

Dear Senators,

I was originally asked by the President to tell him what we should use as an admission cut-off point for SAT scores. I started to try to answer this with data from the Fall 05 cohort. I made an arbitrary decision to divide the students at the HS GPA level of 3.0. I broke the SAT scores into six levels for each GPA group of <3.0 and ≥ 3.0 . See [Table 1](#).

I and others were surprised at the results from these breakdowns. For students with a HS GPA below 3.0, SAT score made little if any difference in their performance. Even more surprising, I found that 51% of the students with a HS GPA below a 3.0 and an SAT of 1200+ were on probation at the end of the first semester.

As SAT scores increased, so did the GPA average for those with a HS GPA at or above 3.0, their first semester. Only 27% of those with an SAT below 1000 and a HS GPA of 3.0 or above were on probation. This is a much lower percentage than those with 1200+ SATs and HS GPAs lower than 3.0 as noted previously.

After finding this pattern for the 05 cohort, I analyzed the performance data for 02, 03, and 04 cohorts and found the same pattern. (See [Table 2](#)) I also looked at the academic standing as of the 06 spring semester for each cohort. Although some students pulled themselves out of probation status, the above 3.0 students continue to remain enrolled and out perform the lower GPA students at each level of their education.

Certainly, we want students who have high HS GPAs and high SATs. These are the top performers. However, those who have performed at a high level in high school are much more likely to succeed than are those who have not performed at a high level no matter what their SAT scores are.

If we raise the minimum HS GPA to 3.0 and admit students with a HS GPA of 3.5 without consideration of SAT scores to replace those whose HS GPAs are under 3.0, we should raise our success rates and increase our retention numbers.

Virginia Purtle