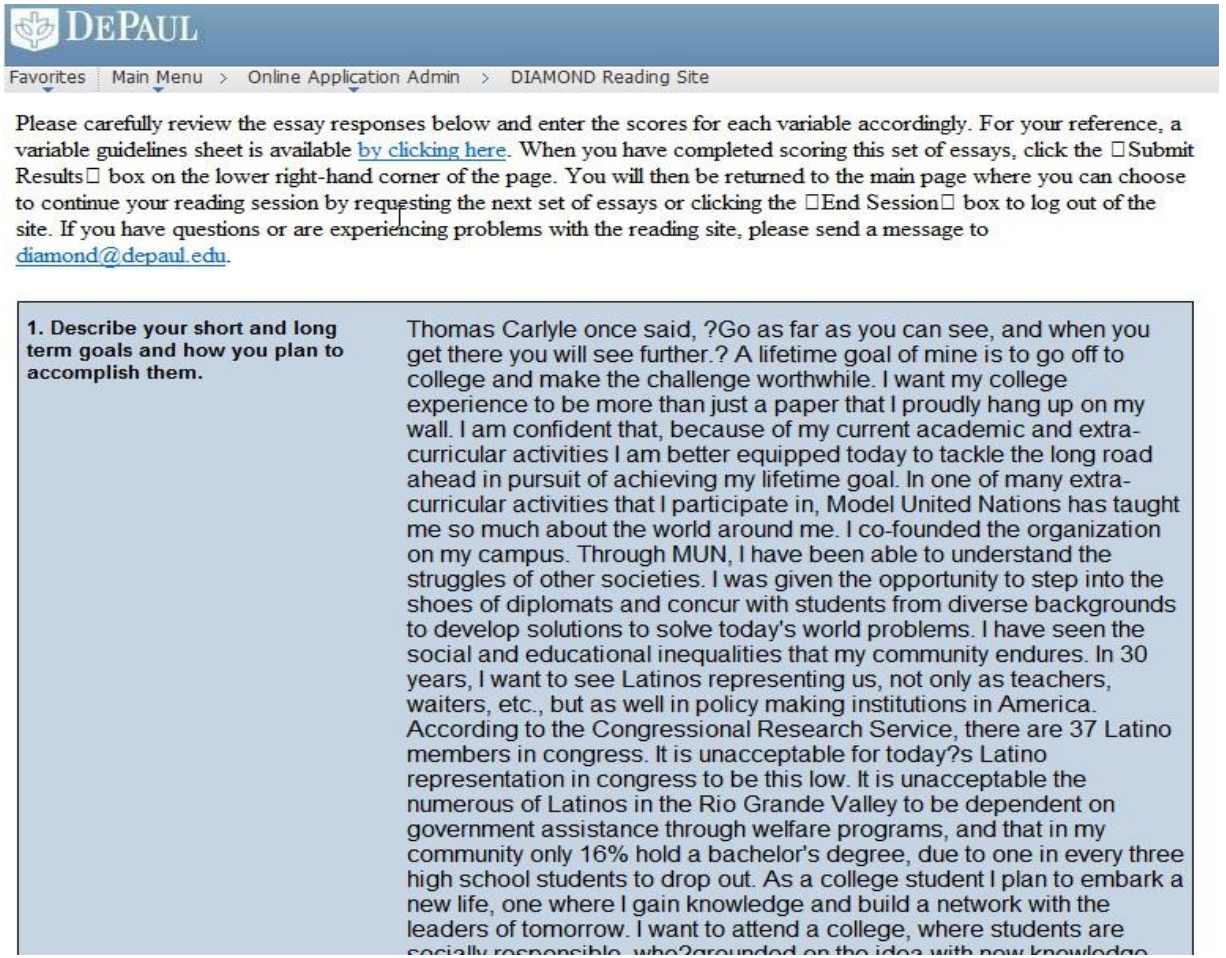
- 3= Substantial behavioral evidence of taking initiative, assuming responsibility and consistent collaborative group participation over time; evidence of helping to resolve disputes

- 2= Some evidence of taking initiative, assuming responsibility and consistent collaborative group participation over time; some evidence of helping to resolve disputes;

- 1= Very limited or no evidence of taking initiative, assuming responsibility. No collaboration with or influence on others

This is the way the essays appear for readers doing essay evaluation.

Readers view each response as one essay and then evaluate for evidence after completing all sections.



The grid used to determine the level of evidence for each NCV can be viewed below and allows readers to skip and flag essays if necessary.

	1 - Low	2 - Med	3 - High
Positive Self-Concept	○	○	○
Realistic Self-Appraisal	○	○	○
Successfully Negotiating the System	○	○	○
Long-Term Goals	○	○	○
Leadership Experience	○	○	○
Community Service	○	○	○
Knowledge in a field	○	○	○
Availability of Strong Support Person	○	○	○

Flag Responses | Skip

Submit Results

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DIAMOND Essay Student View

This is the page students see when they log-in to submit their supplemental essays.

Instructions PLEASE READ

At DePaul, we understand that education takes place in many settings beyond the classroom so we would like to learn a little more about you as an individual and a candidate for admission. The following questions provide an opportunity for you to tell us more about yourself and your experiences. We encourage you to think about your responses carefully and provide examples to illustrate your statements. Each response should be given in 1-2 paragraphs; some students have provided very appropriate responses in as few as 100 words for each question.

Please note that this window will time-out after 15 minutes of inactivity and all unsaved changes will be lost. Therefore, please develop and edit your essays in a word editor such as MS Word and then copy/paste your final responses in the space provided below each question to avoid losing unsaved work. You may save your progress at any time by clicking "Save for Later". When you have finished, simply hit "Submit" and your responses will be made available to our admission staff for review.

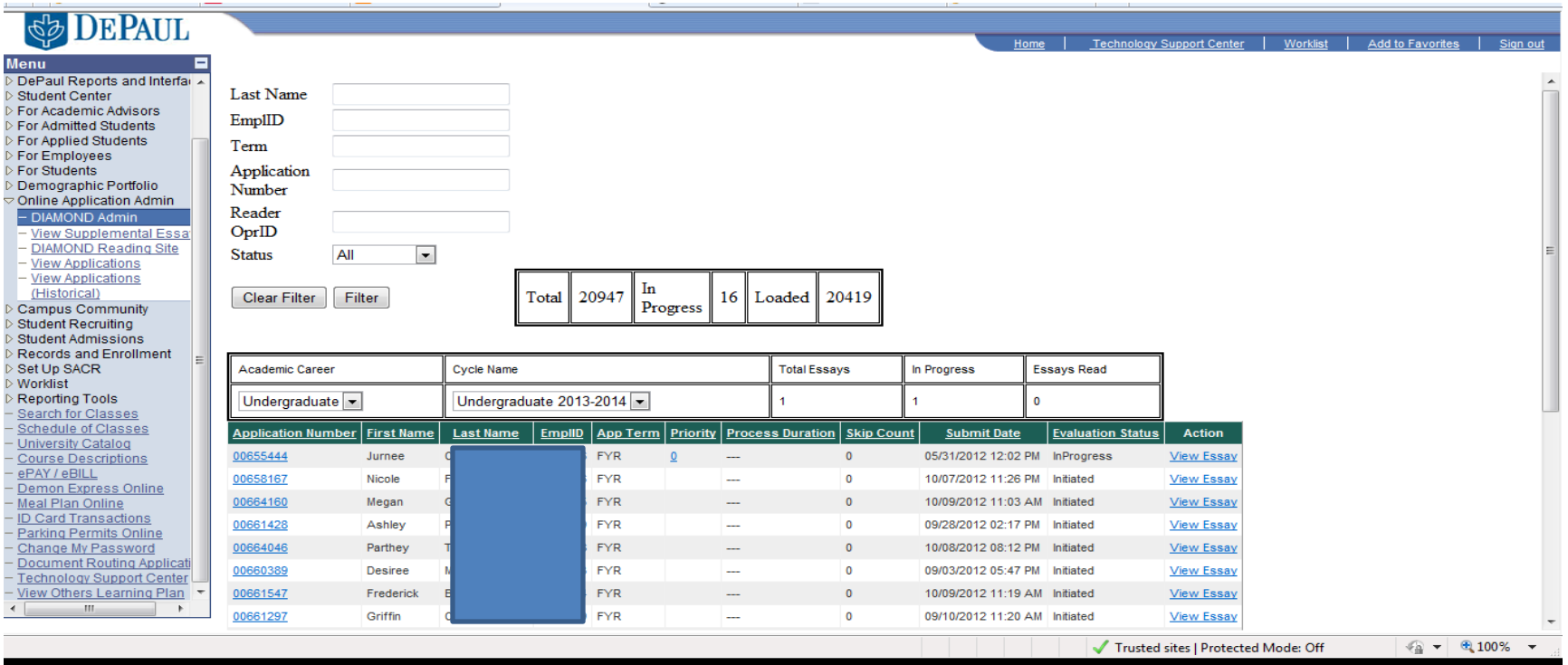
1. Describe your short and long term goals and how you plan to accomplish them.

Maximum remaining: 2000

2. Describe a personal challenge you have faced, or a situation which you found to be particularly difficult. How did you react and what conclusions did you draw from the experience? Were you or others treated unfairly? Were you able to turn to others for support?

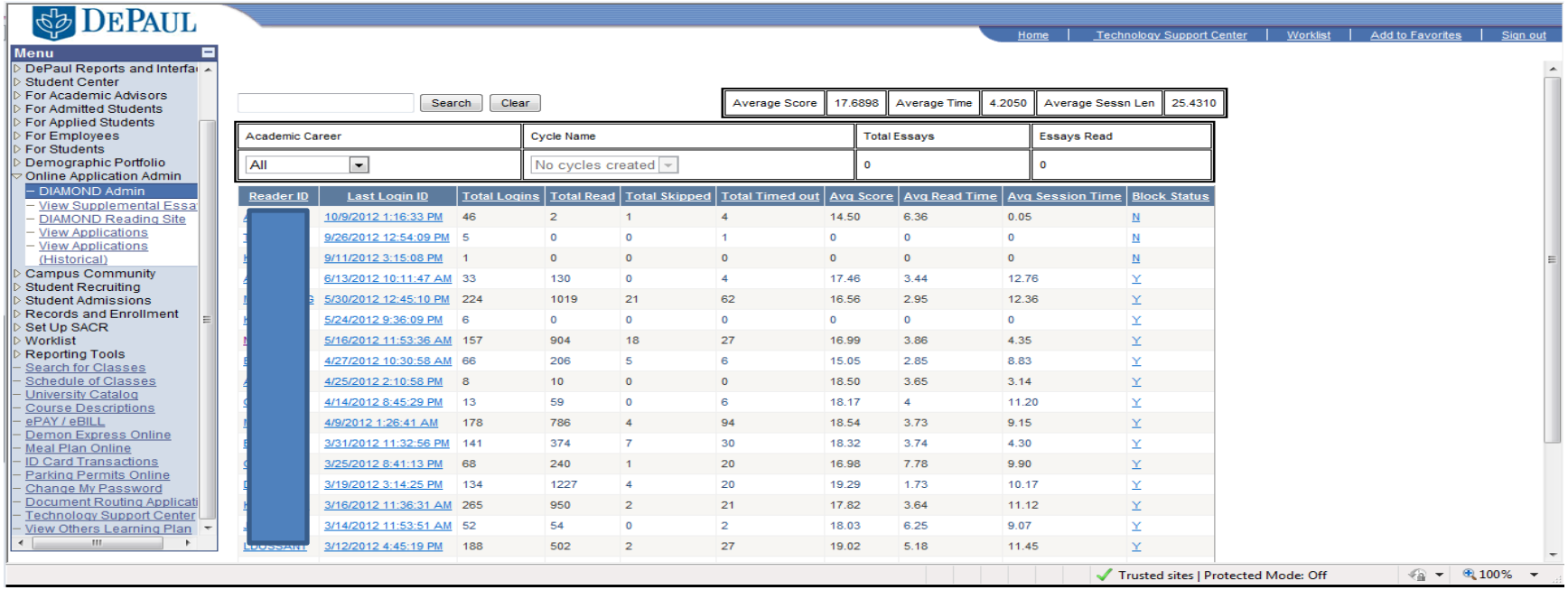
Administrative Functions -- - student view

Track the number of current essay submissions
View the status of essays (submitted, under evaluation, results loaded)
Determine how long it took from submission for essays to be evaluated
Search for a specific student's essays
Search for essays evaluated by a particular reader



Administrative Function: Reader View

View each reader's total logins and number of essays read
Evaluate read-time averages and reader evaluation outcomes to ensure consistency
Determine average amount of time readers dedicate to reviewing essays in one sitting



Volume of Essays – Readers

Fall Term	Applicants	Enrolled	Essays Scored	Readers
2009	11,596	2531	9696	103
2010	12,031	2241	8622	62
2011	16,711	2458	404 deferred students only	20
2012	18,160	2593	1173 TOPP + deferred	35
2013	19,957	2425	1080 TOPP + deferred	13**
2014	19,300*		780* TOPP + deferred	22

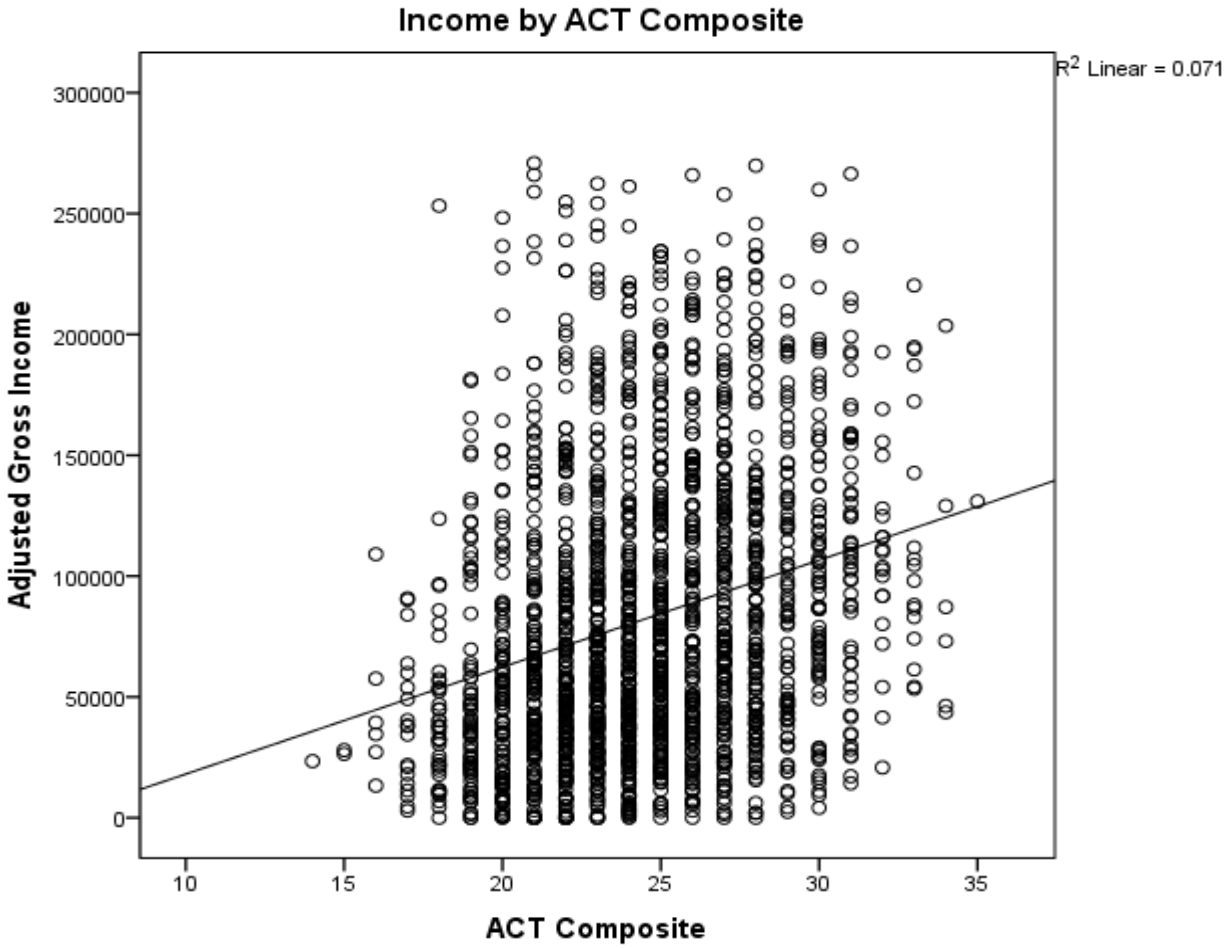
*as of 4-10-14 – loading delays this year due to Common App revisions

**five paid graduate readers were used this year

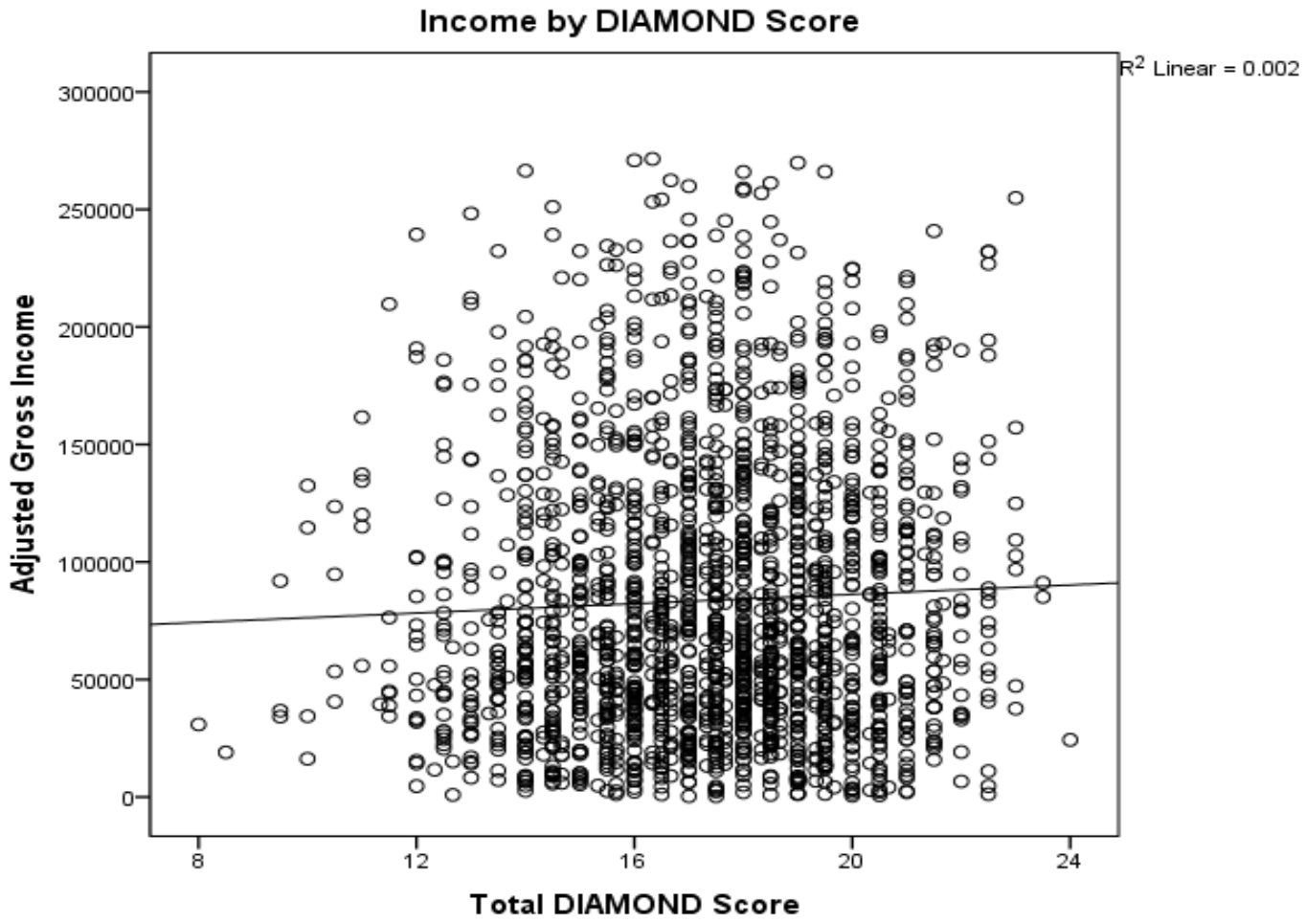
Preliminary Questions

- Do DIAMOND scores level the playing field ?
- Do DIAMOND scores predict student success ?

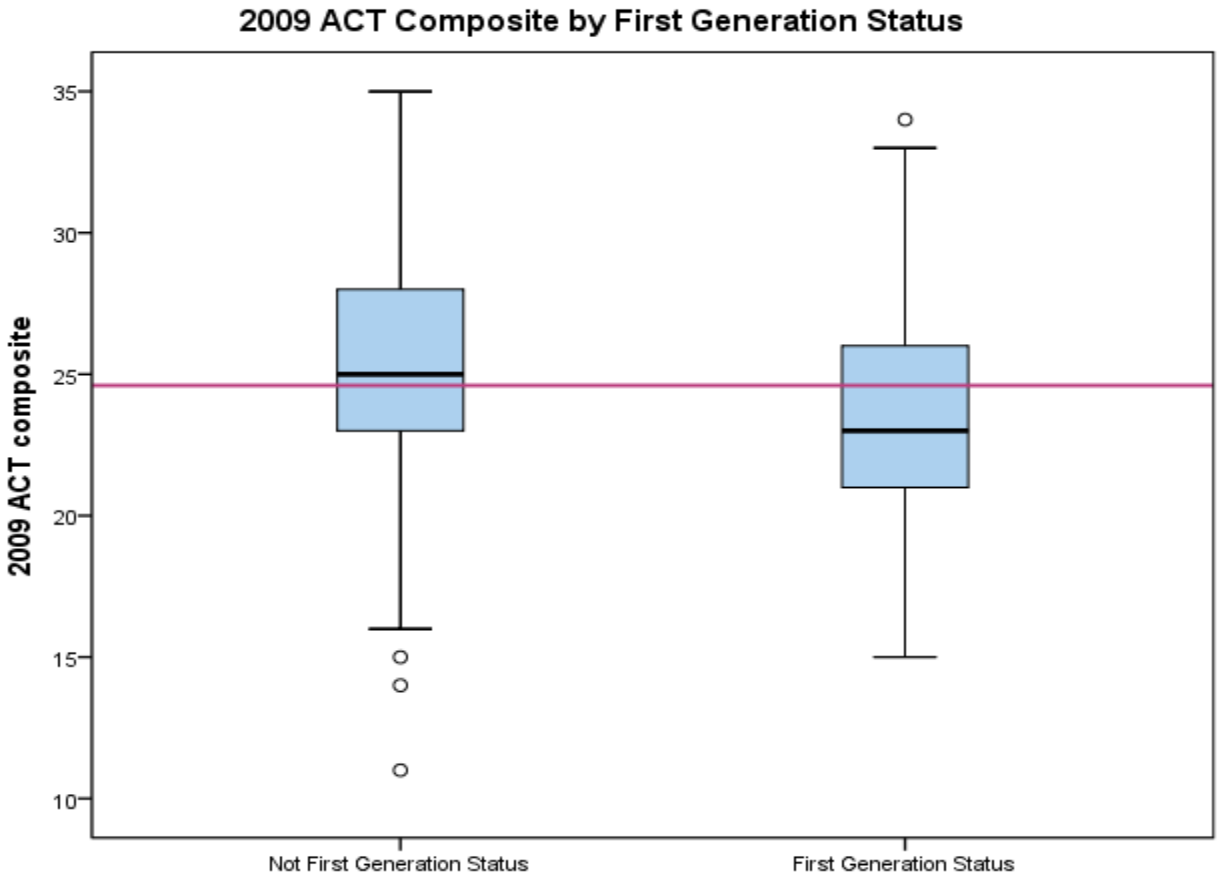
Standardized test scores are correlated with income.



DIAMOND scores are not related to family income.

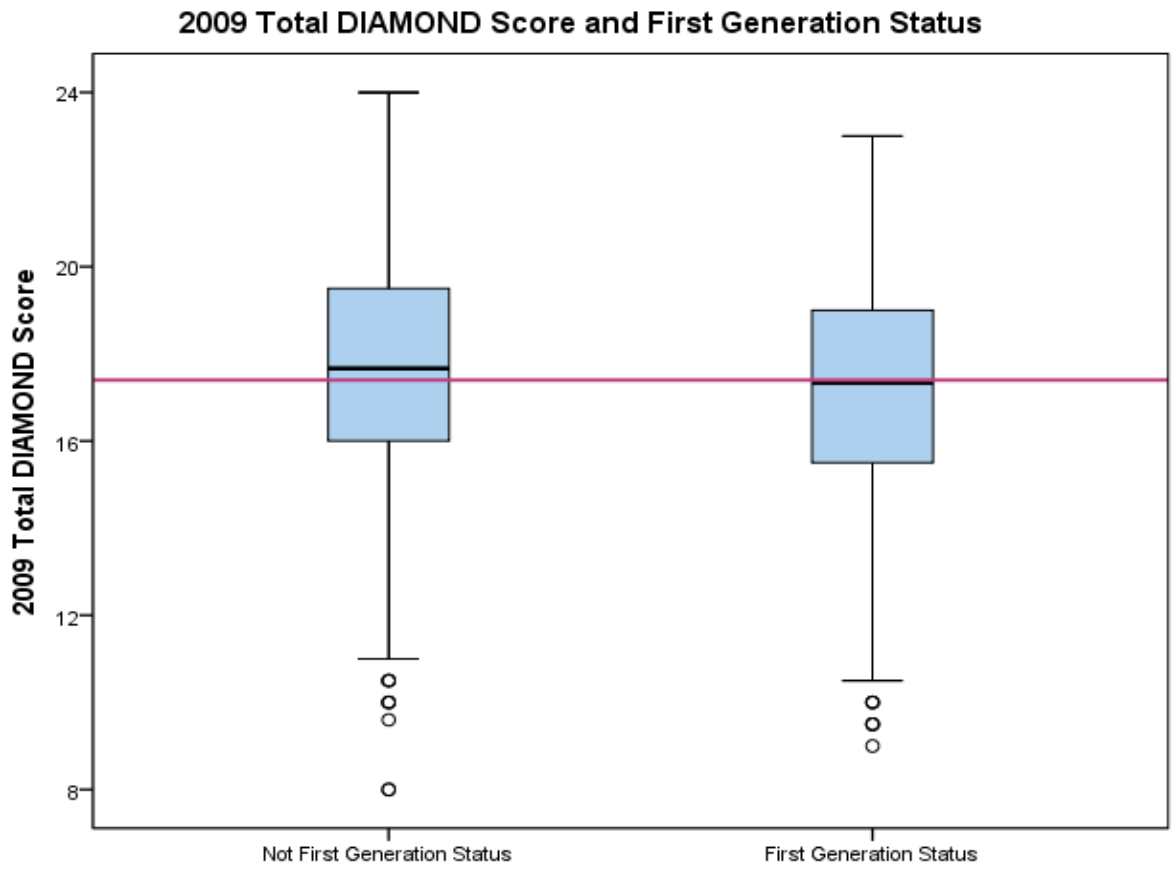


First generation students are at disadvantage with ACT scores.

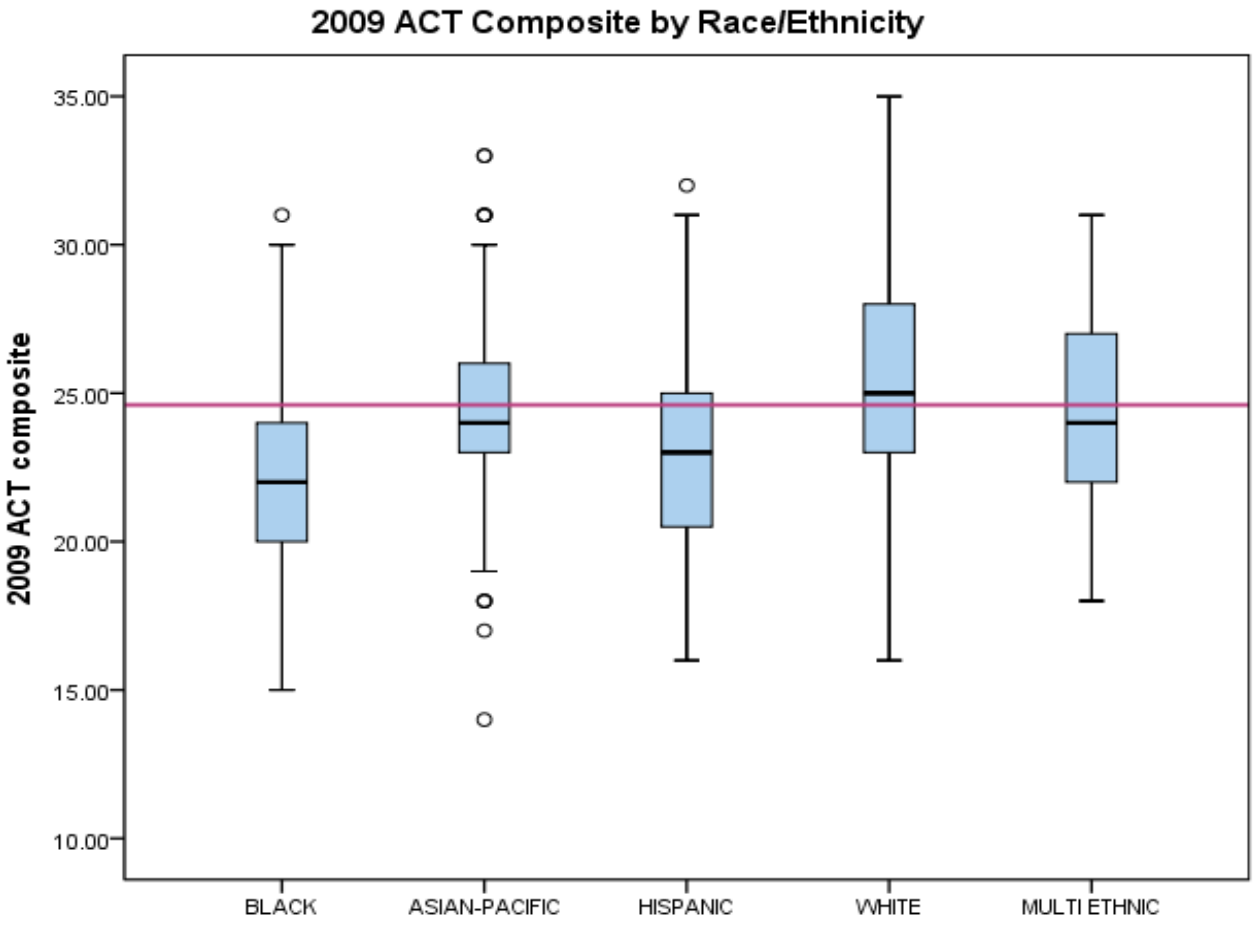


Circles represent outliers. Red line represents mean ACT Composite score

DIAMOND scores are similar for first generation students and students who are not first generation.

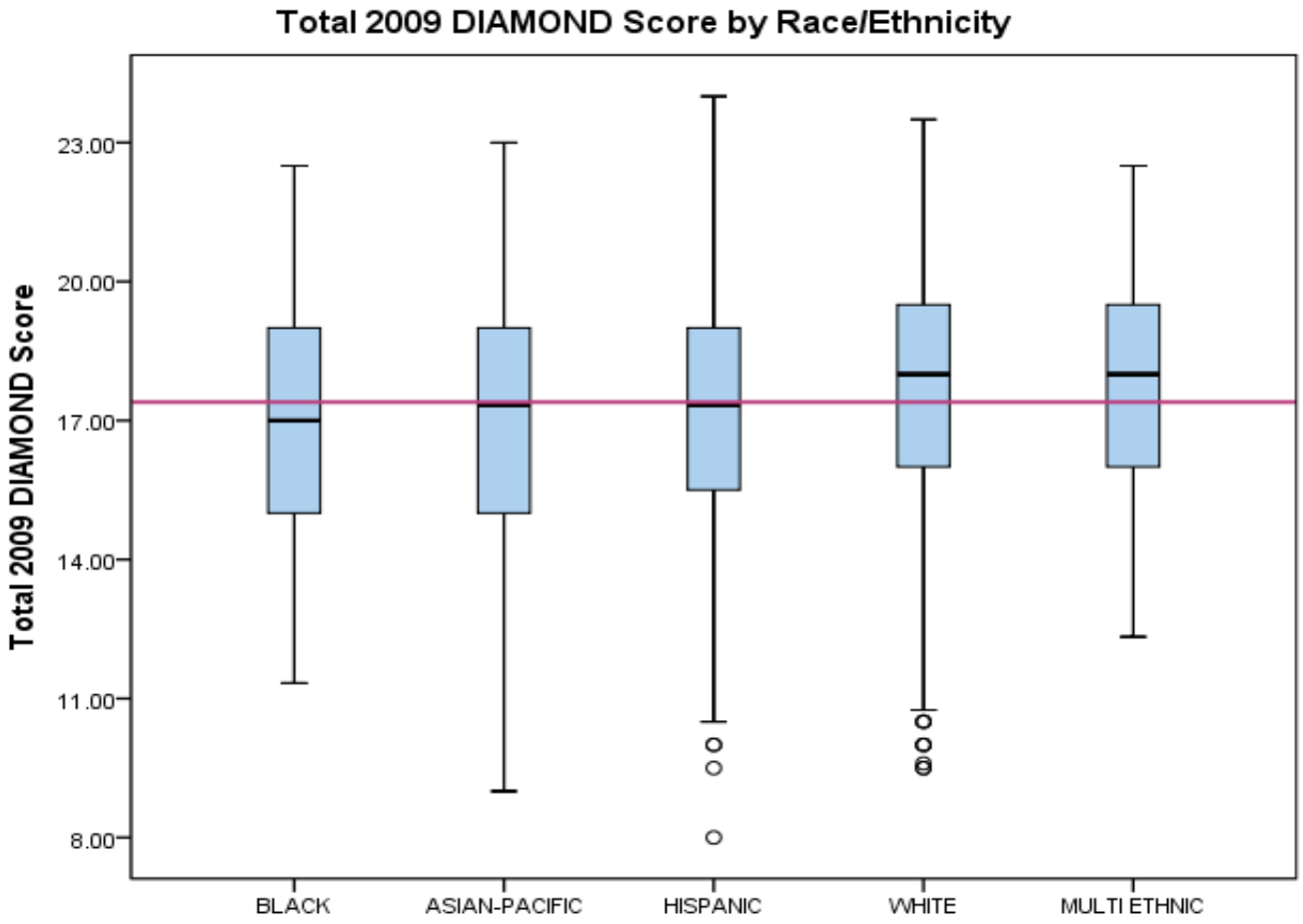


Standardized test scores vary significantly by race/ethnicity.

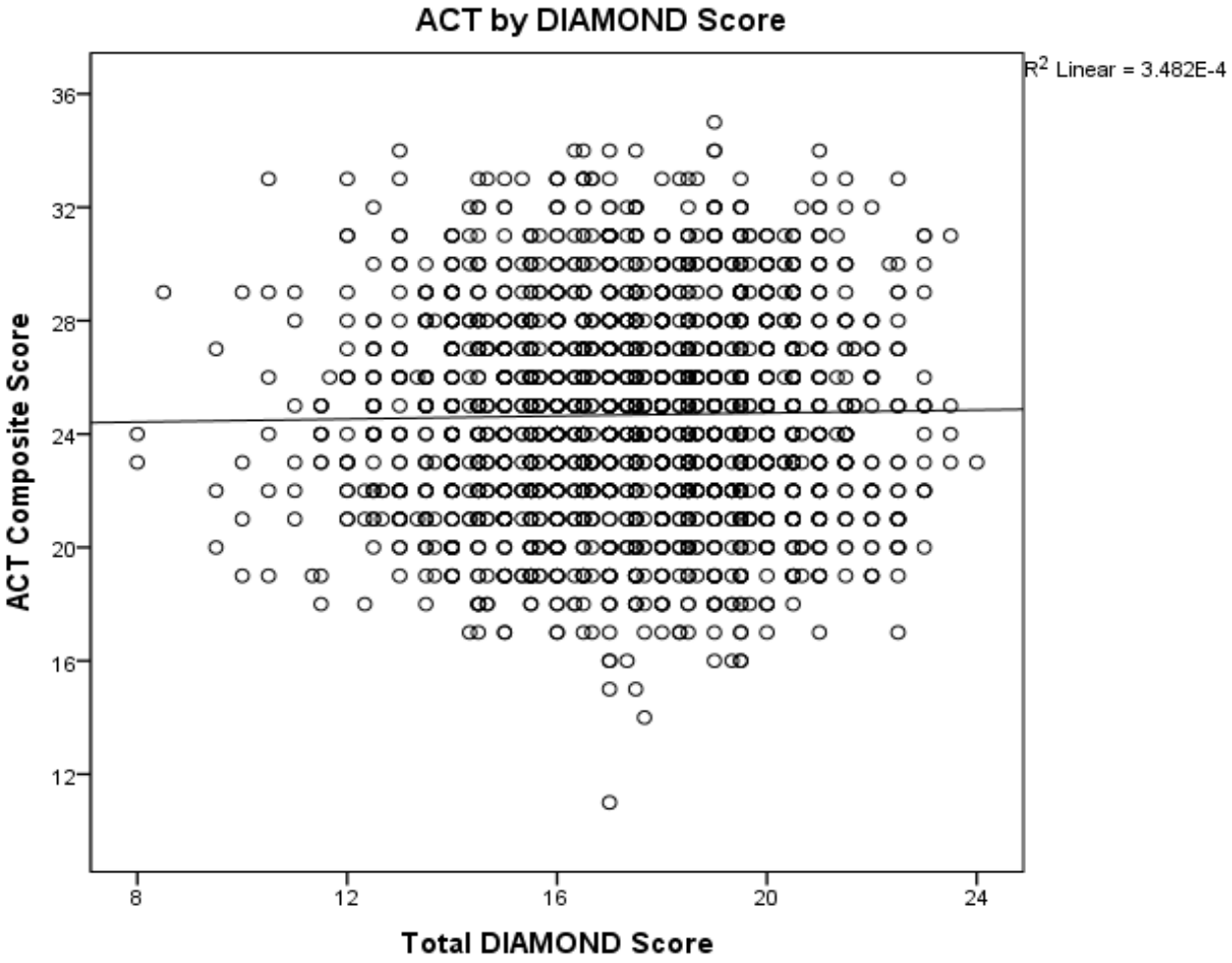


Circles represent outliers. Red line represents mean ACT Composite score

Less difference by race/ethnicity in DIAMOND scores.



DIAMOND scores are not related to ACT scores.

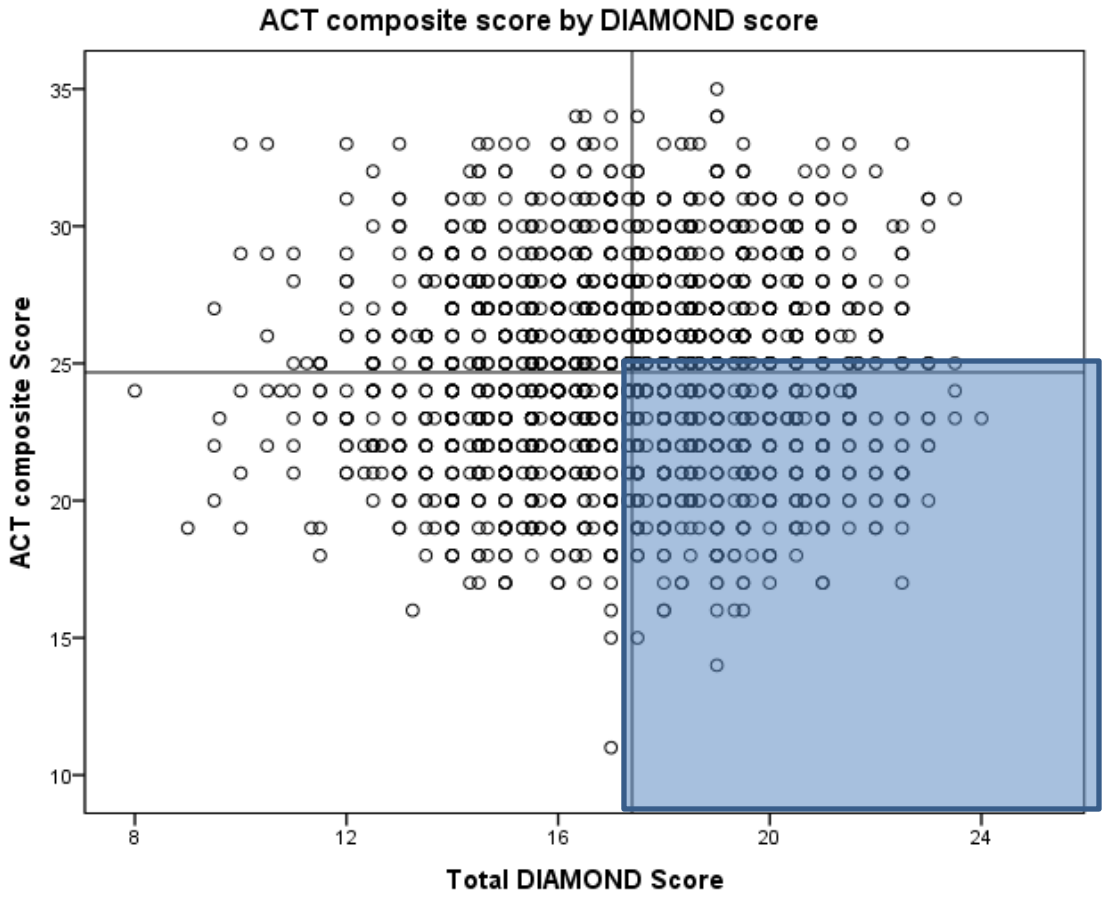


Preliminary Findings

- Do DIAMOND scores level the playing field ? **YES**

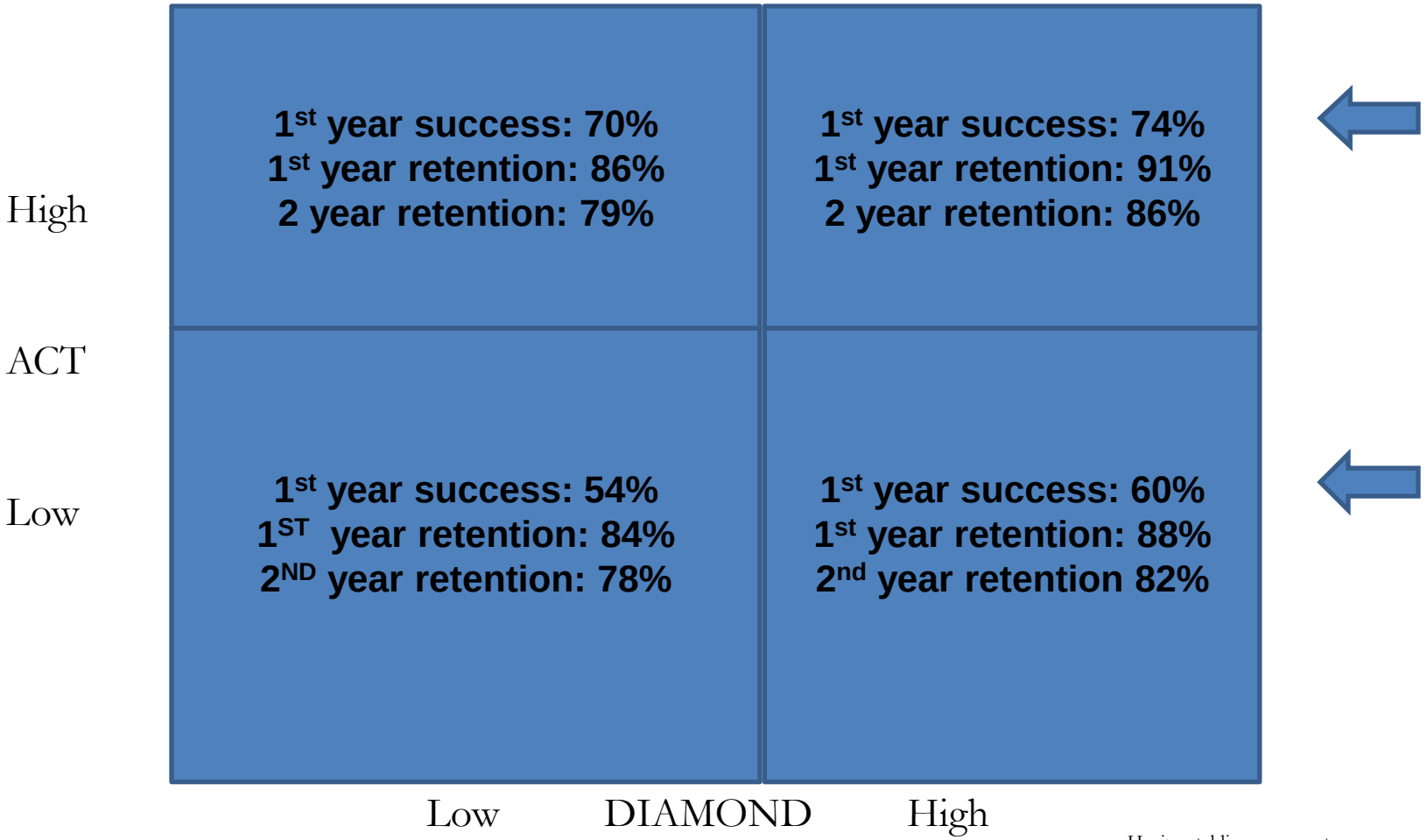
- Do DIAMOND scores predict student success ?

There are many students with lower than average ACT scores and higher than average DIAMOND scores. How successful are these students?



. Horizontal line represents average ACT score, vertical line represents average DIAMOND score.

Students with higher than average DIAMOND scores have greater retention whether ACT is above or below average.



Horizontal line represents average ACT score , vertical line represents average DIAMOND score.

Findings : DIAMOND and Student Success

- **High school GPA is the most significant factor** for predicting first year success.

- There is evidence that **higher DIAMOND scores help predict first year success, and, in some cases, retention - -- for students with lower income, students of color, and students with lower ACT scores.**

- Preliminary findings suggest that the DIAMOND scores can **effectively bring additional information into the admissions review that is not statistically related to applicants' socioeconomic and racial/ethnic background.**

Findings : DIAMOND and Student Success

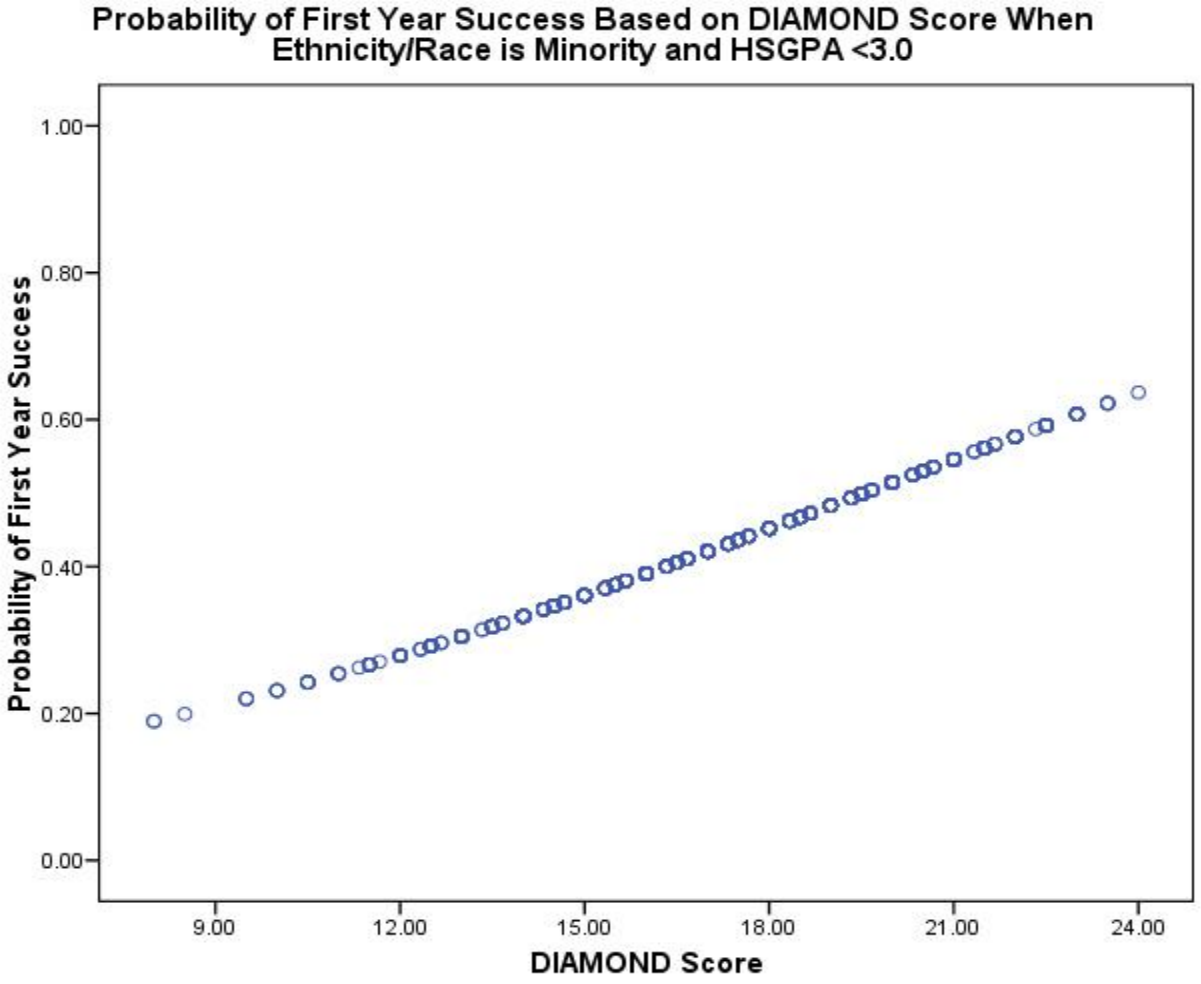
- "**Leadership**" scores are a significant predictor for ALL success outcomes studied: first-year GPA, first-year credits earned, first-year performance, first- to second-year retention, second- to third-year retention and second-year academic performance*.

- "**Total DIAMOND**" scores are predictive of first-year GPA, first-year retention, second-year retention and second-year academic performance*.

- "**Knowledge Acquired in a Field**" contributes to the prediction of first-year performance and second-year performance.

*** Second year performance is earning 2.5 GPA and at least 96 credits (on a quarter system)**

DIAMOND essays are especially predictive of first-year success for minority students with lower HSGPAs.



*First year success defined as GPA <=2.5 and credit hours earned >=48. Probabilities calculated using coefficients from logistic regression.

Preliminary Findings

- **DIAMOND scores appear to help to provide a useful, more holistic assessment of the likelihood of student success, especially for :**
  - **Students with low HSGPA**
  - **Minorities with low HSGPA**
  - **Students with low standardized test scores**
  - **Chicago Public School students**
  - **Students with low HSQ Index**
  - **Federal Pell Grant eligible male students**

Preliminary Findings

- Do DIAMOND scores level the playing field ? **YES**

- Do DIAMOND scores predict student success ? **YES**

Benefits to Applicant and DePaul

- Ties to student success.
- Looks at the whole person.
- Allows applicants to make their own case.
- Asks straightforward and specific questions based on student experience.
- **Establishes a process for more systematic review and assessment of admission essays.**
- Future: Provides additional information on student interests and goals for initial advising and educational planning.

DePaul University

Thank you.

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Appendix

THE TEST-OPTIONAL DECISION

Bringing together market and mission realities with retention research

Why did we make the Test-optional decision?

- Our purpose in offering a test-optional alternative is to elevate in the admission process **the best and fairest criteria for evaluating student potential**, namely students' academic performance in a rigorous, college-preparatory program in high school. That has always been DePaul's primary criterion for freshman admission.

- The objective of this new approach is to encourage a wider range of **high-achieving students** to consider a four-year degree at DePaul, including very talented and promising students who may be disadvantaged by admission criteria that emphasize standardized tests.

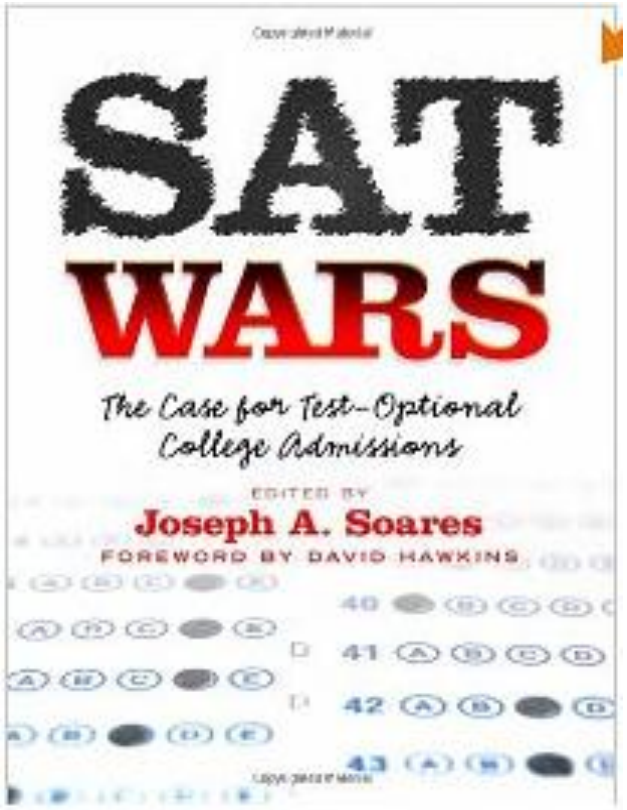
ACT versus HSGPA at DePaul

- High school GPA is a better predictor of first year grades than ACT scores
- Only HSGPA is significant to first-year retention
- ACT scores do not tell us about first to second year retention
- ***First Year Performance** - a combination of first-year GPA of 2.5 and 48 credits earned - is the best predictor of retention and degree completion at DePaul***

Validity of tests

- NACAC 2008 report

"The Commission believes that there may be more colleges and universities that could make appropriate admission decisions without requiring standardized admission tests such as the ACT and SAT. The Commission encourages institutions ***to consider dropping the admission test requirements if it is determined that the predictive utility of the test or the admission policies of the institution…support that decision*** and if the institution believes that standardized test results would not be necessary for other reasons such as course placement, advising, or research."



Report of the Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Admission, NACAC, Sept. 2008

DePaul's Validity Investigation

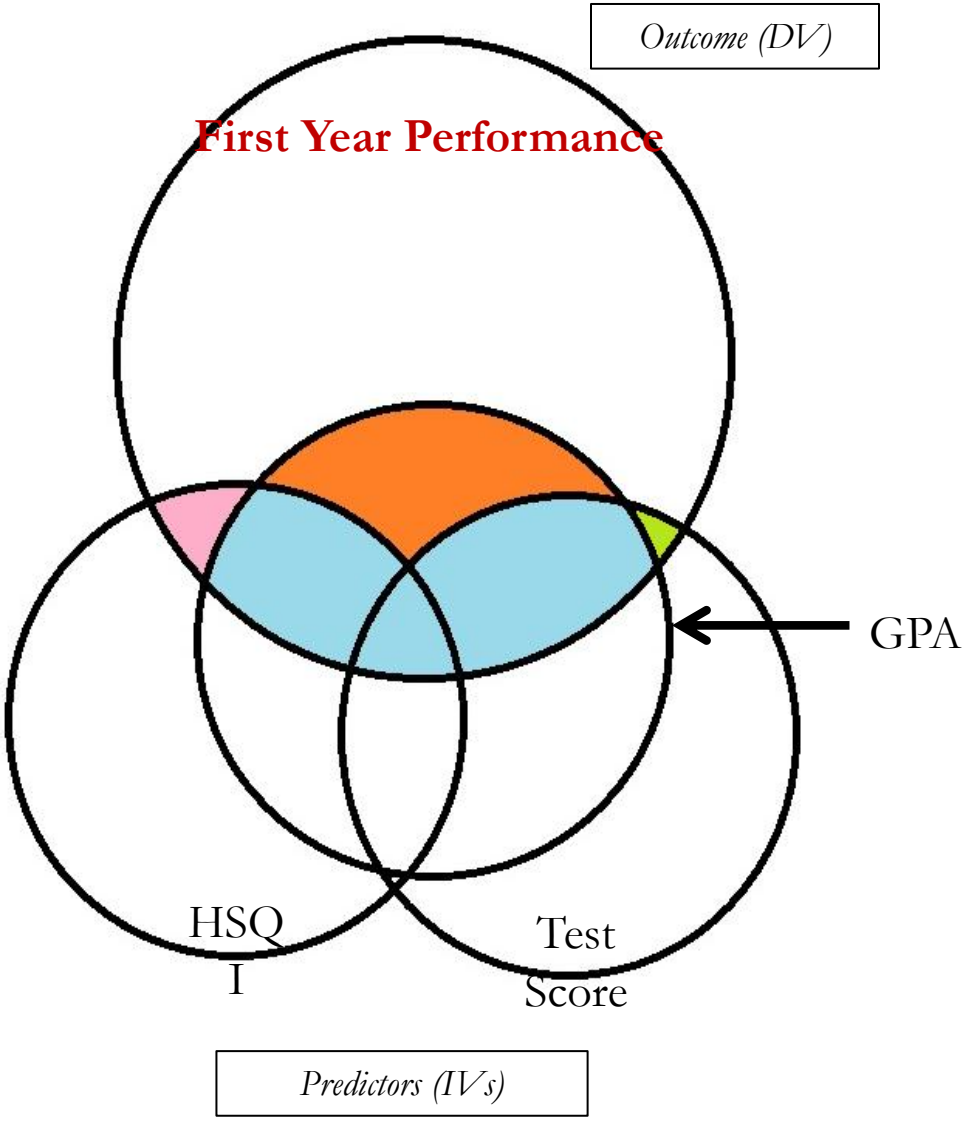
+ + + = 20% of the total variance in First Year Performance

= 12.3% of the total variance uniquely* explained by high school GPA

= 1.7% of the total variance uniquely explained by HSQI

= 1.2% of the total variance uniquely explained by Test Score (ACT or SAT)

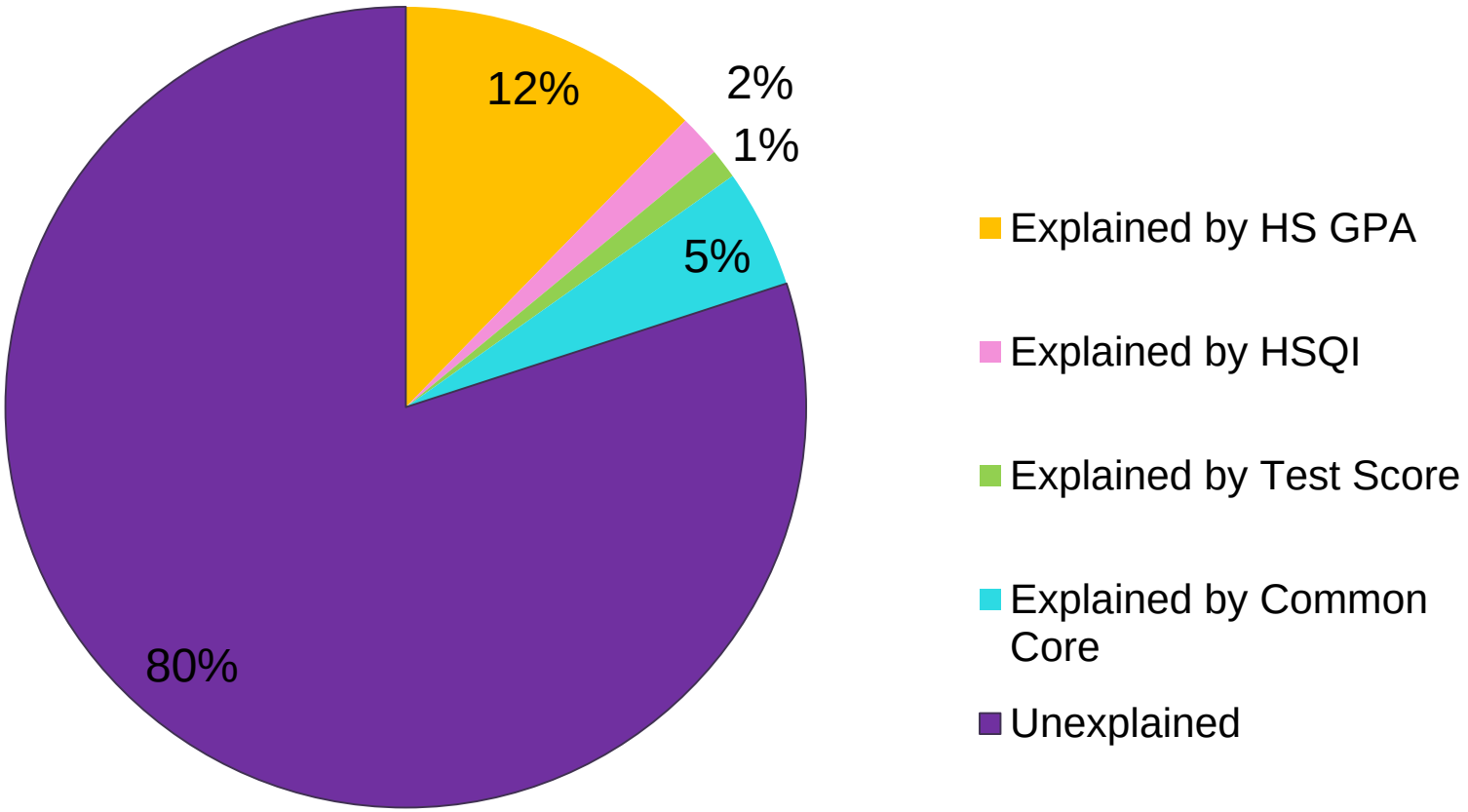
= 4.8% of the total variance explained by the common core of predictors together: Test Score, GPA, HSQI



First-year performance criteria (GPA >= 2.5 and earned credit hours >= 48)

Predicting first-year performance

Percent of variance



Messaging is important

- Assuring students that the admission process is consistent and fair for all applicants

- **Undermatching** is an issue for underrepresented students who aspire to attendance at a four-year institution

- Telling students that their efforts in their high school classes matter

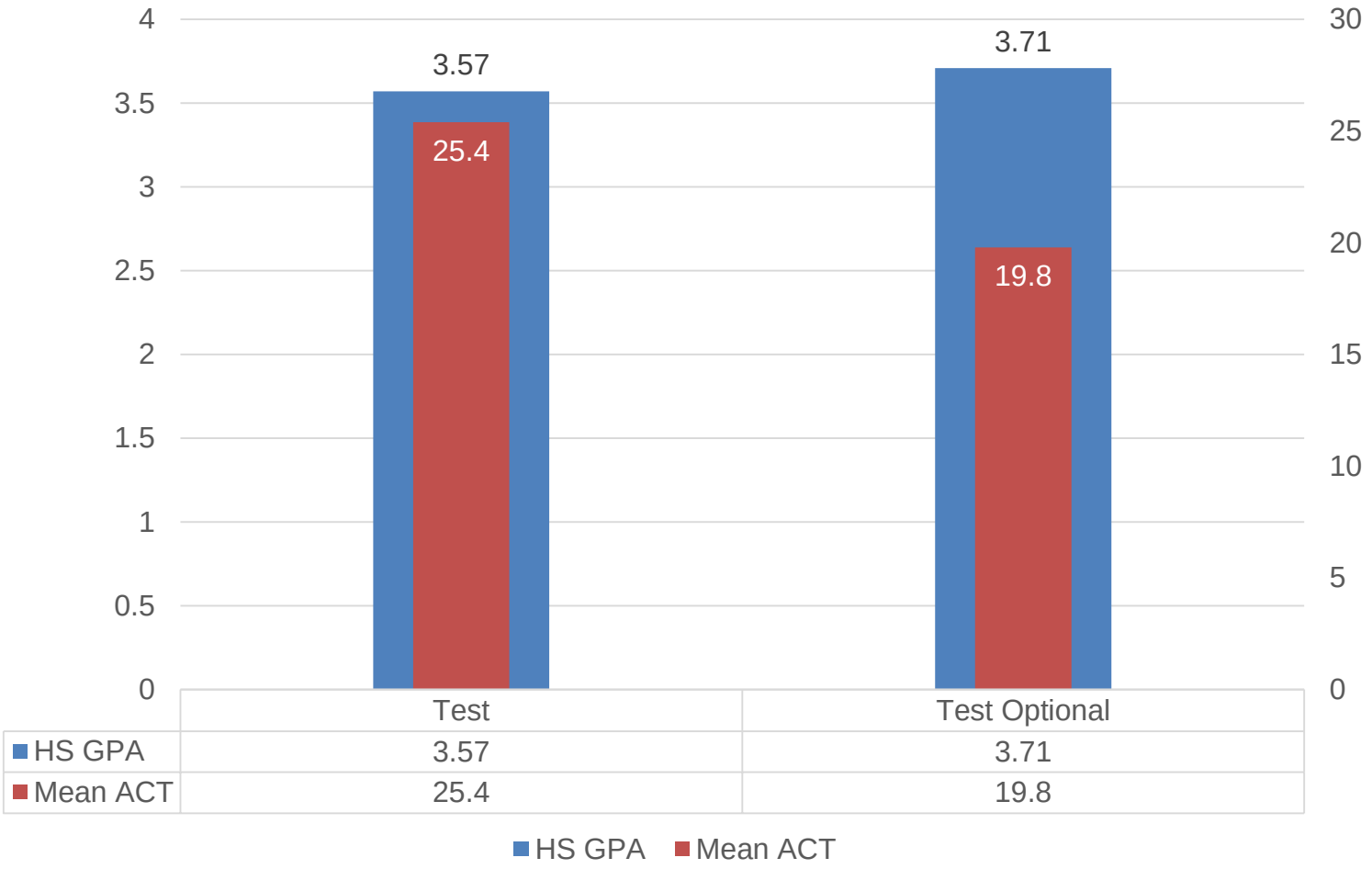
Study hard for four years of high school

Take a rigorous curriculum

Do not discount the possibility of a four-year private education

2012 Test Optional Students had a slightly higher High School GPA and a considerably lower Average ACT Score

NOTE: ACT of 25 is 79th percentile; 19 is 42nd percentile



Test-optional Admission Pilot Program (TOPP)

2012 Early Results

2012 Class	Test-optional	Test-submitter
First-year Retention	84%	85%
First-year GPA	3.25	3.33
HIGH first-year Performance	65%	71%

High: >=48 credit hours earned, >=2.5 GPA

Early outcomes are good despite the fact that **TOPP students were much more likely to be Pell-eligible, students of color and from Chicago Public high schools**.

Test Optional: n=102 Test Submitter: n=2,109

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

http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/nacac-research/Documents/DefiningPromise.pdf (William Hiss)

- The study examines optional standardized testing policies at 33 colleges and universities, as measured by cumulative college GPAs and graduation rates.

- College admissions decisions are reliable for students admitted without SAT or ACT scores. **Testing may artificially truncate pools of applicants who will succeed.**

- 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.*

- 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.*

Test-optional and Non-cognitive References

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