



Standardized testing

Burdick – Faculty Senate November 2020

Decisions to announce by February 2021*

1. Revert to pre-2020 standardized testing requirements
2. Extend 2020 practices for 1 or more year(s)
3. Extend 2020 practices indefinitely

** Presumably these are individual College decisions*

Use of SAT/ACT in admission review

- SAT founded 1926 as “IQ” testing
- Many name and scoring changes
- Math: 20-25% arithmetic; 35-40% algebra; 10-15% each basic geometry and statistics. No trig or calculus.
- Reading and Writing: vocabulary, critical reading, sentence-level reading, grammar, usage, and diction.

Use of SAT/ACT at Cornell

- Through last year, required of all applicants
- Used in context of holistic review
- Most Cornell applicants and students score in the 99th percentile
- No recent validity studies

UC – California standardized testing task force

- Do tests:
 - Assess for readiness
 - Predict student success
 - Promote diversity and opportunity
- Testing practices improved, deweighted, or eliminated?

UC faculty recommendations (January 2020)

1. Find eligibility factors beyond GPA and scores
2. Expand 'eligibility in the local context'
3. Reduce process barriers specific to FGLI and URM
4. Expand academic and social support services
5. Extend research about test design bias
6. Develop a new, broader assessment

Information we have or can get now

Average SAT Scores and Household Income



Standardized testing during pandemic

- Normal year: 2-3 million SAT exams
- 2020: goal is 1 million exams
- ACT this week: cancellations in all 50 states
- Next SAT November 7

Standardized testing during pandemic

- Cornell among the first to announce test-optional 2020
- Continuing test-free in 2021: Cal Tech, University of **California** (test-optional now, test-free starting 2023.)
- Test-optional one year: Brown, Columbia, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, MIT, Penn, Princeton, Stanford, Yale

Information we will/might see February 2021

- New UTR: assessments of each applicant's rigor and performance in context of the school and curriculum
- Number, percentage, and performance of submitters
- **Review experience across Cornell colleges**
- Test results 2020, including current HS juniors
- College Board & ACT plans 2021, including online

Cornell undergraduate review by college

- A&S: test-optional; will use Landscape
- COE: test-optional; enhanced transcript reviews; RD
- CALS: score-free; enhanced transcript reviews
- Dyson & SHA: score-free; continuing holistic review
- CHE and SILR: test-optional; continuing holistic review
- AAP: score-free; continue holistic review (portfolios)

Information we won't/might not have Feb '21

Won't have

- Longitudinal comparability for Cornell classes
- Predictable yield modeling and 2021 enrollment results
- First-year performance data (two-year lag)

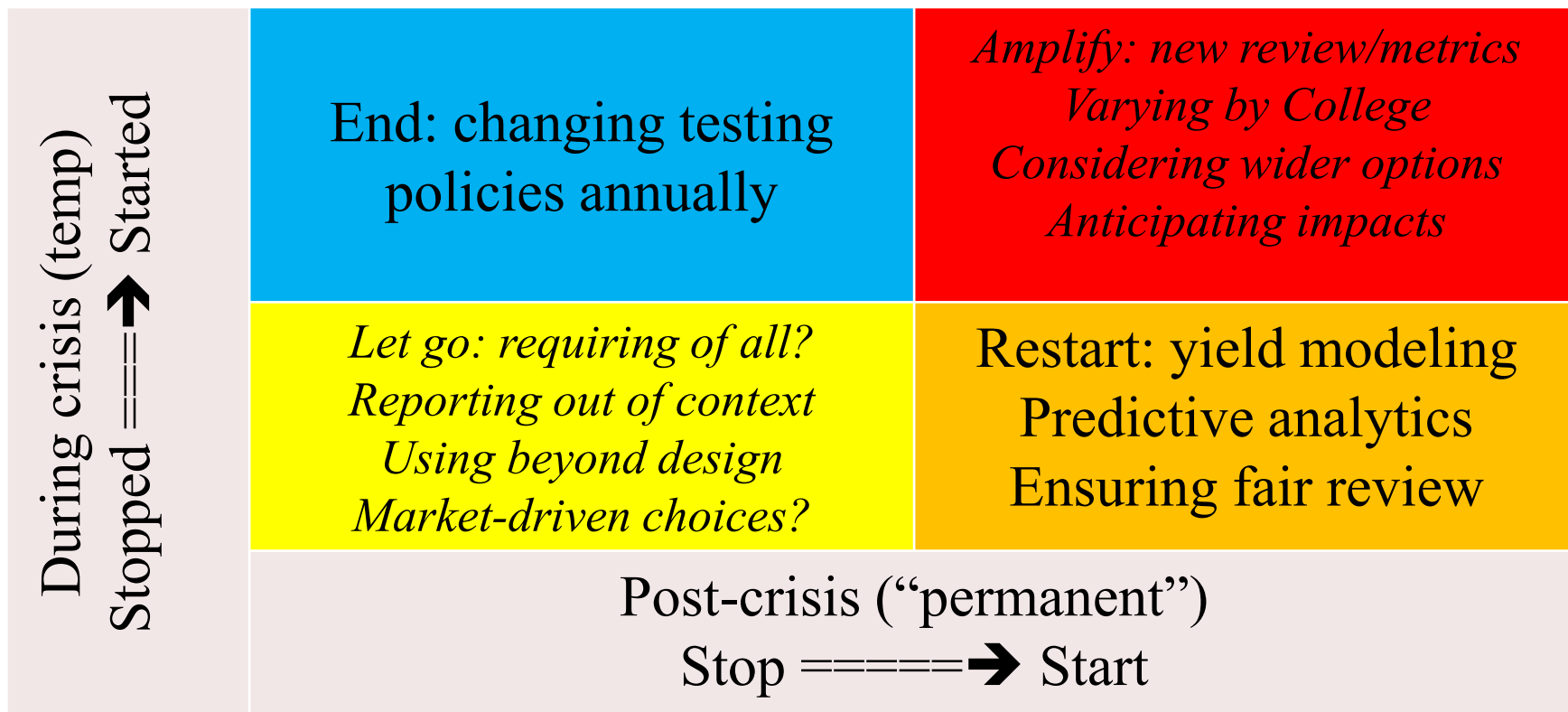
Might not have

- Other university's policies and data

Problematic practices

- Using SAT/ACT for advising/placement
 - Beyond the tests' design and capacity
 - Requires disclosure
 - Not available for many, so maybe an equity issue
- Reporting averages as a proxy for Class preparation
 - Developing reliable substitutes
 - Not meaningful in Cornell's range
 - Not tied to predictions and/or standards

Pandemic and post-pandemic practices



Recommendations for Senate to consider

- Empanel CU research group: faculty and practitioners
- Support for extending 2020 options to current HS juniors
- Adopt ‘eligibility in context’ as a Cornell principle in enrollment growth, including identifying and reducing specific barriers for FGLI and URM students
- Support to identify and eliminate misuse of testing