Transparent Automatic Admissions System in a Time of Test Optional

Board of Regents, State of Iowa
August 9, 2022
History of Regents Automatic Admission

• **1958 – 2009:** Top 50% of high school class
• **Fall 2009:** First entering class to use the RAI
• **Summer 2020:** High School Rank dropped from the RAI
• **Fall 2021:** Test-optional pathway created
Overview of Higher Education in Iowa

• **3 public universities**--governed by a Board of Regents (Two R1 universities, one regional comprehensive)

• **15 public, open-access community colleges** with individual governing boards, coordinated by Iowa Dept of Education

• **30+ private colleges** (ranging from essentially open access to highly selective)

• No all-encompassing coordinating body
Highlights of the Automatic Admissions System
Regent Admission Index (RAI) Formula

\[
\frac{(3 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (30 \times \text{high school GPA}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school core courses})}{\text{Regent Admission Index Score}}
\]

\[\geq 245 = \text{Automatic admission to ISU, UI, UNI}\]
Applying for Automatic Admission

• Initial admission based on self-reported scores
• Official scores & transcripts reviewed
• Admissions offers can be rescinded
Transparency & Predictability

- Admissions formula is public
- Plan your high school classes
- Low uncertainty & stress
- Less need to “hedge your bets”
- Reduces political pushback regarding residency mix at universities
Graduation Rates from 4-Year Public Universities
2014 Entry Class

Started at an Iowa Public University and Earned a Degree at First University Attended

- Graduated within 6 Yrs: 70.2%
- Graduated within 8 Yrs: 56.6%
- Graduated within 10 Yrs: 31.8%

Started at an Iowa Public University and Earned a Degree from any U.S. Institution

- Graduated within 6 Yrs: 80.8%
- Graduated within 8 Yrs: 67.4%
- Graduated within 10 Yrs: 39.5%

Source: NSC 2020 Completing College National and State Reports. Graduation rates determined six years after entry to first college attended. Student could have graduated from any U.S. college, not just the first attended.
Graduation Rates after Six Years at 4-year Public Colleges
by Admissions Selectivity for 2013 Entry Cohort

- Less than 25% accepted: 86%
- 25% - 49.9% accepted: 71%
- 50% - 74.9% accepted: 65%
- 75% - 89.9% accepted: 58%
- Iowa Public Universities (79% - 88% accepted): 72%
- 90%+ accepted: 51%
- Open admissions: 30%

Source: BOR and NCES Table 326.10
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement
Percent of Iowa Residents Who Identify as a Racial/Ethnic Minority

New First-Year Undergraduates from Iowa

- Hispanic: 1.8%, 2.0%, 2.3%, 2.5%, 2.7%, 3.0%, 3.2%, 3.4%, 3.6%, 3.8%, 4.0%, 4.2%, 4.4%, 4.6%, 4.8%, 5.0%, 5.2%, 5.4%, 5.6%, 5.8%, 6.0%, 6.2%, 6.4%
- Asian: 2.0%, 2.3%, 2.6%, 2.9%, 3.2%, 3.5%, 3.8%, 4.1%, 4.4%, 4.7%, 5.0%, 5.3%, 5.6%, 5.9%, 6.2%, 6.5%, 6.8%, 7.1%, 7.4%, 7.7%, 8.0%
- Black or African-American: 1.8%, 2.0%, 2.3%, 2.6%, 2.9%, 3.2%, 3.5%, 3.8%, 4.1%, 4.4%, 4.7%, 5.0%, 5.3%, 5.6%, 5.9%, 6.2%, 6.5%, 6.8%, 7.1%, 7.4%, 7.7%, 8.0%
- Two or More Races: 1.8%, 2.0%, 2.3%, 2.6%, 2.9%, 3.2%, 3.5%, 3.8%, 4.1%, 4.4%, 4.7%, 5.0%, 5.3%, 5.6%, 5.9%, 6.2%, 6.5%, 6.8%, 7.1%, 7.4%, 7.7%, 8.0%

Iowa High School Graduates

- Hispanic: 9.6%, 10.2%
- Black or African American: 5.1%, 5.5%
- Two or More Races: 3.0%, 3.1%
- Asian: 2.6%, 2.8%

Source: Iowa Board of Regents. International students are excluded from both the numerator and denominator.

Source: Iowa Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Postsecondary Readiness Reports.
Percent of Iowa Residents Who Identify as a Racial/Ethnic Minority

**New First-Year Undergraduates from Iowa**

- **Hispanic**: 4.7%, 6.1%, 6.4%
- **Asian**: 3.4%, 4.6%, 4.5%
- **Two or More Races**: 2.7%, 3.2%, 2.5%
- **Black or African-American**: 1.8%, 2.0%, 2.5%

**Iowa High School Graduates Interested in Attending a 4-Year Public College**

- **Hispanic**: 4.8%, 6.5%, 6.3%
- **Asian**: 3.5%, 3.4%, 4.2%
- **Black or African American**: 2.2%, 3.4%, 3.0%
- **Two or More Races**: 2.9%, 2.9%, 2.8%

Source: Iowa Board of Regents. International students are excluded from both the numerator and denominator. Source: Iowa Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Postsecondary Readiness Reports.
Iowa Public K-12 Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000-2001</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Minority</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Iowa Department of Education 2022
Then came COVID and Test-optional

- Throw out the RAI?
- Find a replacement for ACT/SAT in the formula?
- Create a 2-factor RAI?
- How do we control for grade inflation?
- We leveraged our SLDS data partnership to learn more
Comparing 4-year Graduation Rates by ACT and High School GPA

Source: Iowa Board of Regents, 2016 entry cohort
Comparing 3-factor RAI & 2-factor RAI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3-Factor = YES 2-Factor = NO</th>
<th>2-Factor = YES 3-Factor = NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT composite</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Women</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent White</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Free or Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted &amp; Talented</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College GPA</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned for 3rd Year</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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</table>
Test-Optional Era

• Kept the 3-factor RAI for automatic admission
• Added a pathway for individual review admission if a student did not report test scores
• For Fall 2021, 30-38% of applicants did not report ACT/SAT
• Preliminary analysis: students enrolled without scores had college GPAs 0.1 below others
Questions so far?
Next Steps: Addressing the decline in the number of Iowa HS graduates interested…

• Why? We’re not sure

• Would direct acceptance reach these students?

• It might improve equity and, to some degree, access
Figure 5-49

Number of Iowa Public School Graduates 2010-2011 to 2019-2020

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis.
Figure 5-44

Percent of Iowa Public School Graduates Intending to Pursue Postsecondary Education/Training
Graduating Classes of 2012 to 2021

- 2012: 80.7%
- 2013: 80.5%
- 2014: 80.6%
- 2015: 80.1%
- 2016: 79.8%
- 2017: 79.2%
- 2018: 78.0%
- 2019: 77.0%
- 2020*: 75.4%
- 2021: 72.6%
### Table 5-19

Percent of Iowa Public High School Graduates/Seniors Intending to Pursue Postsecondary Education/Training by Postsecondary Institution Type, 2001 and 2016 to 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private 4-Year College</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-Year College</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private 2-Year College</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>30.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Training</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>77.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>75.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Fall College Enrollment after Graduating from an Iowa High School
by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, and Free & Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility
2012 - 2021 HS Graduating Classes

Female Non-FRL Male

Female FRL Male

Race Ethnicity
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Multi Racial
- White

Source: Iowa SLDS, college enrollment includes all colleges reporting to the National Student Clearinghouse
Final Thoughts

• Automatic admission might feel scary
  • Culturally embedded expectations for transparency and access make this work in Iowa

• Test optional admission might feel scary
  • Yep—it’s still scary, but the access expectation combined with an explosion of data (compared to 1958) makes it manageable
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