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TEST-OPTIONAL ADMISSIONS ADVOCATES APPLAUD NEW STUDY: RESEARCH FINDS ELIMINATING ACT/SAT SCORE REQUIREMENTS PROMOTES EQUITY AND ACADEMIC QUALITY

A major study released today shows that ACT/SAT-optional schools increase campus diversity without harming academic performance. *Defining Promise: Optional Standardized Testing Policies in American College and University Admissions* analyzed the records of 123,000 students at 33 institutions.

“This landmark research shows that test-optional plans promote both equity and excellence,” said Robert Schaeffer, Public Education Director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest). “More colleges and universities now have the data to support dropping ACT/SAT requirements.”

FairTest leads the movement to de-emphasize admissions test scores. The group’s website lists more than 800 test-optional four-year schools (<http://fairtest.org/university/optional>). The database includes more than 150 institutions ranked in the top tiers of their respective categories.

Among the key findings of today’s report:

- Students admitted without regard to their ACT or SAT scores do as well academically as those entering under regular criteria.
- Test-optional admission is particularly valuable for first-generation, minority, immigrant, rural students and learning-disabled students.
- High school grades are much stronger predictors of undergraduate performance than are test scores.
- Standardized testing limits the pool of applicants who would be successful in college.
- Test score requirements for “merit” scholarships block access for many talented students.

The schools analyzed include private colleges, public universities, minority serving institutions and art institutes. William Hiss, former head of admissions at Bates College was the project’s primary investigator. The study is online at:

<http://www.nacacnet.org/media-center/PressRoom/2014/Pages/BillHiss.aspx>

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- A timeline of schools de-emphasizing ACT/SAT scores over the past decade and a list of top-ranked test-optional institutions are available on request.