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## Are SAT Scores a Strong Predictor of Student Success? A Study of Education Majors, Admission Variables and the Impact of Leadership Development

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**Are SAT Scores a Strong Predictor of Student Success?**  
**A Study of Education Majors, Admission Variables**  
**and the Impact of Leadership Development**

An Analysis of Pre-Admission Variables,  
Student Success and Persistence  
at the University of Maine at Farmington

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the degree of Master of Arts  
University of Southern Maine  
Master's Degree in Leadership Studies

By

Lisa Marie Ellrich

April 2014

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**ABSTRACT**

This research looks at the use of SAT scores in the college admission process in regards to their ability to accurately predict the success of a student in pursuit of their undergraduate degree – specifically in the academic area of teacher preparation. The research will also examine qualitative factors in the same individuals such as extracurricular involvement, community service, service learning and leadership roles in the application process as equally important indicators of student success. The research will examine the grade point average (GPA) and SAT scores of three entering classes at the University of Maine at Farmington where students indicated an intended major in the fields of early childhood education, elementary education, special education, early childhood special education and all the disciplines of secondary/middle education. Through a survey of these students, this research will look at their extracurricular involvement prior to college as scored on their application evaluation and their current status of engagement on the college campus along with their current status/success as indicated by their college GPA and academic progress through their major. Research conducted by other institutions that made the move to a test optional admission process indicate that they saw little or no difference in the student success rate of subsequent graduating classes. These same schools saw an increase in applications, and contrary to the concerns of many, saw little to no drop in the quality of the applicant pool. If the research from these other institutions holds true, then the question of the value of the SAT as a true predictor of success in education majors at UMF is in question. Looking closely at all the variables – grade point average, rank in class, extra-curricular involvement, and persistence – of the students whose SAT scores fell below a certain benchmark will provide the answer to which is a strong indicator of potential success in college during the admission process.

## INTRODUCTION

The University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) has a longstanding reputation as a premier institution in the field of teacher preparation. In fact, at its original inception and eventual charter in 1864, UMF was created as the Western State Normal School and stood out among teachers' colleges for its commitment to integrating a strong liberal arts program into teacher training. Today, 150 years later, this reputation still stands and graduates of UMF's many Bachelor of Science degree programs in education are not only accredited by the State of Maine but also through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a national accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education authorized by the U.S. Department of Education. This distinction allows UMF graduates to have earned state accreditation in over 36+ states nationwide allowing graduates to teach in a wide spectrum of regions across the country. NCATE accreditation has served as a measure of strength of the education programs as well as an assurance that the UMF B.S. in Education held extra value due to the portability of the national accreditation.

Admission to the University of Maine at Farmington has long been a holistic process. The application process focuses on the many attributes of a student's profile – application, essay, transcript, letters of recommendation and involvement in activities at school and beyond. Students receive a rating for each of these factors in their application review. One thing, however, that is traditionally used in the college application review process throughout the majority of colleges and universities in the United States are standardized tests, such as the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test – reasoning) or the ACT (American College Testing – aptitude test). Standardized tests, however, do not play a role in the admission decision at UMF. In fact, following the landmark 1984 decision by Bates College in Lewiston, Maine to make use of these

standardized tests optional for students, UMF quickly followed suit and was one of the first public universities or colleges to move away from using these exams as a gauge for college success. Not utilizing the SAT or ACT in the admission process has become part of the identity of the University of Maine at Farmington in assuring students and families that they are more than a number.

The 2017 accreditation process for NCATE, however, will require a change in the current practice or UMF will be forced to drop this national accreditation. The current organization known as NCATE, is merging with TEAC (Teacher Education Accreditation Council) to form CAEP (the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation). One of the many changes in their accreditation standards will rely heavily on SAT/ACT scores as part of the admission evaluation process. In fact, CAEP have even determined the cutoff scores that accepted students in education programs at accredited colleges/universities must meet. This change alone will impact the admission process and, subsequently, the number of previously admissible students in the education programs at UMF. As an institution that has long valued the holistic application review process, this change will have a dramatic impact on enrollment, and perhaps the overall culture of the education programs but the overall campus culture as a whole.

This research will examine the admission criteria of the entering classes (Fall 2013, Fall 2012, Fall 2011) at the University of Maine at Farmington of education majors. It will be specifically looking at data related to those entering Bachelor of Science degree programs in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Special Education and Early Childhood Special Education for quantitative factors that played a role in the admissions decisions. This will include recalculated GPA, rigor of curriculum, non-academic rating that includes leadership roles, and SAT scores. Research will also include the first semester and

current semester GPA of the students in these three education cohorts to track academic progress. After an examination of this initial data, I will look for breakpoints below the new cutoffs set by CAEP – which are “the group average performance on nationally normed ability/achievement assessments such as the SAT or ACT in the top 50 percent” or for the State of Maine that is – 496 critical reading, 514 mathematics, 488 writing - and examine those particular students for success rates in their initial major within the education programs. In the students that fall below the CAEP SAT cut off but show academic progress, the research will be looking for other areas of the student application that perhaps provide a better picture of a students’ ability. This study will focus on the admission criteria of student leadership evaluation at the time of admission and student involvement and leadership on campus based on their response to the student survey. It is the belief of the researcher that the data will show that the majority of the students that would be denied admission if the office of admission is forced to change the evaluation process, truly are succeeding at UMF. The second goal of the study is to highlight the admission criteria that truly do point to a student’s ability to succeed, not only in college, but specifically in UMF’s education programs. Although there is research that shows a correlation between SAT data and the likelihood of students to successfully complete the Praxis I and II exams (state teacher certification exams), it is the belief of the researcher that the data will support the hypothesis that fit, community support, and involvement can outweigh those statistics.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A HISTORY OF THE SAT

In 1900 when the College Entrance Examination Board – now known as the College Board – was founded by the presidents of twelve leading United States universities. The goal of the selective schools was to offer a single exam that students applying for admission would take that would be used universally (Leman, 1995). In 1901 they administered the first standardized exam that was initially intended as a uniform method to determine scholarship eligibility and admission as well as force New England’s prominent boarding schools to adopt a uniform curriculum.

In 1923, Carl Brigham, who had previously worked with Harvard Professor Robert Yerkes on a military IQ exam, administers a version of the Army IQ exam to all Princeton freshmen as well as applicants to Cooper Union. The College Board then put him to work on developing a test that could be used to a wider group of schools. In 1926 this test became the first SAT and later that year it was administered to high school students for the first time. By 1938, Henry Chauncey and Wilbur Bender, assistant deans at Harvard, are given the task of devising a way to select public school students for a Harvard scholarship program. They traveled to Princeton and worked with Brigham and in 1934 the SAT was utilized at Harvard to determine scholarship eligibility. In 1935 Harvard began requiring all candidates for admission to take the SAT. By the end of the thirties, the SAT was used in some way as a qualifier by all Ivy League schools.

In 1948, Educational Testing Service (ETS) opened as a new testing agency with Henry Chauncey as its president and James Conant, former Harvard President, as its chairman of the

board. Within that same year, a branch office is established in Berkeley, California and they hope to begin a relationship with the University of California system where they would also adopt the SAT as an admission requirement. By 1952, the current structure of the questions is established and soon after, in 1957, the number of students taking the SAT passes half a million. By 1960, the University of California system adopts the SAT as a requirement and becomes ETS and the College Board's largest client. While the exam has been through a few changes along the way with another major revision scheduled for this next cycle, it remains the most prominent college entrance exam to date with over 1.66 million college-bound students having taken the test in 2013 alone.

The impact of the SAT in the post war years on student enrollment to post-secondary schools allowed some institutions to adopt the exam as not just a way to award scholarships and to grow their enrollment but instead to increase their level of selectivity. As indicated a study on the history of college selectivity, "why expand at a time when prestige is no longer measured by numbers, but by selectivity?" (Wechsler, 1977, n.p.). Frank Aydelotte, (former) President of Swarthmore College (1928) perhaps said it best when he stated, "The race for numbers is over, and ...the race for quality has begun. A few years ago our colleges and universities were competing for students and great emphasis was laid upon 'healthy growth.' Now we are beginning to limit our numbers, to compete only for the best students, and to point with pride to the multitude that we now turn away" (Wechsler, 1977, n.p.). In many cases, the SAT became a strong variable in the early phase of the evolution of higher education in the United States. For some, this variable is not only used as a mechanism to determine admission and a predictor of first year college success but also a bragging point and a method for determining institutional quality.

## THE SAT AS THE ‘GREAT EQUALIZER’

While standardized admission tests are not typically the most important factor in college admission decisions, a recent NACAC survey indicates that “many colleges and universities have attributed increasing importance to standardized tests over the past decade” (NACAC, 2008, n.p.). Since high schools employ differential grading techniques it is challenging to assess the qualifications of students from different high schools with different grading standards and course strength. The SAT for many had become the equalizer. In fact, in a 2006 analysis by the NACAC Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Admission, showed the variation of importance in an admission review/analysis. And while the numbers varied from public to private institutions, they also varied when considering the size of the institution as well as the selectivity of the school. Regardless of the percentage rate, the NACAC Commission’s findings placed emphasis on the importance of transparency on the variables in the application process. “It is critical for colleges and universities to articulate clearly the emphasis or lack thereof placed on such tests and the role they play in admission and scholarship decisions”(NACAC, 2006, n.p.).

Many schools continue to utilize the SAT as what they believe to be the great equalizer in the prediction of first year student success in college. This however, is difficult to swallow when many things are not equal in the high school curriculum, environment, socio-economic situation of the household, and race. In a study of affirmative action and the SAT, Selingo and Brainard (2001) point to a study done by the University of California where they (UC) were looking to eliminate the SAT in order to increase diversity without using racial preferences. Since the SAT scores of black and Hispanic students are historically lower, on average, than those of other students this will be a way to clear the way to encourage more diverse students to apply (Selingo,

& Brainard, 2001). When the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board studied ways to promote diversity at the state's public teaching universities, it concluded that "the use of standardized tests unduly limits admissions and has a chilling effect on the motivations and aspirations of underserved populations" (Rooney & Schaeffer, 1998, p.8).

### **A SHIFT IN THE PARADIGM**

There does, however, appear to be a shift in the paradigm of admission testing from its preoccupation with prediction of success to that of the assessment of achievement and curriculum mastery as an alternative paradigm for the SAT (Atkinson & Geiser, S, 2009). In fact, the ability of college admissions to predict student success in college based on factors known at point of admission remains relatively limited. Atkinson & Geiser (2009), in their *Reflections on a Century of College Admission Tests*, state that:

"After decades of predictive-validity studies, our best prediction models (using not only test scores but high-school grades and other academic and socioeconomic factors) still account for only about 25 to 30 percent of the variance in outcome measures such as college GPA. This means that some 70-75 percent of the variance is unaccounted for and unexplained. That should not be surprising in view of the many other factors that affect student performance after admission, such as social support, financial aid, and academic engagement in college. But it also means that the error bands around our predictions are quite broad. Using test scores as a 'tiebreaker' to choose between applicants who are otherwise equally qualified, as is sometimes done, is not necessarily a reliable guide, especially where score differences are small" (p. 8).

If we look at small differences in test scores, many admission decisions will tip the scales in favor of the candidate with the higher scores when in fact these score differences show little validity in predicting achievement. This is particularly harmful to low-income and minority students in areas where these students actually show higher achievement gains in academic preparation where the playing field has not been equal up to that point. The biggest predictor that makes up the 70 to 75 percent of the “unknown” as Atkinson & Geiser point out are the “other” admissions criteria ranked by admission professionals. In this category fall special talents and skills, leadership and community service, opportunity to learn, economic disadvantage, and social and culture diversity. These factors, according to their 2009 study, show that they may prove to be far more important in selecting whom to admit from among the larger pool. The idea of “crafting” or “building” the class based on these factors may prove to be more valid than some other methods used by a wide variety of institutions.

### **A CASE FOR TEST OPTIONAL ADMISSION**

In looking at the research conducted by NACAC in 2008 and Atkinson & Geiser (2009) it is apparent that factors other than test scores (SAT) may in fact be better predictors of success for first year students, especially given the type of institution and its size. In 1984 – ahead of the current curve of the option SAT movement – Bates College, a selective, private liberal arts college in Lewiston, Maine became one of the first of the selective schools to become SAT I test optional. This movement was voted on and approved by the college’s faculty approximately nine months later. In fact, after Bates initial success in their students without the SAT I tests, they voted to become completely test optional in 1990, meaning they no longer require even the SAT II subject tests. In making their decisions, Bates admission staff and faculty looked at several factors. Were the tests artificially cutting off part of their potential applicant pool? Were the tests

evenly predictive across various populations? Were certain groups of students hurt by the tests? They even considered how the tests were warped based on the values and resources of various high schools. In a very bold and creative move, faculty even pushed admissions to consider a student's actual achievement, imagination, creativity and hard work other than test scores. "The faculty wanted to offer a clear public gesture to encourage applicants from students in groups least likely to have the SATs operating in their favor: minority students, first generation immigrants, bilingual students, and rural or blue-collar students" (Rooney & Schaeffer, 1998, p.17). Bates College's decision to be bold in their move to be test optional sent shock waves through the world of higher education. Many felt this was a romantic notion that would soon fade. Others felt it was a play to inflate their applicant pool while not really altering their review process. (Hoover, 2010) Bates, to this day, holds true to their decision and believes strongly that it was one of the best they have made in the past three decades.

Bates College has closely tracked their admission data and the success of the submitters versus the non-submitters over the course of the years since becoming test optional. William Hiss, former vice president for external and alumni affairs at Bates and former dean of admission from 1978 to 2000, stated that "since the policy was put in place, between a quarter and a third of our students have enrolled without submitting their test results. The GPA's and graduation rates of such students are nearly identical to those who did submit their test scores" (Hiss, 2001). He continued by stating that:

"In some years, non-submitters have had a modestly stronger cumulative GPA than submitters, and we've never had a year when non-submitters were more than .22 of a point lower than submitters...students applying without standardized –test results fell into every subgroup that conventional wisdom

would suggest are at a disadvantage in standardized testing... We saw more women than men, rural and blue-collar students, immigrants, minority students, students who spoke a second language at home, some learning-disabled students, and many with exceptional talents in something brilliant – debaters or student leaders, composers, those with passionate commitments, and yes, some highly disciplined athletes” (p. 12).

While the benefits of making the move to test optional can be great, the transition is not for the faint of heart. Ann McDermott, Director of Admission at the College of the Holy Cross, provides the following insight on the decision to go test-optional in an article from 2008. McDermott advises (McDermott, 2008) that to make the change can be daunting but in order to be successful in the change you must be true to your institution and your mission, to know your institutions students and always operate with their best interests at the center of your decisions. In addition, McDermott states that being ready for the criticism and prepared to handle the negative reactions are critical but not to fear it, to keep the faith, and not give in too soon. It is important to recognize that many factors are at play that can challenge or alter data. Most importantly – McDermott states that you need to believe in your decision. McDermott (McDermott, 2008) added that she is glad that they (College of the Holy Cross and other test optional schools) can offer students the opportunity to enter their senior year, eagerly anticipating what comes next. By being test optional and minimizing the emphasis on the SAT, she believes it provides students with the potential to maximize their success, happiness, passion and creativity, without the focus on the ‘power of the number.’

## A MOVEMENT GAINS MOMENTUM – TEST OPTIONAL NUMBERS GROW

Bates began a movement that gained momentum and continues today. Institutions similar to Bates (4-year private) soon followed and other public institutions took note as well, including the University of Maine at Farmington in 1986. Today it appears that more and more schools are taking the test-optional approach. In fact, according the FairTest, the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest, 2013), there are currently 386 four-year non-profit colleges and universities that do not require any type of standardized testing in their admission evaluation process. When you look beyond that initial number it continues to grow beyond 800 institutions when considering those that require the test but only use them for placement after admission. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2013), the 2013 census data for four year colleges is as follows: 615 public 4-year colleges/universities and 1,536 private 4-year colleges/universities. Given these figures it indicates that nearly 40% of four-year colleges no longer require the SAT or the ACT as part of their admission process. This number is impressive considering that this test-optional movement has only been really gaining speed since the mid 1990's.

In the same study by FairTest (FairTest, 2013) it also states that this number had grown by 231 schools since last three years alone and should be considered a “substantial increase.” Hoover& Supiano (2008, n.p.) list among the ranks of those pushing the boundaries of the “test optional” or “test flexible” to be like Bowdoin College (ME), Wake Forest University (NC), and Lawrence University (WI) citing that this decision is “part of an overall philosophy.” Others like Hamilton College (NY), George Mason University (VA), and Lewis & Clark College (OR) have taken “optional” to a different level by allowing students to submit a portfolio, graded papers/writing samples and extra letters of recommendation in place of the more standard SAT.



According to Robert A. Schaeffer, public-education director for FairTest, “colleges that have done this are better off in every dimension – more applications, better applications, more diversity of all sorts” (Hoover & Supiano, 2008, p. 14). Among the hundreds of colleges and universities that have taken the test optional policy to heart including Bates, Bowdoin, Connecticut College, and Mount Holyoke College, they report that they are generally well-satisfied and that the “applicant pools and enrolled classes have become more diverse without any loss in academic quality” (Kohn, 2001, n.p.). Bates College found that the change had no visible negative impact on the quality of enrollees, and in fact, shows evidence of a positive impact. Non-submitters had a higher academic survival rate than their submitter counterparts after the first four years of their optional SAT decision. In fact, their enrollment of minority students more than doubled in the first five years (Rooney & Schaeffer, 1998, n.p.). Other schools that have chosen the test optional path have experienced similar results. Hamilton College in New York went test optional in 2001 and have found that students that do not submit SAT scores earned a slightly higher grade-point average than those who had submitted them (Hoover & Supiano, 2008, p. 6). Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts changed their testing requirements in 2007 and the response has been overwhelming. Over the course of the first three years, they (WPI) saw their application numbers increase dramatically and have seen an uptick in diversity without any difference in student outcomes. In looking at schools that took the test-optional route in a creative slant, Hoover found that the WPI admission staff learned more about their applicant pool through their “flex path” submission process where applicants submit something that reflects their “organization, motivation, creativity, and problem-solving ability instead of SAT scores” (p. 3). While the application review process took far longer for the

admission staff, the process proved valuable as they truly had the opportunity to learn a great deal more about each individual on a personal level.

### **OTHER FACTORS – BUILDING THE SUCCESSFUL CLASS**

One of the overwhelming benefits of an institution taking a test-optional approach is the opportunity to focus on what is sometimes deemed the “other” category or attributes that are often difficult to measure in a student and their accomplishments. The most difficult part about assigning a value to this category is the complexity of the diversity that comes with it as it can vary so from student to student and cannot, for the most part, be measured against one another. One of the areas that continually appear on the list of qualities evaluated turns to leadership. Leadership in an admission application can be exhibited to us through long-term commitment, persistence, and the ability to overcome adversity or through achievement and recognition by peers and mentors. It can also be exhibited in terms of increased level of responsibility or elected leadership roles. This can be demonstrated through narratives (essay and recommendations) or through involvement with organizations. Involvement in high school extracurricular activities is generally seen as positive and widely supported by parents and educators. Pre-college involvement and development of skills outside the classroom can contribute to relational issues and strategies for success. Involvement in pre-college activities provide the opportunity to acquire and practice specific social, physical, and intellectual skills that may be useful in a wide variety of settings including school, contribute to the well-being of one’s community and to develop a sense of agency as a member of one’s community, belong to a socially recognized and valued group, establish supportive social networks of peers and adults that can help in both the present and the future, and experience and deal with challenges (Komives & Johnson, 2009, n.p.). In short, the research of Komives & Johnson show the

relationship between high school extracurricular involvement (in school and beyond) can help contribute to college leadership outcomes. The outcome of their findings points to the fact that involvement and leadership in extracurricular activities from 8<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade predicts academic achievement and pro-social behavior in adolescents. If this involvement is part of an applicant's background, it seems logical that the students' involvement and leadership skills should receive significant merit in the application review process – more so perhaps than standardized testing scores. A student's "other" category, as it is classified in many admission review processes, should then receive a higher score than other areas that have perhaps been strong influences in the past.

Research suggests that certain types of involvement and developmental outcomes vary depending on the activity itself. For instance, involvement in service-learning activities have shown to lead to better academic achievement, higher self-esteem, reduced dropout rates, increased political participation and increased volunteerism (Mahoney, 2000). Involvement in high school sports relates to a higher likelihood of graduation and college attendance – with an even greater likelihood for the low-achieving and blue-collar male athletes (Gould & Weiss, 1987). How leadership is developed in pre-college students varies based on their maturity, the activities in which they participate and the mentorships that are afforded to them. It is important to look at their ability to develop their own independence and their eventual ability to recognize leadership as a process and not positional or simply an individual (Komives, 2005).

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATORS**

In looking at the key areas that point to the success of future educators, Komives, Lucas, and McMahon's (1998) work shows the following five characteristics of individuals as

key to contributing to teacher preparation. Future educators do best when they are: purposeful, inclusive, empowering, ethical, and process-oriented. Capturing these qualities in the college application then becomes key perhaps to admitting students who will be successful in their pursuit of a degree in education. Quantifying these characteristics could serve as an important factor in the evaluation - far more so than that of a student's SAT score. In another study that looked at leadership development in pre-college and early college students and success, Komives, Wagner & Associates (2009) they found that activities that look to enhance social change through three levels: individual, group and community are also expressly important. Both studies look toward collaboration, understanding, civility, empowering and openness. These values are also aligned with the characteristics of the future educator. According a 2011 study by Rushton, Mariano, & Wallace, there is consistent evidence that the strengths of flexibility, creativity and adaptability along with being perceptive, open to new ideas, and intuitive are key to teachers success. All these are qualities that can be gained through certain types of pre-college leadership development (Rushton, Mariano, Wallace, 2011). Combined with evidence that pre-college leadership experiences play a central role in higher academic performance, it seems only logical that the "other" category in college admission should take on a role of even greater value in the selection process. Eliminating the SAT provides the opportunity to look more closely at differentiating students through their extra-curricular involvement with a nod to retention based on the factors in the research that are linked to academic success. Admitting students with signs of leadership development can only look to improve the profile of the class, the students overall involvement once on campus and therefore overall level of student satisfaction and success in their academic career. The universities' role, in turn, is to continue to foster that personal growth and realize their full potential.

## WHAT MATTERS MOST IN EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

Across the nation, individual states have been struggling to adjust their teacher education requirements to meet the needs of schools within their borders. Many states and national certification organizations, in spite of the evidence present that the SAT and other standardized tests are not strong predictors of student success, have increased the use of variables such as the SAT and ACT scores for admission to university teacher preparation programs as a means of measurement of the strength of the candidates at the onset of their college education versus their demonstrated mastery of content area and methodology at the time of certification. By making these judgments on individuals without regard for context (location, high school attended, socio-economic status, ethnicity, etc.) and allowing them to explore their passion, we are perhaps eliminating an outstanding group of individuals from their professional calling (Gitomer, 2007).

In a study conducted at Elizabethtown College, Blue & associates (2002) determined that while the SAT scores alone could be used to identify a certain type of teacher, the higher the SAT score set, the more heterogeneous would be the teacher pool. This will do continued damage on the numbers of available candidate seeking to become certified teachers as well as the diversity of the group itself. This same study also showed that those in the lower third of their statistics (SAT, GPA, Praxis scores) who were successful in completing the same requirements as their other classmates with higher SAT scores, shows that the SAT is not necessarily good predictors of individual success. Many of those in the lower groups clearly showed that they can exceed expectations if given the opportunity.

Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, in a 2003 study of what made the biggest impact on teacher effectiveness, found that education coursework is a stronger predictor of teaching effectiveness than are the teachers' grade-point averages in their majors or their test scores on content knowledge or standardized tests (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2003, n.p.). This statement points not only to the end product from a certified teacher preparation program at a college/university but also to their entering GPA and test scores. In short, a strong teacher preparation program, with highly skilled mentors, compassionate faculty, multiple opportunities for practicum and student teaching along with desire, drive and determination of the student are the factors that can make the difference. In short, according to Laczko-Kerr and Berliner, strong SAT scores in an individual's high school profile do not equal academic success in college nor do they indicate traits that would lead to becoming more effective educators.

## **Conclusion**

The SAT was initially designed as an entrance exam for elite colleges. It has since developed into a reasoning test that some believe serves as an accurate predictor of first year success for those attending college. Researchers, however, have highlighted the disparaging values of the SAT across lines of race, gender, and socio-economic background to the point that it can handicap certain individuals from the start. What had become a standard of admission and a measure of quality is now being questioned by many as a method of evaluation. Areas that the SAT does not take into consideration and cannot evaluate are an individual's will and drive. The SAT cannot evaluate their ability to persist through a roadblock or hurdle to overcome and succeed.

Many institutions are moving away from the SAT as a standard of measure in the admission process and are looking more closely at student involvement and commitment along with grade point average and course rigor. By altering their admission process they are adding value to the class by looking beyond traditional values and have evidence to prove that these students with sub-par SAT scores can survive – and thrive – in a college environment. They are also overcoming other barriers such as teacher certification exams and other standards of measure at nearly the same rate as others before them with strong SAT scores. There is proof in what these students have accomplished and as the number of schools who are dropping the SAT requirement continues to grow, so will the opportunities for students who are given the chance to prove themselves.

Students looking to attend the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) to pursue a career in education should not be penalized because of low SAT scores. With evidence to show that students with lower SAT scores can persist and succeed in the education programs at UMF, it would be a terrible injustice to the campus community and the state of Maine – and beyond - to turn these individuals away. By encouraging students from various backgrounds – economic and academic – to pursue their dreams of become teachers, we are helping to shape the future.

## Methodology

### Method

This research is designed as data analysis tool for evaluation of the admission process for undergraduate degrees at the University of Maine at Farmington. The research focused specifically at admission to majors in: early childhood education, special education, elementary education and secondary/middle education. Current methodology for application evaluation consists of the following areas: transcript evaluation and analysis (including grade point average recalculation), evaluation of course rigor, application and recommendations, along with a minimal evaluation of extracurricular involvement (school or other) along with leadership potential as exhibited by roles and persistence. One value not used by the UMF Admission staff is standardized test scores. Many students submit their scores but they are not a factor in the actual admission evaluation. Current administration, however, is encouraging a change in this evaluation process to include the SAT as well as setting strict cut-off scores. This study looks at admission values assigned to accepted students whose SAT scores would fall below the potential cut-offs, examines their success rate in the first semester of college and persistence, along with their involvement on campus and their ability to pass the first level of their teacher certification examination (PRAXIS). The research will look closely at the values assigned in extracurricular involvement and leadership and variables in admission persistence rates for the two groups – below and above SAT cutoff scores.

Research was conducted by inviting students in the below SAT score group that were admitted to an education program to participate in a survey that looked closely at their current academic and social situation at the University of Maine at Farmington. The role of the



researcher was to pull the appropriate data for the participants, facilitate the survey, and process and analyze the results.

### **Participants**

The research required currently enrolled students at the University of Maine at Farmington who had SAT scores that were below the cutoffs being recommended by administration for a new admission evaluation process. These students were invited to participate in the study by completing a survey that looked to gain an understanding of their current status in the program, involvement on campus, and tools used to help them with their educational pursuits. The students were made aware of the potential change in the admission procedure to require the standardized test scores that could change the evaluation process for students in the future. The students invited to the research project came from the past three years of enrollment to the education majors at UMF and were broken down into the following groups: 1210 (Fall 2012) = 34, 1310 (Fall 2013) = 39, 1410 (Fall 2014) = 53 for a total of 126 participants invited. Of the 126 students who were invited to participate, 31 (or 25%) completed the survey within the required two weeks they were given.

### **Procedure**

Invitations to participate in the research were sent by email letter that served as their invitation and consent to participate (see Appendix 1). The survey (see Appendix 2) was imbedded in the email with instructions to complete and return to the researcher either via email or in person at the office of admission. The survey included the following breakdown of question types: two demographic, nine yes/no, nine open ended, and three quantitative questions using a Likert scale. Participants were encouraged to answer all the questions but were instructed that they may skip

any that they felt uncomfortable with or did not want to share information about with the researcher. Participants were encouraged to respond with their name, but only for verification of data. Once the surveys were returned, the data was transferred to a spreadsheet and secured for analysis at a later time. At the end of the first week, an email reminder was sent to those who had not yet responded (see Appendix 3). After the second week, all data sources that could indicate an individual's identity (name, identification number, email address) were deleted in order to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis of the data was done by first adding the categories of the survey to the student data tables the researcher created when extracting the admission profile data. An Excel spreadsheet was used for this purpose and data was sorted by each of the categories: GPA, sex, national accreditation, SAT optional, involvement in campus activities, leadership roles, number of hours in activities per week, student employment, number of hours working per week, PRAXIS exam data, use of study guides, as well as rating of support services and relationships with faculty as areas of importance. This data, along with the admission application profile (recalculated GPA, activity score, rigor), allowed the researcher to have an overall understanding of not only where the student was currently (academically, socially, developmentally) but also where they had come from when they first applied as a high school senior.

### **Assumptions and limitations**

The first limitation that must be addressed in this study is the size of the response of the group. While 25% of those invited did choose to participate, that does still leave a significant portion of the group that did not respond which does leave a gap in determining value.

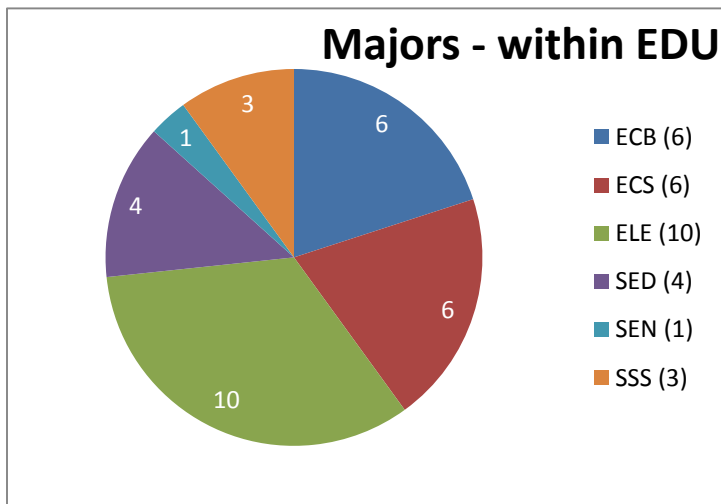
A second limitation in this study is the inability to reach out to those that did not persist at the University of Maine at Farmington. This study was only able to reach out to those who are still at UMF and not to those that have either chosen to leave (in good standing) to transfer to another institution or to pursue other interests and those that were asked to leave (academic suspension). A whole picture is not truly available without a sampling from members of this group as well.

A third limitation in this study is that by virtue of human nature, those that did respond are potentially those that are more involved on campus than the average student. They are potentially the ones that participate at a higher rate and therefore chose to complete the survey. The rating score for importance of involvement could be inflated to the '4' that is the average of the response group if this is in fact true. Without looking at the larger group (below and above SAT cutoffs and those that are no longer at UMF) it is difficult to get a true and accurate response.

A final limitation of the study is the varied experiences of the three subsets of the group invited to participate. By nature of their length of time on campus and comfort level in the UMF community, 1210 (Fall 2012) students' responses and those from 1310 (Fall 2013) and 1410 (Fall 2014) could vary. It should be understood that those in their first year could very well have a more limited view of what is available on campus, their level of involvement could be somewhat different, and their understanding of the full program may be less comprehensive.

### Findings

In the responses to the survey sent to the 126 individuals that fit the profile (matriculated students at UMF in education majors with sub-par SAT scores according to new NCATE determinations), of the 31 that did participate there was nearly an equal split between the three years of admission. The numbers were as follows: 10 responders for Fall 2014 admits, 10 responders for Fall 2013 admits, and 11 responders for Fall 2012 admits. Within the responders there was only 3% (or one) that was male. This however is rather indicative of the larger group of admitted education majors overall. When looking at the entire class of EDU majors (above and below SAT cut offs) only 8% on average are male. In fact, of those in the sub-par SAT group, less than 1% were not female. Also of interest is the fact that the breakdown of majors within EDU programs was nearly evenly distributed between majors. The Chart 1 indicates the breakdown by major of those that responded.



ECB = Early Childhood Education  
 ECS = Early Childhood Special Education  
 ELE – Elementary Education  
 SED = Special Education  
 SEN = Secondary Education – English  
 SSS = Secondary Education Social Sciences

**Chart 1**

In looking at the SAT averages for those that did participate, the numbers were actually significantly below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for the state of Maine which is the cut off for the CAEP

certification that is in question at UMF. As a reminder, the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for Maine are as follows: Math 514, Critical Reading 496, and Writing 488. The averages for those that completed the survey were far below these numbers coming in at: Math 438, Critical Reading 410, and Writing 423. This did not include those that completed the survey but did not submit SAT scores at the time of admission. In the group of responders there were ten who did not submit scores. Therefore, the averages for the SAT score was based on the responses for the other 21 of the 31 who replied.

Academically, while the group of responders may have low SAT scores, their average recalculated GPA from high school was a 3.22 at the time of admission. Currently, their average GPA is at approximately a 2.89. While there was some discrepancy between their actual GPA and their self-reported GPA on the survey, most were close. Responders could have been interpreting the question to read current – as in current semester – or misunderstood current and cumulative. The GPA breakdown is as follows and can be seen in Charts 2 and 3. None of those that responded are on academic probation and only one is in jeopardy of losing their status in the College of Education, Health and Rehabilitation where they must maintain a 2.5 GPA to move forward in their EDU program. It is also important to note that none of this group had a recalculated GPA at the time of admission that fell below at 2.33.

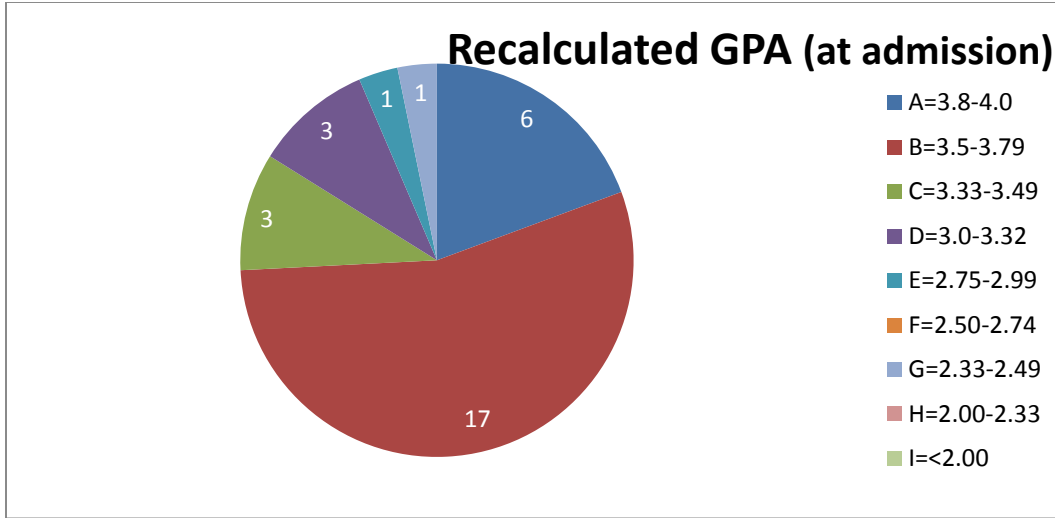


Chart 2

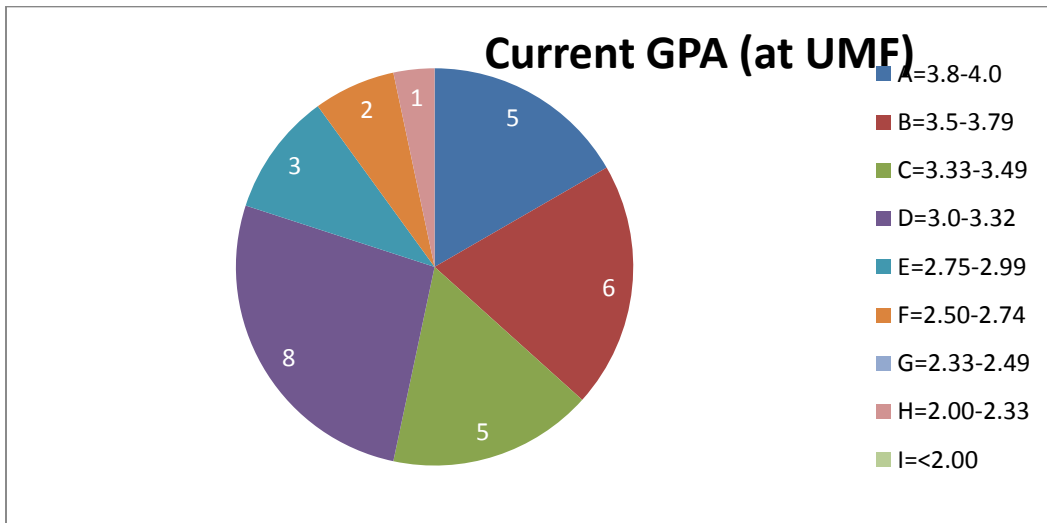


Chart 3

In the group that responded, over 90% indicated involvement in clubs, organizations, and athletics during their time at UMF. The breakdown of those groups that they belonged to or were a part of was vast and varied. Chart 4 shows the variance in their interests.

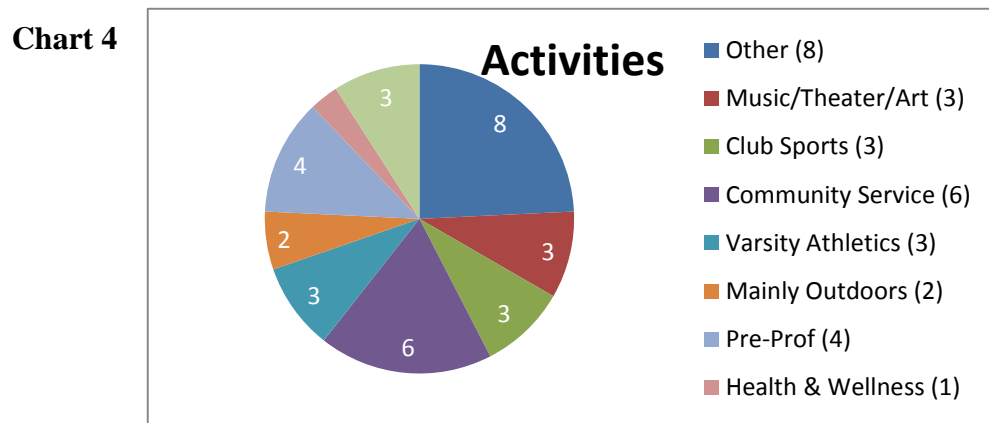
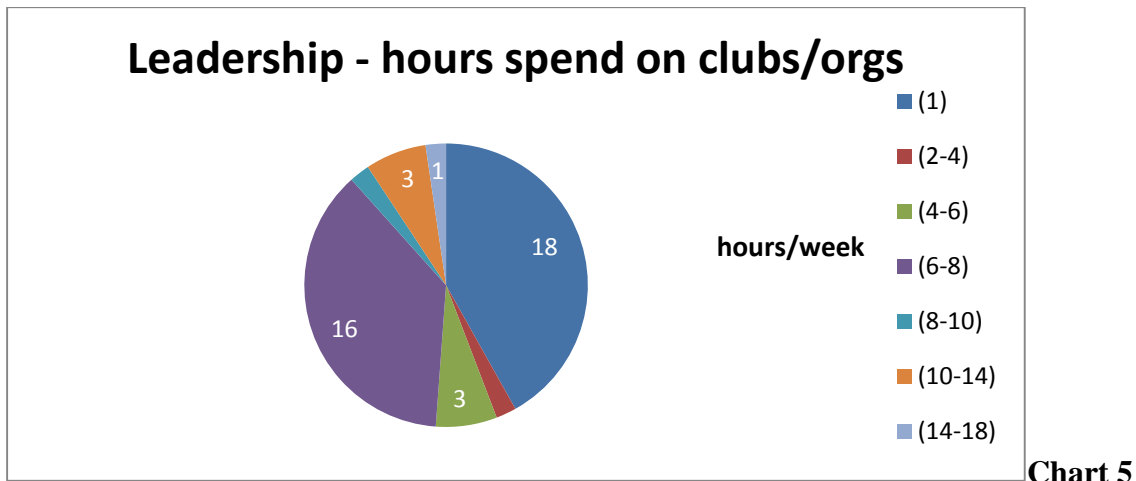


Chart 4

While the majority of the group replied “other” which is not defined, that could be due to two reasons. The first could be that they are part of an organization that does not fit the boundaries that were defined in the survey (Appendix 2) or that they just did not believe that the organization in question fit into those boundaries. Either way, this graph shows the variance in the sample group of their interests.

In addition to what they participated in, students were asked how many hours per week they believed they spend on their club/organization/ athletic pursuits. Chart 5 shows that the majority of the students believed that they spent upwards of 6-10 hours per week. Some clearly spent less but some spent far more as well. In looking closely at the data, it is interesting to note that of the responders, all those that indicated 18+ hours were varsity athletes during their season.



In addition, over 80% of those involved in clubs/organizations/athletics indicated that they held at least one position/formal leadership role in at least one organization. Many students - 52% in fact - indicated that they held a leadership role in multiple organizations. And, when

asked about the importance of their involvement in extracurricular activities - clubs, organizations, and athletics on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the strongest, the average score of the responders was a 4.31. This indicates that demonstrated leadership roles and involvement were extremely important to their well-being – personally and academically. This is in line with the groups’ extracurricular/leadership rating of an average of a 4 in the admission process (scale of 1-5 with 5 as the highest) and would indicated that this group is maintaining their ‘active’ status.

In addition to their involvement on campus, responses indicate that over 90% of these students work at an on-campus job. In addition, 16% indicated that they also work at an off-campus job. It is unclear, however, if this is during the school week, over breaks when at home, etc. All that is known about this response is that it falls during the ‘academic year.’ Of those that indicated they were employed, the majority indicated that they were working 6-8 hours per week. This included only the hours indicated at the on-campus employment. Chart 6 provides the breakdown of the hours per week students indicated they were on the job.

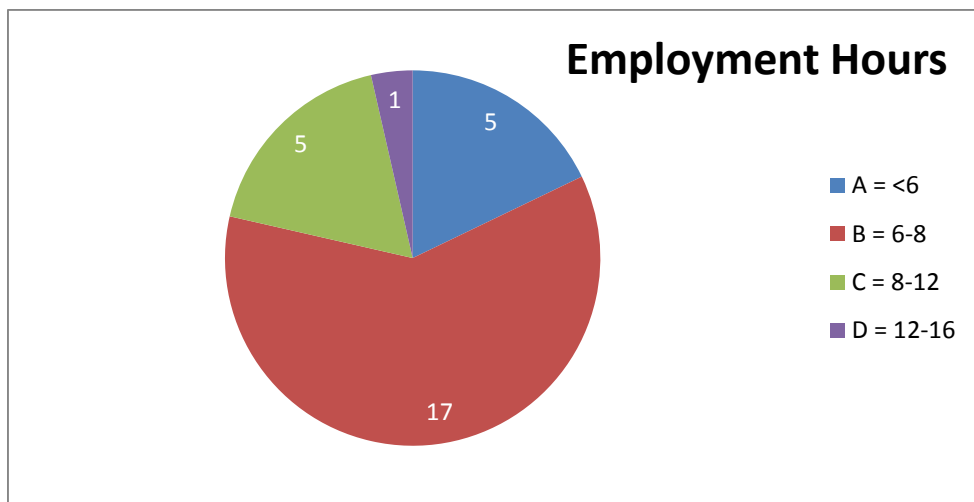


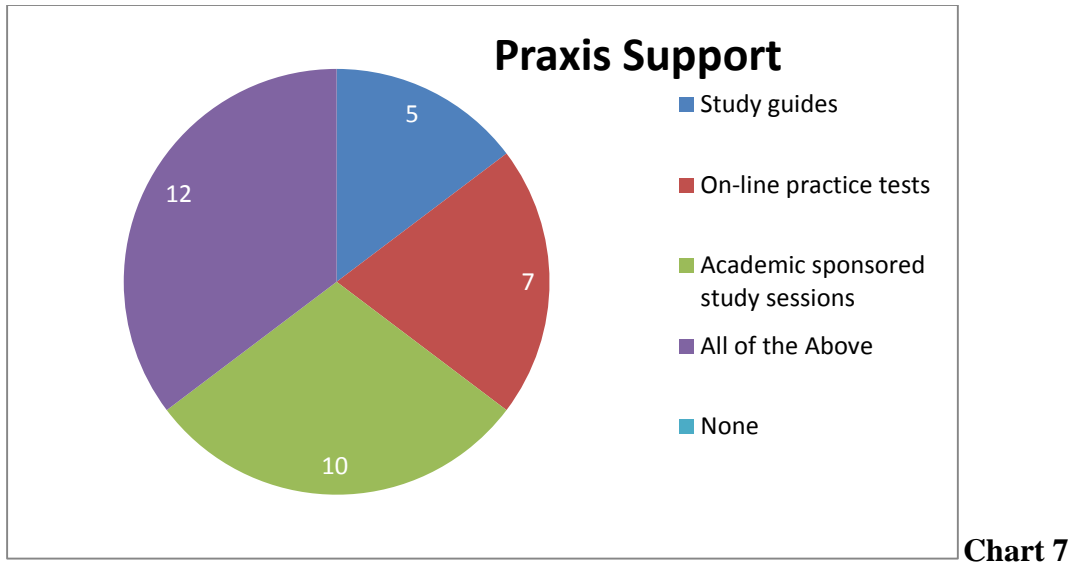
Chart 6

The final area of data findings that is quite important to examine are those surrounding PRAXIS testing. That is, the state certification exams for teacher certification that UMF requires



as benchmarks for progression through the EDU programs. Students typically complete the PRAXIS I their first year at UMF and must pass this exam in order to move into their sophomore year practicum coursework. This would have impacted ALL students in the study. PRAXIS II is the content area exams and is typically taken during the junior year prior to student teaching. Incidentally, both exams must be completed successfully in order to graduate. This would have directly impacted only the upperclassmen in this study or those with a class year entering in 2012.

The survey asked the students if they had passed the PRAXIS I exam. 100% of the respondents indicated that they had passed all three sections. 23% indicated that they had passed the PRAXIS II exam. This was actually nine of the eleven in the group that would be juniors this year. This indicates that 81% of that group has passed all their state certification exams. Of the two that have not passed, they will be retaking the exams in the coming months. The two were in different disciplines of education so there was not pattern present in their content area that could indicate a gap in learning/teaching. When asked about the importance of the use of study materials for the PRAXIS exams, students indicated on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest importance an average of 4.03. What the students used to study was varied and can be seen in the breakdown in the Chart 7 below. Clearly academic sponsored study sessions was the single most important Praxis support for students as indicated by the green in the chart followed by on-line tests and study guides. Overall, however, it appears that many individuals utilized multiple sources to prepare. None indicated using no support/study mechanisms prior to the exams.



Finally, when asked if the National Accreditation was an important factor in making their decision to apply/attend UMF, 63% indicated that it was not, however, a significant factor. 84% indicated that the fact the UMF did not require SAT scores for admission was, however, a factor in their decision to apply. Most telling was the response that the students gave when asked about the importance the support of faculty as a contributing factor to their success. Students were asked to rate their response on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest priority and the average response of the group was 4.53. Clearly students feel connected to their faculty and believe they are an important factor in their overall success.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

After the data was compiled and analyzed it became apparent that while there were some differences between the SAT threshold groups, those differences appear to be minor. In looking at the raw numbers of matriculated students from each of the academic years to education (EDU) programs at UMF in the years Fall 2012 through Fall 2014, the majority of the students who attend UMF have been from the group where the SAT scores are above the CAEP cut off indicators or the State of Maine fiftieth percentile of SAT scorers. In 2012 the group below the

SAT cutoffs was 45% of the entering EDU class; in 2013 that number was at 42%; and in 2014 that group was 40% of the entering EDU majors. Chart 8 below offers a visual of these numbers within each of these groups.

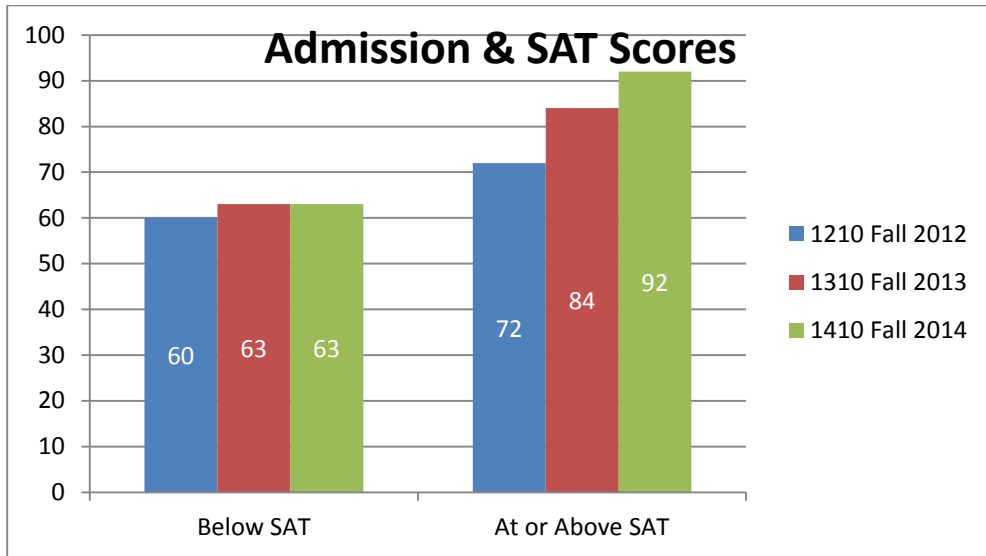
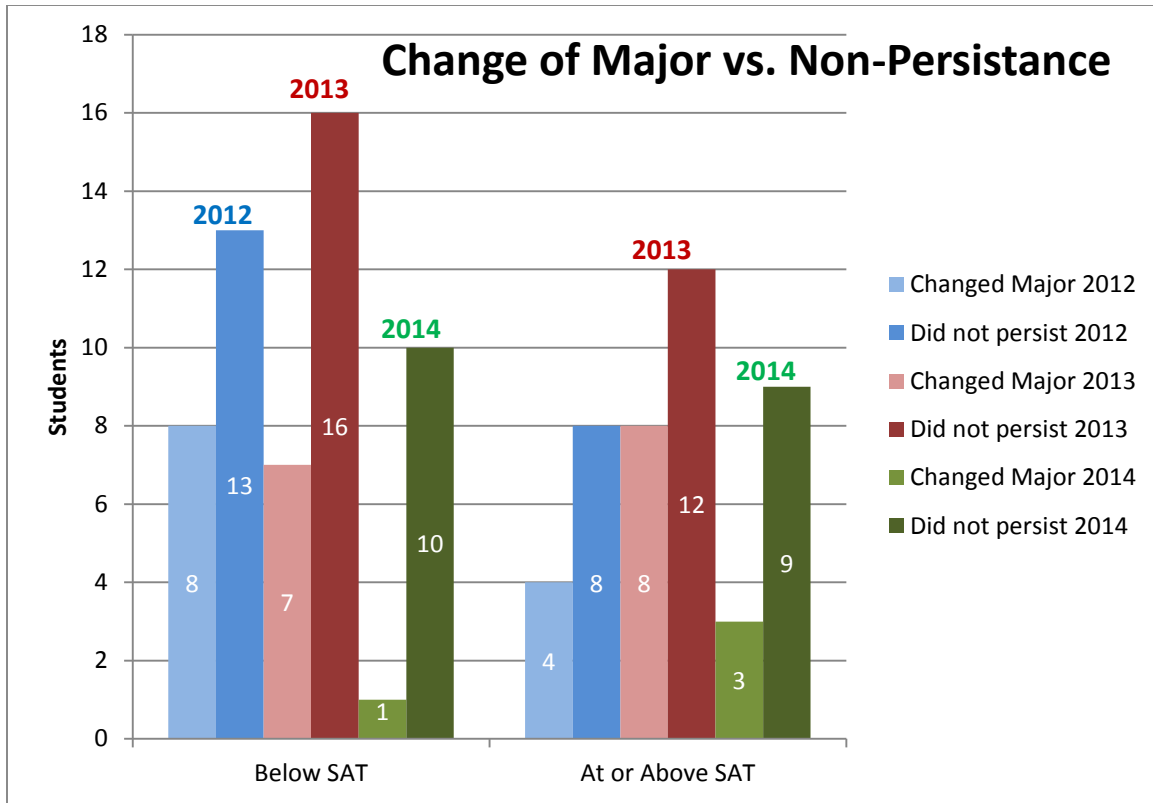


Chart 8

In digging deeper into these numbers and what they actually contain it became apparent to me that these students whose scores are below the SAT cutoffs are succeeding and should not be discarded. In looking at persistence rates of the same three classes, the persistence rates were fairly close. In fact, they only differed by ten students overall with 29 students in the above cutoff group falling out of “good standing” and 39 students in the below cutoff group falling to the same status. Chart 9 shows that these students differ only by one when it comes to those that began in EDU programs and later changed their major out of the College of Education, Health and Rehabilitation but stayed at UMF. This indicates that there exists the possibility that a student could decide they no longer want to pursue a degree in the field of education based on personal choice rather than due to the fact that they cannot move successfully through the program.



**Chart 9**

In looking more closely at the numbers of students for each of the three years that did leave UMF, the breakdown is actually quite similar between those who left because they were academically dismissed/suspended versus those who chose to leave but were in good academic standing. With the exception of 2014 entering class that was in the sub SAT group, nearly all the numbers are relatively equal and indicate very little significant differentiation. Charts 10-12 show the numbers each year for those in EDU programs who either transferred out, left to pursue something different and those who were asked to leave because they had fallen below acceptable GPA limits.

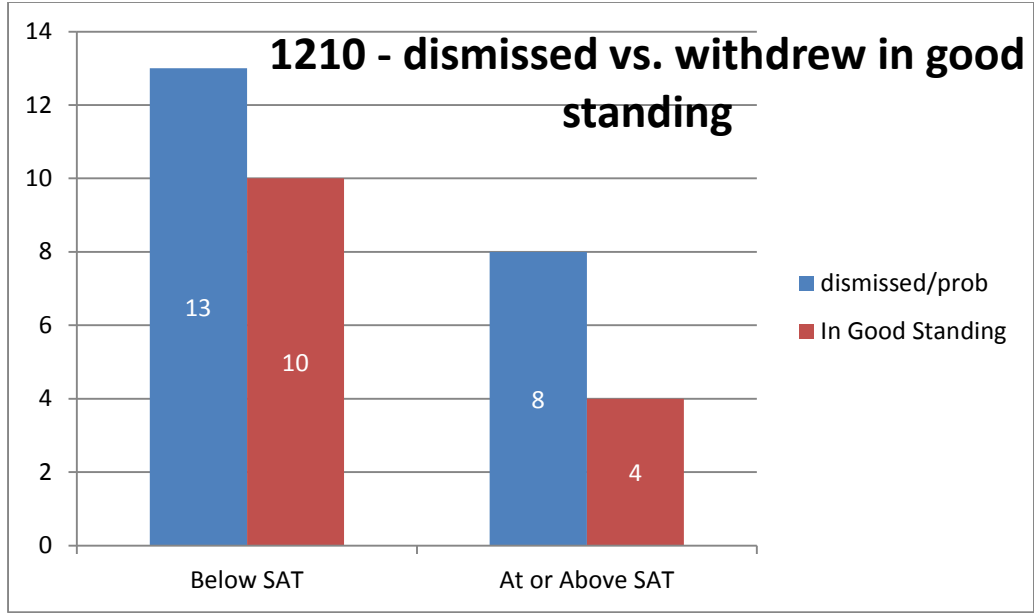


Chart 10

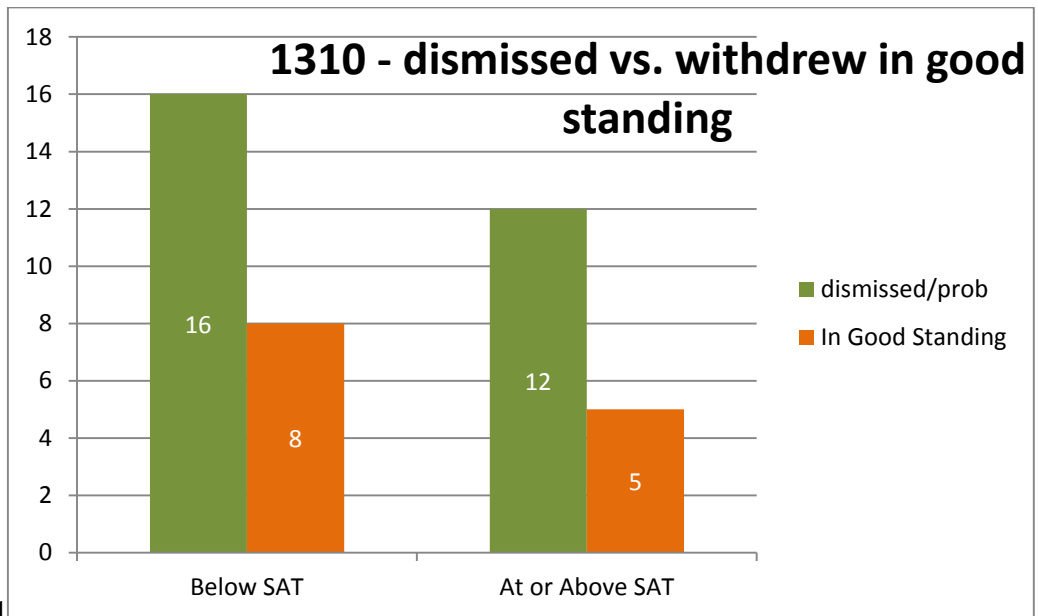


Chart 11

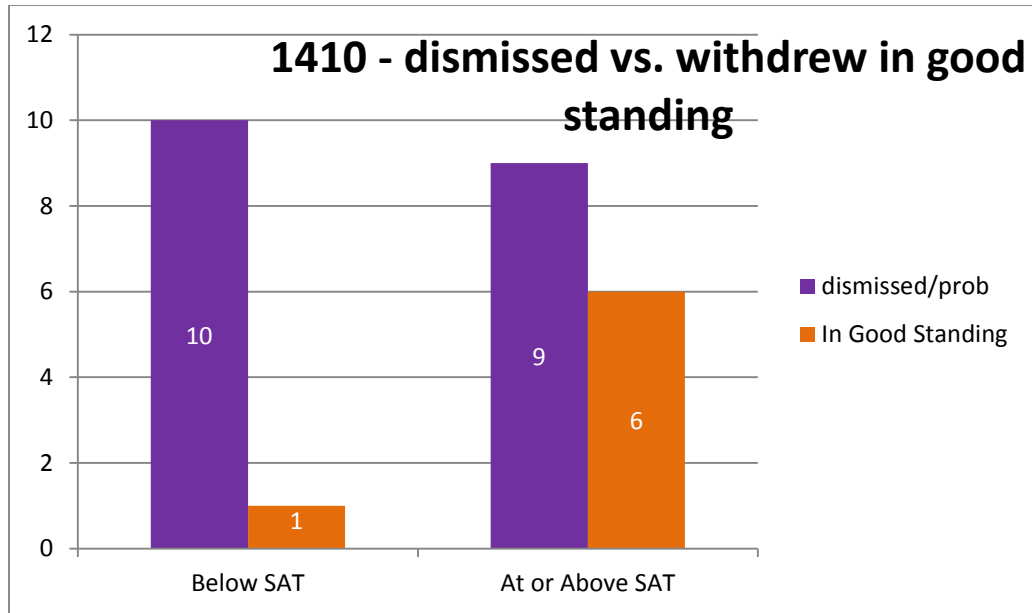


Chart 12

The average GPA for the group also shows no significant difference from those with SAT scores above the proposed cutoff. Each group had their own number of GPA struggles and challenges and that just goes to show that even a 4.0 student is not a guarantee of success in college.

Perhaps the most significant piece of evidence found in the research was that of the passing PRAXIS I scores of the group. With 100% of those that responded having passed the PRAXIS I at the time of the survey, it is evidence that cannot be ignored. Many ‘experts’ equate the SAT with a guarantee of passing scores. While there is no evidence to dispute the fact that perhaps the students in the at or above SAT cutoff group have less of a struggle in passing the PRAXIS exam, it is the belief of the researcher that the numbers indicate that the students with sub SAT scores can and will pass the exams as well. Those thirty-one students who responded are living proof that given the tools, the right environment and proper support, they can and will make it happen.

Students must pass the PRAXIS I by the end of their first year or end the first semester of their second year in order to move into their sophomore year required practicum. The PRAXIS I is typically taken during the fall of the first year. PRAXIS II is typically taken during the junior year and is a benchmark for student teaching and therefore graduation. At many institutions the PRAXIS exams are not part of the formal EDU program and a student will graduate with a degree in education but will not be certified to teach. That will fall to the student to handle on their own. At UMF, one of the cornerstones of the EDU programs is that students graduate with a degree in education AND their state of Maine certification as well as additional level up that indicates they are “highly qualified.” While the researcher agrees that the EDU programs must maintain this certification line for their programs, adding the SAT to the mix as a guide for admission is not the answer. Clearly the numbers indicate that even those below the SAT threshold can and will pass the PRAXIS.

Student involvement, sense of place and purpose and a supportive community are key to making this happen. Students in this group are involved at UMF. They are in many groups on campus as is evident by their responses. They are leaders in many definitions of the word. They are making it happen. And, they were making it happen before they applied to college and chose UMF as their school. With an average extracurricular score of a four on a one to five scale in their admission evaluation this number is one that is significant...far more significant than their SAT scores will ever be in admission to UMF. Clearly these students are seeing success. Extracurricular involvement and evidence of leadership in the college application process should be play a significant role in the application evaluation rather than being almost treated as an afterthought.

To not admit these students would be an incredible loss for our campus culture as a whole. They are contributing members of our community. And, given the declining demographics of high school graduates in the state and throughout New England, looking away from these students as not viable is just not an option. These students are succeeding and at nearly the same rate as those who fall on the higher side of the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in SAT scores. They are a good fit for UMF. Perhaps we should bear in mind that when asked if the NCATE (now CAEP) Accreditation was a significant factor in their decision to attend UMF only eleven of the thirty one responded yes. That is 35% of the group which leaves 65% who either didn't know what that meant or it truly played no role in their decision. Keep in mind, however, that 84% of the group stated that the fact that UMF did not require SAT scores was a significant part of their decision to apply. This is a telling number as well. If UMF is to move to requiring the SAT, this decision will impact not only the number of students admitted but also the number of students who choose to apply. UMF is not ready for that potential double negative in this economy and educational environment. While the scope of the study is limited, the data speaks volumes and indicates that further study should be undertaken. The numbers and voices of these thirty one students speak volumes. UMF took a chance years ago along with Bates College and now many others. It seems that it would be going backwards – literally – to reverse that decision.

After this study it is the belief of the researcher that there are a number of things that should be taken into considered in the application review process. While recalculated GPA and rigor remain the most telling pieces of a student's application, they are not the whole story. Extracurricular involvement as exhibited on the application and through narratives such as recommendations and commendations should also be given full consideration. Students who show evidence of involvement, persistence, and the ability to overcome adversity deserve an



additional boost in the evaluation process. Students who score high on this scale should be evaluated as offering potential as a student leader and future contributor to the campus. Perhaps a broader study could be done that would take this evaluation score of all students over a period of time and explore their contributions to campus. The thirty one students who participated in this study showed evidence of their leadership/involvement potential in their application. However their SAT scores would have put them in a category that could potentially deny them admission. They are a success and UMF should continue to admit students like them who, if given the opportunity, will succeed as well. This study is a start and indicates that the research should be taken further before any decisions are made to change the admission process to potentially include SAT scores.

Students looking to attend the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) to pursue a career in education should not be penalized because of low SAT scores. With evidence to show that students with lower SAT scores can persist and succeed in the education programs at UMF, it would be a terrible injustice to the campus community and the state of Maine, and beyond, to turn these individuals away. By encouraging students from various backgrounds – economic and academic – to pursue their dreams of become teachers, UMF, and other institutions with a similar mission, are helping to shape the future.

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## Appendix 1

Dear <FName>,

My name is Lisa Ellrich, and I am Associate Director of Admission here at UMF. As part of my Master's Degree Program in Leadership Studies at USM I am conducting a survey of UMF education majors and looking specifically at their involvement on campus. I am looking to see the correlations between leadership and involvement prior to your attending UMF, your current involvement on the UMF campus, and your SAT scores when you applied for admission.

As you may know, there are many who believe that the SAT is a strong predictor of success in college. However, there is other data to support that the use of the high school GPA combined with extra-curricular involvement may be just as strong, if not stronger, in predicting this success. By participating in the survey you can help me collect data on what is the stronger predictor here at UMF where I believe the small campus and close personal connection plays a significant role in building confidence and helping students reach their goals.

You have been invited to participate in this survey based on your major and your SAT scores submitted when you applied. Participation in this survey will be confidential and no names or distinguishable identifiers will be available in the results. All indicators of individual's identity will be eliminated from the results and destroyed. Participation is completely voluntary and your decision to take part will have no positive or negative impact on your academic standing. You will not receive any compensation for your participation nor will you incur any expense if you choose to participate. And, if you do choose to participate in the survey, you may skip any question for any reason.

While there is no direct benefit to you for completing this survey, I will take the information I gather, based on the results, and examine our application evaluation process here in the UMF Office of Admission. The outcome of this initial survey could play a role in future research and eventually on how we make admission decisions. The results may be shared beyond the UMaine System and could play a role in helping other institutions make decisions about admissions in the future.

- If you have any questions concerning this survey or clarification before participation, please contact me either via email at [ellrich@maine.edu](mailto:ellrich@maine.edu), by phone at 778-7054 or by stopping by the UMF Admission Office to speak with me in person. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Elizabeth Turesky at [eturesky@maine.edu](mailto:eturesky@maine.edu). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call the USM Human Protections Administrator at (207) 228-8434 and/or email [usmirb@usm.maine.edu](mailto:usmirb@usm.maine.edu). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Southern Maine has approved the use of human subjects in this research.

I hope you will seriously consider taking a few minutes to answer the questions in this survey (it should take less than ten minutes). Your responses could help make an impact on the importance of outside factors that are not always easily quantified in the admission decisions process of the future. If you choose to participate, please click on the link to the survey below. Your participation will indicate to me that you have read this statement and granted permission for me to access data as well as for you to share your responses with me. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Ellrich  
Associate Director of Admission

● *Click here to enter the survey. By doing so, I understand that I have read the conditions of participation and agree to be a willing contributor.*

**Appendix 2**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your current major?
2. Did you change your major from what you originally intended?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No

2a. If you answered YES to question #2, what was your original academic major?
3. Gender:
  - A. Female
  - B. Male
4. What is your current GPA range? (circle one)
  - A. 3.8-4.0
  - B. 3.5-3.79
  - C. 3.33-3.49
  - D. 3.0-3.32
  - E. 2.75-2.99
  - F. 2.50-2.74
  - G. 2.33-2.49
  - H. 2.00-2.33
  - I. below 2.00
5. Was your decision to enroll at UMF based at all on the education programs National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Accreditation?  
Yes  
No
6. In your college search, was the fact that UMF did not utilize the SAT in the application decision process an important factor to you?  
Yes  
No
7. When you applied to UMF, did you submit your SAT scores (even though they were not used in the decision process)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

**CAMPUS INVOLVMENT**

8. Are you involved in campus activities? (clubs/organizations/athletics, etc)

- a. Yes
- b. No

(If no, please skip to question #10D)

9. If yes, please select from the list below ALL your campus activities/involvement:

Varsity Athletics  
 Club Sports  
 Intramural Sports  
 Mainly Outdoors Activities  
 Community Service Organizations  
 Health & Wellness  
 Pre-Professional Organizations  
 Music/Theater/Art Organizations  
 Academic Affiliations  
 Religious Affiliations  
 Other

10. Of the activities listed, please rank them in order of your priorities. You may name specific clubs/orgs/sports or list groupings as above.

### **LEADERSHIP and POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

A. Of the activities listed, do you hold any leadership roles in those organizations? Please indicate from the drop down list those roles that you have held or currently hold:

President  
 Vice President  
 Treasurer  
 Secretary  
 Council Representative  
 Sub-Committee Member  
 Sub-Committee Chair  
 Other

B. Of the activities listed, please indicate the amount of time total (on average) per week that is spent with these organizations/events:

2-4 hours per week  
 4-6 hours per week  
 6-8 hours per week  
 10-14 hours per week



14-18 hours per week  
 More than 18 hours per week

- C. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being a top priority and 1 being the lowest priority, please indicate how important you believe these activities are to FEELING your overall POSITIVE COLLEGE ABOUT YOUR experience.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

- D. If you responded no to campus activities and involvement, is there any particular obstacle that prohibits you from becoming involved?
- A. Schedule
  - B. Activities Offered (not what you are looking for)
  - C. Work (on or off campus)
  - D. Travel time to and from campus
  - E. I don't believe they are important
  - F. Other (please state):
  - G. Does Not Apply

**EMPLOYMENT (on and off campus during the academic year)**

11. Do you work on campus?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. If yes to question 27, approx. how many hours per week do you work?

- a. less than 6 hours per week
- b. 6 – 8 hours per week
- c. 8-12 hours per week
- d. 12-16 hours per week
- e. more than 16 hours per week
- f. N/A

13. Do you have an off campus job during the academic year?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. If you responded yes to question 29, how many hours per week do you work?

- a. less than 6 hours per week
- b. 6 – 8 hours per week
- c. 8-12 hours per week
- d. 12-16 hours per week
- e. more than 16 hours per week
- f. N/A

**PRAXIS exams are an important part of the teacher certification process and are critical to continued progression through many education majors/degrees at UMF. Questions 15 & 16 will ask questions about these exams.**

15. Have you taken the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST or PRAXIS I)?

- a. Yes and passed
- b. No
- c. Yes and didn't pass

16. Have you taken the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PRAXIS II)?

- A. Yes and passed
- B. No
- C. Yes and didn't pass

17. Did you utilize any of the following study methods to prepare? (please indicate ALL that apply)

- a. Study guides
- b. On-line practice exams
- a. Academic Department Sponsored Study Programs/Sessions
- b. None of the Above
- c. All of the Above
- d. Other:

### **SERVICES and SUPPORT**

18. During your academic experience at UMF, how important are the support services (math clinic, writing center, tutors and/or Supplemental Instruction Program (SI))?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

19. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most important and 1 being least important, please rate the importance of building a relationship with faculty as a contributing factor to YOUR FEELING SUCCESSFUL in college:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! ☺**

### Appendix 3

Hello <FName>!

Last week I sent out an invitation for you to participate in a survey as part of my research on SAT's in the UMF Application process. Thanks so much to those of you who have already completed the survey. Your answers have been very helpful.

For those of you who have not yet completed the survey, I have attached it here again and hope you will take just a few minutes to share your responses with me. I could influence how we look at applications in the future. The survey should really take no more than 5-8 minutes to complete. Just bold or highlight your responses and send the survey back to me.

Thanks in advance for your help and participation!

***● Click here to enter the survey. By doing so, I understand that I have read the conditions of participation and agree to be a willing contributor.***

Lisa M. Ellrich  
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