

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

ADMISSIONS STUDY TEAM FINAL REPORT

Actions Requested:

1. Consider recommending to the Board approval of the Admissions Study Team proposal to revise the admissions requirements at the Regent universities.
2. Consider recommending to the Board that the Board Office be directed to submit the Admissions Study Team final report to the Senate and House of Representatives standing committees on education by January 8, 2007.
3. Consider recommending to the Board approval of the proposed changes in the Board Policy Manual §6.01.
4. Consider recommending to the Board filing of the Notice of Intended Action to amend Section 681 of the Iowa Administrative Code.

Executive Summary: In light of its mission and stewardship role to provide educational opportunities to the citizens of the state, the Board of Regents has an ongoing interest in ensuring that students who are admitted to the Regent universities are academically prepared to succeed in college. After conducting an in-depth study of predictors of success for entering freshmen at the Regent universities, the Admissions Study Team¹ recommends that the current admissions process (of admitting students who are in the top 50% of their high school graduating class and who have the core subject area course requirements) be replaced with a Regent Admission Index (RAI) using the following equation:

$$\text{Regent Admission Index} = (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (1 \times \text{high school rank}) + (20 \times \text{high school grade point average}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas})^2.$$

Students will still be required to complete the core subject area course requirements specified by each Regent university as described in Attachment C. The proposed Regent Admission Index is consistent with the Iowa Department of Education's recently-developed model core curriculum and is intended to promote rigor in the high school academic curriculum undertaken by students.

¹ The team included Michael Barron and Tom Rocklin (SUI); Kathy Jones and Karen Zunkel (ISU); Phil Patton and Dave Smith (UNI); and Diana Gonzalez (Board Office). Phil Caffrey (ISU) and Dennis Hendrickson (UNI) were active participants in the study.

² For purposes of calculating the Regent Admission Index, ACT composite score has a top value of 36 (SAT scores will be converted to ACT composite equivalents); high school rank is expressed as a percentile with 99% as the top value; high school GPA is expressed on a 4-point scale; and number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas is expressed in terms of years or fractions of years of study. The chosen multipliers were statistically derived.

Recommendations:

The goal of the admissions process is to enroll students at the three Regent universities who have a reasonable probability of academic success. The Team's data analyses showed the importance of using multiple factors in the admissions process. Therefore, the Admissions Study Team proposes the following recommendations:

- ☞ Replace the current admissions process of admitting students who are in the top 50% of their high school graduating class and who have the core subject area course requirements with a new admissions process which combines four factors:
 - ☑ High school rank;
 - ☑ High school grade point average (GPA);
 - ☑ Performance on standardized tests (SAT Reasoning Test or ACT); and
 - ☑ Number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas.

These factors predict academic success at the Regent universities and are consistent with the Iowa Department of Education's goal of encouraging students to take a rigorous core curriculum throughout their high school careers.

- ☞ Implement a Regent Admission Index with the four factors identified above, using the following equation:

$$\text{Regent Admission Index} = (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (1 \times \text{high school rank}) + (20 \times \text{high school GPA}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas}).$$

Continue to require the core subject area courses, including English, mathematics, science, social science, and foreign language/electives, as defined by each Regent university (pg. 8).

- ☞ Use a Regent Admission Index of 250 for automatic admission at the three Regent universities.
- ☞ Allow each Regent university to continue to conduct individual reviews of students who do not meet the Regent Admission Index of 250 but who otherwise demonstrate potential and commitment to succeeding at a Regent university. The individual review process will also be used in cases where a student does not possess all required factors, e.g., high school rank, GPA.
- ☞ Use the National Center for Education Statistics course numbering system implemented by Iowa school districts to identify the core subject area courses that will be counted in the Regent Admission Index.
- ☞ Use the same Regent Admission Index for automatic admission at the three Regent universities.
- ☞ Implement the proposed admissions process for the Fall 2009 enrollment class at the Regent universities. This will allow current high school sophomores two years to prepare for the changes.

- ☞ Re-affirm the current Board policy that non-resident freshman applicants will be held to standards at least as high as those for resident freshman applicants.
- ☞ Approve the proposed changes to the Board Policy Manual §6.01 to include the equation for the Regent Admission Index and the Regent Admission Index required for automatic admission to the Regent universities as described in Attachment A.
- ☞ Publish the Regent Admission Index and the Regent Admission Index required for automatic admission to the Regent universities on the Board of Regents and universities' websites. Also include an online Regent Admission Index calculator on the websites.
- ☞ Replace the *Building Your Future* brochure³ with a new publication describing the new admissions process.
- ☞ Provide adequate notice to students and the general public about future changes to the Regent Admission Index.
- ☞ Approve filing the Notice of Intended Action to amend Section 681 of the Iowa Administrative Code to include the four factors in the admissions process as described in Attachment B.
- ☞ Conduct periodic reviews of the new admissions process. The first review should be conducted no later than five years after implementation of the new process.

³ This brochure was prepared jointly by the three Regent universities to define the minimum requirements for admission and the optimum recommendations for success. Copies are made available to all 8th grade students in the state annually. The brochure is also available on the Board of Regents, universities', and Department of Education's websites.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.01 Admission Requirements Common to the Three State Universities

- A. The Board shall make rules for admission to and for the government of the institutions under its control, consistent with law. (Iowa Code §262.9(3))
- B. The Board of Regents, State of Iowa, has adopted the following requirements governing admission of students to the three state universities.

Each university shall describe in its catalog the requirements and other information necessary to make the admission process operate within the framework of these requirements.

Amendments and changes in these requirements are proposed by the universities to the Regent Committee on Educational Relations, which examines the proposals and makes specific recommendations through the Council of Provosts to the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, which is empowered by law to establish the admission requirements.

1. Admission of undergraduate students directly from high school. Students desiring admission must meet the requirements in this section and also any special requirements for the program, school, or college of their choice.
 - a. Applicants must submit a formal application for admission, together with the appropriate application fee for U.S. citizens or permanent residents, to the State University of Iowa, Iowa State University, or the University of Northern Iowa. All three universities have a separate application fee for international students. Transcripts of students' academic records, including credits and grades, rank in class, high school grade point average, courses completed, and certification of graduation, shall be provided by the appropriate secondary schools.

Applicants must also submit SAT Reasoning Test or ACT scores ~~from the ACT Assessment (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT-I)~~, or the equivalent as determined by each university. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the equivalent as determined by each university is required of foreign students whose first language is not English. Applicants may be required to submit additional information or data to support their applications.

- b. Graduates of approved Iowa high schools who have the subject matter background as required by each university and who ~~rank in the upper one-half of their graduating class~~ have a Regent Admission Index of 250 or higher will be automatically admitted. Applicants ~~who are not in the upper one-half of their graduating class~~ with a Regent Admission Index lower than 250 may, after a review of their academic and test records by the appropriate university, and at the discretion of the admissions officers: (1) be admitted unconditionally, (2) be admitted conditionally, (3) be required to enroll for a tryout period during a preceding summer session, or (4) be denied admission.

The Regent Admission Index is calculated using the following formula:

Regent Admission Index = (2 x ACT composite score) + (1 x high school rank) + (20 x high school grade point average) + (5 x number of high school courses completed in the subject areas)⁴

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⁴ For purposes of calculating the Regent Admission Index, ACT composite score has a top value of 36 (SAT scores will be converted to ACT composite equivalents); high school rank is expressed as a percentile with 99% as the top value; high school GPA is expressed on a 4-point scale; and number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas is expressed in terms of years or fractions of years of study. The chosen multipliers were statistically derived.

IOWA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

681—1.1(262) Admission of undergraduate students directly from high school. Students desiring admission to the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, or the University of Northern Iowa must meet the requirements in this rule and also any special requirements for the curriculum, school, or college of their choice.

Applicants must submit a formal application for admission, together with the appropriate application fee as approved by the state board of regents pursuant to Iowa Code subsection 262.9(18) and detailed in rule 681—1.7(262), and have their secondary school provide a transcript of their academic record, including credits and grades, rank in class, and certification of graduation. Applicants must also submit SAT Reasoning Test or ACT scores ~~from the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT),~~ or the equivalent, as determined by each university. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required of foreign students whose first language is not English. Applicants may be required to submit additional information or data to support their applications.

1.1(1) Admission decisions to a university are based on the following four factors - performance on standardized tests (SAT Reasoning Test or ACT); high school grade point average; high school percentile rank in class; and number of core (or above) subject area courses completed in high school. These factors are used to calculate a Regent Admission Index, using an equation described in the Board Policy Manual. Graduates of approved Iowa high schools who have the subject matter background as recommended required by each university and who ~~rank in the upper one-half of their graduating class~~ meet the Regent Admission Index required for automatic admission described in the Board Policy Manual will be admitted to any Regent university. Applicants who ~~are not in the upper one-half of their graduating class~~ do not meet the Regent Admission Index for automatic admission or the subject matter requirements, may, after an individual review of their academic and test records, and at the discretion of the admissions officers:

- a. Be admitted unconditionally,
- b. Be admitted conditionally,
- c. Be required to enroll for a tryout period during a preceding summer session, or
- d. Be denied admission.

1.1(2) Graduates of ~~accredited~~ approved high schools in other states may be held to higher academic standards, but must meet at least the same requirements as graduates of Iowa high schools. The options for conditional admission or summer tryout enrollment may not necessarily be offered to these students.

1.1(3) Applicants who are graduates of nonapproved high schools will be considered for admission in a manner similar to applicants from approved high schools, but additional emphasis will be given to scores obtained on standardized examinations.

1.1(4) Applicants who are not high school graduates, but whose classes have graduated, may be considered for admission. They will be required to submit all academic data to the extent that it exists and achieve scores on standardized examinations which will demonstrate that they are adequately prepared for academic study.

Students with superior academic records may be admitted, on an individual basis, for part-time university study while enrolled in high school or during the summers prior to high school graduation.

In rare situations, exceptional students may be admitted as full-time students to a regent university before completing high school. Early admission to a regent university is provided to serve persons whose academic achievement and personal and intellectual maturity clearly suggest readiness for collegiate level study. Each university will specify requirements and conditions for early admission.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 262.9(3).

FRESHMAN ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS TO IOWA REGENT UNIVERSITIES

The admission of freshman applicants to the Iowa Regent Universities is based on a Regent Admission Index which combines four factors: ACT composite score, high school rank, high school grade point average, and number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas.

A Regent Admission Index (RAI) will be calculated for each freshman applicant using the equation below:

$$\text{RAI} = (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (1 \times \text{high school rank}) + (20 \times \text{high school grade point average}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas})$$

Note: For purposes of calculating the Regent Admission Index, ACT composite score has a top value of 36 (SAT scores will be converted to ACT composite equivalent); high school rank is expressed as a percentile with 99% as the top value; high school GPA is expressed on a 4-point scale; and number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas is expressed in terms of years or fractions of years of study⁵.

Freshman applicants from Iowa high schools who have an RAI of at least 250 and who meet the minimum number of high school courses required by the Regent universities will qualify for automatic admission to any of the three Regent universities. Freshman applicants who have an RAI below 250 may also be admitted to a specific Regent university; however, each Regent university will review these applications on an individual basis and the admission decision will be specific to each institution. Freshman applicants from approved high schools in other states may be held to higher academic standards, but must meet at least the same requirements as graduates of Iowa high schools.

The Regent universities recognize that the traditional measures of academic performance do not adequately describe some students' potential for success. Therefore, the Regent universities strongly encourage all interested students to apply for admission. Applicants who feel their academic record is not an accurate reflection of their potential for success are encouraged to provide supplemental information explaining their circumstances in addition to the application, academic transcripts, and test scores.

⁵ Applicants who do not possess all required factors will be evaluated on an individual basis by each Regent university.

High School Course Requirements for Admission

In addition to the requirements stated previously, freshman applicants must also meet the minimum high school course requirements for their institution of choice as indicated below.

Subject Area	Iowa State University	The University of Iowa	University of Northern Iowa
Foreign Language	Two years of a single foreign language for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . This requirement will also apply to the College of Engineering beginning Fall 2009. Foreign language courses are not required for admission to the Colleges of Agriculture, Business, Design, or Human Sciences .	Two years of a single foreign language.	Foreign language courses are not required for admission. However, two years of a foreign language in high school with a C- or above in the last term will meet the university graduation requirement.
English/ Language Arts	Four years of English/Language Arts emphasizing writing, speaking, reading, as well as an understanding and appreciation of literature.	Four years, with an emphasis on the analysis and interpretation of literature, composition, and speech.	Four years, including one year of composition; also may include one year of speech, communication, or journalism.
Math	Three years, including one year each of algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra.	Three years, including two years of algebra and one year of geometry, for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . Four years, including two years of algebra, one year of geometry, and one year of higher mathematics (trigonometry, analysis, or calculus), for admission to the College of Engineering .	Three years, including the equivalent of algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra.
Natural Science	Three years, including one year each from any two of the following: biology, chemistry, and physics.	Three years, including one year each from any two of the following: biology, chemistry, and physics for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . Three years, including at least one year of chemistry and one year of physics for admission to the College of Engineering .	Three years, including courses in general science, biology, chemistry, earth science, or physics; laboratory experience highly recommended.
Social Sciences	Two years for admission to the Colleges of Agriculture, Business, Design, Human Sciences, and Engineering . Three years for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences .	Three years, with U.S. history and world history recommended, for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . Two years, with U.S. history and world history recommended, for admission to the College of Engineering .	Three years, including courses in anthropology, economics, geography, government, history, psychology, or sociology.
Other Courses	Specific elective courses are not required for admission to Iowa State University.	Specific elective courses are not required for admission to the University of Iowa.	Two years of additional courses from the required subject areas, foreign languages, or fine arts.

Note: Non-resident freshman applicants may be held to higher standards for admission, but must meet at least the same requirements as resident freshman applicants.