

Whereas the proportions of Underserved Students (First-Generation, Underrepresented Minority, and/or Low-Income) students has decreased in the Cohen Honors College in recent years, the Honors College Student Council aims to increase diversity within the college. This fits in with the goals of Wichita State University and the inclusive excellence strategic plan for past and coming Academic Years.

The percentage of Underrepresented Minorities in the college from 2012-2017 was 29% and dropped to 25% in 2018, compared to the University for the same time period: 37.1% and 39.7%, respectively.

The percentage of First-Generation students in the college from 2014-2018 was 29.6% compared to the University's 41%.

The proportion of Underserved Applicants to the Honors College has decreased from 50.4% in 2014 to 36.1% in 2018.

Therefore, the Honors College Student Council recommends amending the bylaws to remove the GPA and ACT/SAT requirement from the application. This comes with the trend of colleges and universities, including the University of Southern California, recognizing that a higher socioeconomic status is the greatest predictor of high standardized test scores.

It has been noted the exceptions essay, a portion of the application where students explain their reasons for not meeting the GPA and ACT/SAT requirement, can drive otherwise qualified students from applying.

The University of Oregon uses this model and has a high GPA and SAT average for the Clark Honors College with a true [value of diversity](#). The Michigan Tech Pavlis Honors College also has no minimum requirement; they focus on distinct [abilities](#).

Removing the barriers of GPA and ACT/SAT requirements will increase the diversity of applicants to the college, as shown in a study by Syverson, Franks, and Hiss (2018). Moreover, the Student Council hopes to create an environment and culture in the Honors College that values experiences and effort rather than only numbers. The Cohen Honors College's goal is to enhance the intellectual, professional, innovative, and transformative ethics of its members, which cannot be measured by numbers.

Therefore, we recommend that the application process can be more holistic, considering all factors of a student's high school and transfer experiences, as well as GPA and ACT/SAT scores.

Factors can include, but are not limited to resumes, personal statements, letters of recommendation, and community service hours.

Syverson, S. T., Franks, V. W., & Hiss, W. C. (2018). *Defining Access: How Test-Optional Works*. *National Association for College Admission Counseling*.