



Asian American Coalition for Education

January 20, 2020

University of California Board of Regents  
Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Regents  
1111 Franklin St., 12th floor  
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Board of Regents,

On behalf of the Asian American Coalition for Education (AACE), an alliance of over 260 Asian-American organizations in advancing the cause of equal education rights, I am writing to express our serious concern and strong objection regarding a proposed policy change to abolish standardized testing in University of California's undergraduate admissions. Prior to making a decision, I urge you to responsibly and fully consider the ramifications of such a broad plan as well as the critical input of the Asian-American community as a key stakeholder.

Dropping empirically designed tests such as SAT and ACT in UC's process of selecting incoming students is a politicized and misguided attempt to masquerade achievement and opportunity gaps. Both the December 2019 lawsuit and a slew of UC top officials precipitating such a change falsely correlate a student's standardized test performance with his or her socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. This misdirected line of reasoning irresponsibly disregards the complex underlying problems behind falling quality of education in underrepresented communities while further skews the already contentious dialogue on college admissions.

In addition, replacing SAT/ACT with more subjective school-level factors (GPAs) and less rigorous methods (the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium) will undermine American meritocracy, hinder our nation's technological progress and jeopardize our national security. This systematic change will ostensibly weaken our STEM education by eliminating a common and realistic metric to efficiently measure students' mastery of scientific knowledge. America is only ranked 38<sup>th</sup> in math and 24<sup>th</sup> in science according to the 2018 PISA International Education Assessment. De-emphasizing academics in college admissions will further falter our nation's economic and educational competitiveness in the world. Without a fair and transparent process offered by standardized tests, our colleges cannot select and educate the best and brightest to make critical contributions to our economic prosperity, technological leadership and national security!

Furthermore, dropping standard tests such as SAT/ACT as requirement for admissions will create unintended harms against children growing up in underrepresented communities. It exacerbates the issue of "grade inflation" and serves as bandage to cover up the education achievement gap, depriving underserved students of their fair opportunities to succeed through fundamental improvements in their K-12 education. This precipitous plan to abandon



Asian American Coalition for Education

standardized testing will perpetuate educational inequalities without delivering any meaningful changes to enhance academic performance, college readiness and future workplace success.

As the world's most comprehensive higher education system, University of California is home to many Asian-American students and scholars. Currently, Asian Americans make up 29.48% of the undergraduate students body, 18.3% of its graduate students and 15% of its faculty members. Nationwide, Asian Americans contribute tremendously to American education: many are educators such as K-12 teachers, college professors and school administrators. We are also the fastest growing minority group in the United States, with an impressive level of cultural and socioeconomic diversities. In places like Los Angeles and San Francisco, in spite of historically high poverty, insufficient public support and limited English proficiency, Asian-American students have consistently succeeded academically and relied on the merit-based principle to advance their American dream. As such, we strongly oppose your proposed policy change to abolish standardized testing in University of California's undergraduate admissions. We demand that University of California faithfully engage the Asian-American community in prior consultation before making a decision on a consequential policy change regarding standardized testing in admissions.

As a national leader in championing equal education rights for the Asian-American community, AACE requests that we be involved in a fair consultation process with University of California. We will both benefit from dynamic and productive discussions on how we can collectively improve the college admissions system by addressing existing disparities in K-12 education in a comprehensive, sustainable and transparent manner.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Yukong Zhao", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Yukong Zhao  
President

Asian American Coalition for Education

<http://asianamericanforeducation.org/en/home/>

P.O. Box 507

Livingston, NJ 07039

E-mail: [info@asianamericanforeducation.org](mailto:info@asianamericanforeducation.org)