



Tab 16

Revised Admission Guidelines Update

Coordinating Board for Higher Education
June 5, 2019

BACKGROUND

Section 173.005.2(6), RSMo, directs the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to establish admission guidelines consistent with institutional missions. Existing admission guidelines were developed in the 1990s and both their structure and metrics are outdated. Clear admission guidelines are important in helping students prepare and plan for postsecondary education, particularly in encouraging more students to understand the full range of opportunities available to them. Updated admission guidelines support Blueprint Goal 1.3, which seeks to increase the postsecondary participation rates of traditional age students through early planning for college, and Goal 1.5, which seeks to reduce disparities for students at Missouri colleges and universities. This agenda item provides an update on efforts to revise institutional admission guidelines.

CURRENT STATUS

In 1992, acting on recommendations contained in a report by the Critical Choices Task Force, the CBHE approved a four-tiered admissions structure from which institutions would choose their admissions category: Highly Selective, Selective, Moderately Selective, and Open Admissions. The intent of the structure was to improve preparation in high school (the CBHE-recommended high school curriculum) and establish a system of institutions differentiated by admission criteria that could respond effectively to the needs of students from the full range of academic preparation and achievement. The report noted that students should begin at an institution “appropriate to their preparation” which would allow them to develop their academic skills and preparation and, if they chose, transfer to another institution.

Current CBHE Admissions Guidelines			
Selectivity Category	High School Rank Percentile plus ACT/SAT Percentile	Automatic Admission (ACT Composite)	Freshman Class % Exception
Highly Selective	140	27	10 percent
Selective	120	24	10 percent
Moderately Selective	100	21	10 percent
Open Admissions	n/a	n/a	n/a

As indicated above, the structure and metrics of these guidelines are outdated. At the time the guidelines were adopted, the CBHE expected that at least 90 percent of all first-time, full-time students at an institution would meet the institution’s selectivity criteria, an expectation which has rarely been satisfied. In addition, today few—if any—school districts rank students, and some institutions nationally have stopped using standardized tests (such as the ACT) for admissions.

In an effort to update the guidelines and make them more relevant and appropriate to the present higher education landscape, MDHE staff proposes a revised framework for admission guidelines. The revised framework eliminates the “90 percent” expectation but maintains standards appropriate to the institution’s mission and student profile. The proposed framework will use high school grade point average (GPA), which research has shown to be the single best predictor of postsecondary success, in conjunction with traditional standardized admission tests such as the ACT or the SAT, which carries great significance for students, parents, and school districts.

The revised framework will send a stronger and more consistent message to students and families about college preparedness and provides students with better information about their readiness for and likelihood of success in college. Research has shown that many students are dissuaded or discouraged from enrolling in college

because they believe—based on their test scores—they are not “college ready” and could not gain admission to a postsecondary institution. The revised framework is intended to encourage more students to see that there are many postsecondary opportunities available to them.

Proposed Framework

The proposed framework was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Council of Chief Academic Officers, who generally support the framework as presented below: MDHE staff will work with institutional representatives to assign specific scores and numbers to each category. These discussions may also result in some modification of the nomenclature use to identify each category.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR NEW CBHE ADMISSION GUIDELINES			
Selectivity Category	Minimum High School GPA	and/or	Minimum ACT Composite Score
Highly Selective	X.XX	and/or	XX
Selective	X.XX	and/or	XX
Moderately Selective	X.XX	and/or	XX
Open Admissions: University	X.XX	and/or	XX
Open Admissions: Community College	High school diploma/equivalent	and/or	n/a

NEXT STEPS

Reaching agreement on an appropriate framework is the first of many steps in developing new admission guidelines. Subsequent tasks include assigning specific scores (or range of scores) to each selectivity category and reviewing, and perhaps revising, how the categories themselves are defined. MDHE staff is looking broadly at data to determine the correlation between high school GPA and postsecondary success. Staff will reach out to all institutions for data to help define the parameters for each selectivity category. Staff intend to bring recommendations to the CBHE for its consideration at the September 2019 meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an information item only.

NO ATTACHMENTS