

## AGENDA ITEM

A-6. Section 700.1.1 of the UNC Policy Manual – Waiver of the SAT/ACT Requirement..... Kimberly van Noort

**Situation:** Section 700.1.1 of the UNC Policy Manual, Policy on Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Undergraduate Admission to the University of North Carolina System, establishes the minimum academic standards that a student must satisfy to be considered for undergraduate admission at a UNC System institution. This includes the requirement that students submit an ACT or SAT score to be eligible for admissions consideration.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on test availability, the Board of Governors in July 2020 waived the standardized test requirement for students applying for admission in spring 2021, summer 2021, and fall 2021. Due to ongoing cancellations and disruptions to standardized test availability, it is recommended that the Board extend the standardized test requirement waiver for an additional year, through the fall 2022.

**Background:** Access to the ACT and SAT has been limited due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In North Carolina, many students access the ACT through in-class administrations. The number of students failing to take the ACT through this option has nearly doubled from last year, with approximately 22,000 students impacted (up from just over 11,000 last year). Additionally, this lack of test availability has been felt most profoundly in rural and economically distressed counties, with 14 of the top 20 counties impacted being classified as Tier 1 by the NC Department of Commerce.

In response, over 60 percent of undergraduate institutions in the United States will not require a standardized test for entry in the fall 2022. In North Carolina, this includes Duke University, Davidson College, Elon University, Wake Forest University. Across the nation, the list includes all Ivy League Institutions; state systems such as the University of Texas System, California State University (CSU) system, the University of Illinois system, the Penn State System; and key enrollment competitors such as the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, College of Charleston, University of Alabama, and others. The NCAA has also removed standardized testing requirements for student athletes enrolling in 2022-23.

**Assessment:** The proposed waiver is consistent with the responses of other colleges, universities, and systems. It is recommended that the Board waive the standardized testing component of Section 700.1.1 for students applying for admission in spring 2022, summer 2022, and fall 2022.

**Action:** This item requires a vote by the committee, with a vote by the full Board of Governors through the consent agenda.

**Policy on Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Undergraduate  
Admission for the University of North Carolina System**

I. Purpose. The University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors has, since 1988, established minimum requirements for undergraduate admission to any constituent institution. These requirements serve to provide a common set of minimum standards to be considered for admission as an undergraduate student. Exceptions and special considerations to these minimum eligibility requirements are provided in Sections 700.1.1.1[R], 700.1.1.2[R], 700.7.1, and 700.7.1[R] of the UNC Policy Manual. Any constituent institution may set admissions requirements that exceed the minimums established in this policy upon the approval of their board of trustees.

II. High School Diploma. All students should hold a high school diploma or its equivalent.

III. Minimum Course Requirements. The following courses must be completed at the high school level, although those courses may be completed at an earlier time (e.g., middle school).

A. English: four course units emphasizing grammar, composition, and literature.

B. Mathematics: four course units in any of the following combinations:<sup>1</sup>

1. Algebra I, algebra II, geometry, and one unit beyond algebra II; or

2. Algebra I, algebra II, and two units beyond algebra II; or

3. Common core math I, II, and III, and one unit beyond common core math III; or

4. Integrated math I, II, III, and one unit beyond integrated math III; or

5. NC Math 1, 2, 3, and one unit beyond NC Math 3 identified as meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> level mathematics requirement for admission to UNC System institutions.

C. Science: three course units, including:

1. Life or biological science (e.g., biology); and

2. Physical science (e.g., chemistry, physical science, physics); and

3. One laboratory course.

D. Second Language: two course units of a language other than English.

E. Social Studies: two course units, including one unit in U.S. history.<sup>2</sup>

IV. High School Grade Point Average and Standardized Test Scores. Students must meet either the minimum high school grade point average (GPA) or standardized test score in order to be considered for admission. All applicants for admission, except those exempted by current UNC policy or regulation, must submit a standardized test score, even if they satisfy the minimum eligibility requirement through the high school GPA.

A. High School GPA: A minimum weighted GPA of 2.5; or

B. Standardized Test Scores: A composite ACT score of 19, or combined SAT (mathematics and evidence-based reading and writing) of 1010.

C. Chancellor's Exceptions: The maximum number of chancellor's exceptions is limited to one percent of the total number of applicants accepted as first-time undergraduates each year. A chancellor's exception may be applied to the SAT/ACT minimum requirement or the high school GPA minimum requirement.

V. Graduates of Cooperative Innovative High Schools (Early College). Each UNC constituent institution must offer to any student who graduated from a cooperative innovative high school program with an associate degree and who applies for admission to a constituent institution the option of being considered for admission as a first-time (freshman) or as a transfer student.

A. The constituent institution shall also provide written information to the student regarding the consequences that accompany each option and any other relevant information that may be helpful to the student when considering which option to select.

B. Beginning March 1, 2017, the Board of Governors shall report annually regarding the number of students who graduated from a cooperative innovative high school program with an associate degree and which option was chosen by those students when applying for admission to a constituent institution.

VI. Notification of Stakeholders and Educational Policymakers. The president is directed to develop plans and further recommendations to inform key stakeholders and education policymakers of the changes in requirements.

VII. Other Matters

A. Effective Date. The requirements of this policy shall be effective for all first-time students applying for admission at a constituent institution for any semester beginning with the 2020 fall semester through the 2022 fall semester (including students who attended the institution for the first time in the prior summer term).

B. Relation to Federal and State Laws. The foregoing policy as adopted by the Board of Governors is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this policy.

C. Regulations and Guidelines. This policy shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations and guidelines as may be adopted from time to time by the president.

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<sup>1</sup>Students applying to the University of North Carolina School of the Arts must only complete three mathematics courses in order to be eligible for admission.

<sup>2</sup>An applicant who does not have the unit in U.S. history may be admitted on the condition that at least three semester hours in that subject be passed by the end of the sophomore (second) year.