EFFECT OF NON-UNIFORM CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND RANK IN CLASS BY TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS UPON ADMISSIONS TO PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN TEXAS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Sandra B. Carr, B.A., M.A.

Denton, Texas

December, 1990

This study sought to determine the ways in which Texas public school districts differ in their calculation of Grade Point Average/Rank in Class (GPA/RIC), how district size affects weighting practices, and the effect of non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC on admissions to college. Descriptive and non-parametric analysis techniques were used.

Questionnaires were sent to Texas’s 1,068 public school districts (39% return) and 25 public four-year universities (96% return). A preliminary study of eleven Dallas-Fort Worth public school district handbooks provided the background information for the questions.

Texas public school districts differ greatly in the calculation of GPA/RIC by using varying combinations of coursework in their calculation and by weighting the calculated grades in varying ways.

Statistically significant differences exist in the weighting practices of Texas public school districts. Smaller districts do not weight grades as often as do larger districts.
Admissions officers responded with statistically significant agreement that they (a) are concerned that non-uniform GPA/RIC calculation methods exist, (b) feel the calculation methods should be standardized, (c) report that uniform calculation would make the admissions process easier, (d) feel that non-uniform calculation is unfair, and (e) feel the admissions process would be more fair if calculation were standardized. In addition, they prefer that the Texas Education Agency mandate standardized GPA/RIC calculation methods.

Admissions officers report that RIC is the single most important admissions criterion. The two most important admissions criteria used in combination for the Texas public four-year universities are the RIC and the Scholastic Aptitude Test/American College Test (SAT/ACT) scores whether management of enrollment is a factor or not. Further, the current usage rate of SAT/ACT scores as admissions criteria would probably not change even if GPA/RIC calculation became standardized.
Copyright by

Sandra B. Carr

1990
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>vi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Significance of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Admissions and Primary Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas and Recent Educational Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerning Standards and Access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of the Scholastic Aptitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test in College Admissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of the American College Testing Program in College Admissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Point Average and Rank in Class in College Admissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices Concerning the High School Record in Texas Public School Districts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Populations in the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the Questionnaires</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Collecting the Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return Rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Treating the Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations in Calculation of Grade Point Average/Rank in Class in Texas Public School Districts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Calculation of Grade Point Average/Rank in Class by Size of District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Non-Uniform Calculation of Grade Point Average/Rank in Class as Reported by Admissions Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Major Findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Major Findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of the Findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Further Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Educational Service Center Regions</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. School District Questionnaire</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Admissions Officers' Questionnaire</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Profile of Responding Texas Public School Districts</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Profile of Responding Texas Public Four-Year Universities</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Number of Texas Public School Districts Reporting Courses Omitted in Calculation of Grade Point Average/Rank in Class</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Methods of Adjusting and Weighting Grades of 100 as Reported by Texas Public School Districts</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Relationship Between Size of Texas Public School Districts and Weighting Practices</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Number of Texas Public School Districts Reporting Weighting Practices Based on the Number of High Schools in the Districts</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Number of Texas Public School Districts Weighting Grades Based on Membership in Educational Service Centers</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Responses of Admissions Officers to Questions Regarding Calculation of Grade Point Average/Rank in Class</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Opinions of Admissions Officers Concerning Calculation Practices</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ranking by Admissions Officers of the Importance of Criteria when Not Managing Enrollment</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ranking by Admissions Officers of the Importance of Criteria when Managing Enrollment</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, the high school achievement record is recognized as the most important of the measures used as admissions criteria by higher education institutions. In 1986, 94% of 433 surveyed four-year public universities declared that school achievement was "very important" to admissions (The College Board 1988). This same measure was also considered the most important criterion in 1932 with approximately 90% of universities using the high school record (Learned 1933). Because 95% of all incoming freshmen at a higher education institution come from their home state (The College Board 1988), the magnitude of the importance of how the Grade Point Average/Rank in Class (GPA/RIC) is calculated within a state is evident.

The methods of calculation of a student's overall GPA earned in high school determine the RIC that a student may attain. Methods differ in whether grades are not weighted or weighted and the weights that are assigned to the course work. Methods differ in the courses included in the calculation process. Academic core courses, courses required for graduation and their substitutes, and electives may be arrayed in varying configurations and be assigned differing weights according to local district guidelines. The variability
of GPA/RIC calculation is known to higher education admissions officers and those education professionals whose jobs keep them aware of the process. However, students, parents, higher education professionals not involved in admissions, and other education professionals at all levels whose jobs do not deal with high school graduation concerns may not be aware of the importance and impact of GPA/RIC calculation, nor of the many ways in which the calculation can be configured.

Test scores are the second most important admissions criterion (The College Board 1988). Currently, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) are in the process of change. The College Board is at present making efforts to change the SAT (Dodge 1989). The American College Testing Program has already completed extensive changes to the ACT, and the new test was in place for 1989 use. The changes in these tests may cause added emphasis to be placed on GPA/RIC until the new tests become familiar and the new score conversions are in place.

School reforms that have raised high school graduation requirements in the United States have had no significant effect on improving the national achievement test scores of black and Hispanic students, according to the General Accounting Office (Cage 1989). Concurrently, minority population is now approaching one-third of the national total, prompting the American Council on Education to conduct major conferences designed to develop strategies that will assist colleges and universities in recruiting and retaining
minority students, faculty, and administrators ("Educating One-Third of a Nation II: What Works" 1989). According to Texas Governor William Clements (cited by Jaschik 1988), Texas will be 50% black and Hispanic in the under-age 30 group by 2000 A.D. The potential percentage of blacks and Hispanics in graduating classes will grow. If national achievement test scores will not help to differentiate among these students, GPA/RIC could help, if calculated uniformly throughout the state.

These factors—the historic and contemporary importance of the GPA/RIC in admissions, the changes in the SAT and ACT tests, the lack of change in minority student achievement due to educational reforms, and the growth of the percentage of those minorities in Texas—all provide background reasons why the non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC in Texas high schools needs to become uniform. Prospective students may not be receiving fair treatment with regard to the admissions process because of non-uniform calculation. This study may then contribute to the moderation or modification of the present methods.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem of this study concerns the non-uniform calculation of GPA and RIC by Texas public high schools and the effect of these procedures upon admissions to public four-year higher education institutions in Texas.
Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. to determine how Texas public school districts differ in GPA and RIC calculation practices, and
2. to determine how non-uniform GPA and RIC calculation affects the admissions process of the Texas public four-year universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been used for this study:

1. In what ways do Texas public school districts differ in their calculation of GPA and RIC?
2. How do Texas public school districts differ according to size in the way they calculate GPA and RIC?
3. What is the importance of non-uniform calculation of GPA and RIC in the admissions process at the Texas public four-year universities?

Background and Significance of the Study

The most widely used and published criterion for college admission is the GPA/RIC. This criterion is calculated by dividing the grades achieved by the courses completed and then ranking that score in relation to every other score in the graduating class (Texas Education Agency 1988). However, this most requested of all measures for college admission is not uniformly
calculated among Texas public high schools and differs greatly in how it is calculated.

This non-uniform calculation is the first concern of this study and prompted a preliminary study of eleven handbooks from Dallas-Fort Worth area public school districts which revealed a wide variance among the districts in GPA/RIC calculation practices. While all eleven of the sample districts weighted grades for calculation of GPA, no two districts weighted in the same way. Each district had different weighting scales which included different populations of students. Each district included a different selection of course work in the weighting equation. The resultant GPAs would produce non-comparable RICs so that even should a hypothetical match of GPA and RIC occur in two districts, actual comparability would not exist due to the non-uniform variables used in calculation.

In this study, weighting grades by giving extra points for advanced or honors classes is the second main concern. When the College Board (1986) printed its *College Board Guide to Secondary Schools: Texas*, information was published from a wide sampling of public and private high schools. Of the entries, the largest and smallest public high schools showed a wide difference in their weighting practices. When examining the entries with respect to University Interscholastic League (UIL) classifications, 192 replies from high schools of the 5A class size and 130 replies from high schools of the 1A class size were in the guide. The class 5A schools had 1,305 or more Average Daily
Attendance (ADA) in 1985. The class 1A schools had 134 or less ADA in that same year (Bradford 1987). Of the class 5A schools only 19% reported not weighting grades for GPA/RIC, whereas, of the class 1A schools 76% reported not weighting grades for GPA/RIC.

According to Attaway (1984), significantly different results occur from the use of different methods of calculation of GPA/RIC. His dissertation study used four different methods of ranking 763 student cumulative records in Missouri. Statistically significant differences occurred in all four systems of calculation. The methods of calculation were (1) weighted grades/academic courses only and weighted grades/all courses included in calculation, (2) weighted grades/academic courses only and non-weighted grades/academic courses only, (3) weighted grades/all courses and non-weighted grades/academic courses only, and (4) weighted grades/all courses and non-weighted grades/all courses. Considerable movement occurred from one quartile to another for students at or near the different quartile break-off points. While stability existed among the valedictorian, salutatorian, and top ten class members' positions, the numbers of honor graduates (defined as those with a GPA of 90 or above) produced by the four systems of calculation, ranged from 102 to 126. These combinations of weighted and unweighted calculations in this study may have possible serious implications for the high school students of Texas. The use of quartiles of RIC is part of the admissions criteria for 16 of the 25 Texas public four-year universities (Minnie Stevens
Piper Foundation 1989). Furthermore, scholarships and loans frequently are offered on the basis of academic record or RIC.

According to the Compendium of Texas Colleges and Financial Aid Calendar (Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation 1989), which provides information on Texas public and private college admission requirements, the 25 public four-year universities in Texas require some combination of high school graduation, GPA/RIC and SAT or ACT scores. Various combinations range from high school graduation or GED at the University of Houston-Downtown to sliding scales in percentiles of RIC and scores on the SAT or ACT, as used by 16 of the 25 four-year universities.

In the United States, academic performance in high school was considered as the "single most important or very important" factor in admissions decisions in 78% of public four-year institutions in 1979, as reported in a nationwide survey which was jointly conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the College Board (College Entrance Examination Board 1980, 18). A demographic study in 1985, sponsored jointly by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, the American College Testing Program, the College Board, the Educational Testing Service, and the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, concluded that, as in 1979, public and private universities regard the high school GPA or RIC as the most important factor in admissions. Admissions test scores and the types of high school courses
taken were rated second and third, respectively, in importance (Breland, Wilder, and Robertson 1985).

Lovette concluded, in 1982, that most studies show the high school record to be the consistently best single indicator of academic success in college. He also found admissions tests and achievement tests ranking second in predictive ability.

Highly selective universities use the GPA/RIC as a primary means of identifying their admissions candidates. According to Thompson (1982), the kind of student the applicant is will be found primarily in the high school record through grades, courses taken, and RIC, if available.

Wing and Wallach, in 1971, compared actual accepted students and hypothetical choice models. They noted that the committee that assembled a class based solely on RIC admitted disproportionately more students who had the following characteristics: (1) students whose parents did not go to college, (2) students who had attended public high schools, (3) students from smaller cities and towns, (4) students not from primarily residential areas, (5) students who were from their home state and region, (6) students applying for financial aid, and (7) students who were nonwhite. According to Wing, this bias toward the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum and toward the geographical vicinity of the university was expected if students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend not to apply unless they have done relatively well in secondary school. Thus, their RIC would be higher than that of the students
from more affluent backgrounds who apply despite relatively lower grade records (Wing and Wallach 1971). This socioeconomic factor could be a significant problem if those lower level applicants were not on a uniform calculation basis with other applicants.

The Annual Survey of Colleges, 1987-88, by the College Board, reports that four-year public institutions admitted 86.5% of all incoming freshmen in 1980, 85.2% in 1985, and 85.1% in 1986. Specifically, in the Southwest region, four-year public institutions admitted 76% of the incoming freshmen (The College Board 1988). Thus, public four-year institutions, rather than private institutions, are absorbing the majority of incoming freshmen. The passage of such large percentages of graduates between high schools and public four-year institutions of higher education should be as free as possible from artificial barriers. Non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC is an artificial barrier that could be corrected. While the use of the high school record as an admission criterion has been shown to be established in Texas as well as throughout the rest of the United States, the calculation of the high school GPA/RIC that is non-uniform in the Texas public high schools could become more fair or equitable if it were uniform.

Admissions choices may carry serious implications nationwide in the practice of many state colleges and university systems of having a selective admissions process that is accomplished through the published admissions requirements of GPA/RIC. Turnbull noted in 1971 that open enrollment was
theoretically available to any high school graduate in a state. However, where spaces were scarce, the student had to show a record of high scores. Thus, the state maintained a kind of hierarchy among its colleges and universities (Turnbull 1971).

Wing and Wallach (1971) also noted that state systems distribute their own high school graduate in-coming freshmen among the state colleges and universities through the use of rank in high school class. It was noted that a "queen" institution tended to have the highest percentile rank requirements. Those students with lower academic ratings were relegated to one of the satellite institutions.

Within the state system of Texas public four-year universities there is also a hierarchy of admissions standards. The varying demands by the institutions place emphasis on GPA/RIC combined with SAT or ACT scores. Quartile location is important for sixteen out of the twenty-five institutions (Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation 1989). Because of the hierarchy of requirements, rejection letters may be accompanied by suggestions to try another state institution that has admissions criteria more suitable to the applicant, according to Don Palermo (1989), Director of Admissions at the University of North Texas.

While college admissions have always been varied in the demands made on applicants, the enormous push toward open admissions in the late 1960s and early 1970s caused an influx of thousands of students who would have
never before considered college. The higher education system had to gear up for the arrival of a new clientele that consisted of four types of potential students. These groups were those low achievers gaining entrance through open admissions, those adult and part-time learners who had not entered before because alternative admissions were not prevalent, ethnic minorities, and women (Cross 1973). The problems associated with admitting these new students centered around changing admissions requirements in dynamic ways. While these groups are no longer an unusual part of the higher education population, the members of these four groups do not seek out only open admissions institutions. Knowing that their RIC was the result of a uniform calculation process could assist these and all other types of potential students in their choices of universities.

Non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC could become more critical as time passes. According to the 1985 demographics study by Breland, Wilder, and Robertson, criteria for admissions to many four-year public institutions have changed noticeably, if not dramatically. Significantly more institutions in 1985 than in 1979 reported that they had specific high school course requirements. Between those years, the average GPA and minimum test score requirements increased for college admission. Further, consistent with these higher standards, fewer institutions now offer exceptions to their formal academic admission requirements for groups such as athletes, minorities, and alumni children (Breland, Wilder, and Robertson 1985).
Standardized test scores, the second most used admissions tool, do not surpass the GPA/RIC in usefulness. Continuing controversy over the usefulness of SAT scores is indicated by letters in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Weiss 1988). In one letter, College Board President Donald Stewart had responded to an article that suggested the elimination of the SAT as an admissions requirement by writing that colleges would not be able to evaluate their admissions applications because there is no common curriculum in the United States. John Weiss (1988), Executive Director of Fair Test of Cambridge, Massachusetts, used this letter-to-the-editor page to remind Stewart that the College Board's own literature shows that high school grades are far better predictors of college performance than test scores.

The need for this study can be seen by the importance of GPA/RIC to college admissions. The fact that 85% of first time freshmen attend college in their home state places enormous significance on the admissions standards used to qualify incoming students (The College Board 1988).

Because of the state's size, Texas' practices can have a national impact. The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1989) places Texas as the third most populous state in 1987. Further, Texas is projected to rank second in population among states by the year 2000.

Uniformity of calculation of GPA/RIC would assist in college admissions decisions. Such a state-wide norm would give future Texas public high school
graduates more confidence in their own GPA/RIC in the college admissions system.

**Delimitations of the Study**

This study is delimited by the following factors:

1. Only the practices of Texas public high schools regarding GPA/RIC calculation are considered in this study due to the large numbers of graduates involved. Texas has the third highest high school graduate group in the United States.

2. Only the admissions practices of Texas public four-year universities are considered. These institutions absorb the majority of the available "traditional" freshmen, those who have come directly from high school.

3. Only the GPA/RIC needs of those public high school graduates who immediately enter a public four-year institution directly from high school are considered for this study as compared to the GPA/RIC needs of those high school graduates who apply to community and two-year junior colleges where open admissions prevail.

**Summary**

This chapter introduces the concerns of the study and presents some of the background and the reasons why the study is significant. Chapter II reviews the literature on the subject, presenting information on the key areas introduced in this chapter. Chapter III presents the methods and procedures
used in collecting and analyzing the data of the study. Chapter IV reports the findings of the research, both major and peripheral. Finally, in Chapter V, the study is summarized and includes the conclusions that have been drawn from the major findings. Recommendations for further research and study are also presented.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


Palermo, Don, Director of Admissions, University of North Texas. 1989. Interview by author, July, Denton, Texas.


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the history of college admissions and how the primary admissions criteria evolved. Also reviewed are current educational philosophy from the national and state levels; demographic data relevant to educational needs, past, projected, and specifically related to Texas; the history of and the controversy regarding the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT); the history and use of the American College Test (ACT); the contemporary use of the Grade Point Average (GPA) and Rank in Class (RIC) in college admissions; and the rules governing Texas public high schools in how they produce the GPA/RIC required by college admissions officers.

Materials reviewed include books, professional journals, public documents, and legislative mandates. Both historical and contemporary thought on the subject are included.

College Admissions and Primary Criteria

Admission to college has been recognized for most of this century as an important and dramatic event in an American student's education career (Learned 1933). The future of the individual lies in a path extending from that
seminal point. Historically, the predominant credentials needed to cross the interface from secondary school to college have been certification based on the high school record and some sort of examination. In 1932, certification based on the high school record was used in more than 90% of American college admissions. The school record of the student was put up as evidence along with some standard that showed the attainment of certain ratings in each subject before the certificate was granted (Learned 1933).

From the beginnings, however, the curriculum, instruction, and estimates of achievement evidenced in the high school record were disparate enough that colleges set up their own tests to validate the records received from the preparatory or secondary schools (Learned 1933). An extensive and adequate record that would show a pupil's present worth after twelve years of schooling was desired. The need for the creation of a comprehensive cumulative record that both high schools and colleges could use, understand, and trust was strongly advocated by the American Council on Education in 1932. Texas law now mandates a comprehensive and uniform school record for grades nine through twelve called the Academic Achievement Record (AAR) (Texas Education Agency 1986). While appearing to be uniform in all aspects, the AARs produced for students from different public school districts differ considerably in the way the GPA is calculated. Therefore, the RIC is not uniformly determined statewide. Even though today's form in Texas seems to
fulfill the wishes of the admissions officers of 1932, the basic intent of uniformity is still elusive.

The elitist beginnings of American universities were patterned after European university models. Until 1745, Latin and Greek were the only subjects that applicants for admission to a colonial university were expected to know to fulfill entrance requirements (Rudolph 1968). Changes in curriculum came slowly, but some universities began to drop Latin and Greek from admissions requirements around 1826.

The need for more down-to-earth and relevant studies in higher education eventually brought about the formation of the land grant universities (Williams 1971). Some of these, in order to get students, lowered admissions requirements to as low as an eighth-grade education (Rudolph 1968). Such low standards brought about a backlash renewal of higher standards at other new land grant universities, such as Cornell, where some applicants were actually rejected for their lack of knowledge of geography (Rudolph 1968). Widely differing levels of admissions criteria have been a part of higher education from the very beginning.

The recognition of the public high school as a college preparatory institution became well-established by 1900 (Rudolph 1968). Preparatory schools were by then greatly outnumbered by public high schools, and this situation substantially increased the number of students ready for and interested in going to college.
By 1910, as many as thirty different subjects were accepted as admission criteria to the University of California (Rudolph 1968). This widened the range of student interests demonstrated by the expanded public high school curricula.

Going to college had changed from an event for the elite to an event for the masses with more universal access to higher education institutions. The increasing number of high school students who enrolled in college, then, as now, put a strain on practices such as admission (Thelin 1985).

The Carnegie Foundation had a great impact on many aspects of college development, including tightening admissions standards (Rudolph 1968). The diversity among the nation's secondary school standards led to a definition of the "Carnegie Unit" which could be used to judge applicants' transcripts in a more uniform manner. This unit was described in 1908 as any one of four courses carried for five days a week during the secondary school year (Rudolph 1968).

College admission requirements were so different from one college to another that in the 1890s, the idea for a College Entrance Examination Board began (Rudolph 1968). Secondary school principals complained that almost every student who was preparing for admission to a different college needed a different course of study in order to be admitted. The National Education Association (NEA) became involved in trying to solve this problem in 1891 (Fuess 1950). By 1892, the NEA met and formed a committee that
investigated the entire subject of the relations between schools and colleges. From these beginnings came guidelines for courses of study and fixed, minimum standards for secondary schools.

The NEA in 1895 surveyed sixty-seven leading colleges from all across America as to their entrance requirements. It was agreed that while it was inadvisable for all colleges to have the same entrance requirements, it was hoped that they would state their requirements in terms of national units, or norms, and that the secondary schools would construct their curricula from these specifications (Fuess 1950). Much controversy continued, and the College Entrance Examination Board was begun as a consequence of the gradual clarification of needs from both secondary schools and colleges concerning admission to college.

The organizational of the College Entrance Examination Board was formally announced on November 17, 1900. There were twelve institutional and charter members. From the outset, the organization was commonly referred to as the College Board (Fuess 1950).

The advantages of the uniform entrance examinations had to be sold to the potential users (Fuess 1950). The examination subjects were agreed upon, and the first examinations were held during the week of June 17, 1901, at sixty-seven locations in the United States.

The first exams were essay papers. The initial 973 candidates wrote 7,889 papers which were graded by thirty-nine readers (Fuess 1950).
In the following years the exams themselves were scrutinized and changed as problems became apparent. When student scores dropped on sections of the exam, secondary schools began to change their curricula to match the tests. Further, colleges began to adjust their admission requirements to conform with definitions adopted by the College Board (Fuess 1950). The power of the College Board tests began to be felt throughout the educational community at the secondary and college level.

After twenty-five years, the examinations were attended by 19,775 candidates at 316 locations throughout the world. The number of readers needed to fulfill the needs of such a body of test takers grew to 626 (Fuess 1950).

Not content with judging what knowledge a student could demonstrate, the College Board pressed on to make use of World War I advances in the scientific measurement of human intelligence (Fuess 1950). The concept of an aptitude, or intelligence level, needed for college work became apparent. The SAT was thus born and first given on June 23, 1926.

Even before the first test was administered, the College Board warned against the use of the test as an infallible means of predicting future success (Fuess 1950). However, school faculties were already hoping to use this measure as a student Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and a permanent label.

As time passed, more and more candidates took only the SAT and avoided the College Board's essay format tests (Fuess 1950). Then World War
II came, and mass testing of recruits became the business of the College Board. The rapid expansion of testing services led to the formation of the Educational Testing Service on December 19, 1947.

There was constant controversy as to the merits and possibilities of the essay test versus the objective format (Fuess 1950). The objective tests soon became paramount as machine scoring became available (Angoff 1971). However, the content of the questions depended on the ability of the IBM 850 scoring machine, so that questions were arranged to meet the limitations of the machine.

The American College Testing Program did not begin until 1959. This was the first and is still the only major college entrance exam test to compete with the SAT. The use of the ACT made the standardized college entrance test a more common and accepted articulation tool in college admissions (Menacker 1975).

The magnitude of the testing programs is evidenced by the 840,000 high school seniors who take the ACT annually, and the 1.1 million high school students who annually take the SAT (Evangelauf, 1988d). These tests have advanced dramatically in scope and influence from the first uses to validate high school records.

At no time in the history of college admissions was one admission method foremost. However, the high school record and the evolved entrance exam were the standard admission tools in the beginning and still are today.
Texas and Recent Educational Philosophy
Concerning Standards and Access

In response to public concerns over the problems in education in the United States, various governmental bodies have studied what is needed to further the future of educational excellence. The National Commission on Excellence in Education produced A Nation at Risk in 1983. Certain elements of the recommendations have had various degrees of impact on Texas education.

The commission recommended that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened. The "new basics" were to be four years of English, three years of mathematics, three years of science, three years of social studies, one-half year of computer science, and two years of a foreign language (for college-bound students, especially) (Gardner 1983).

Further recommendations were that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards (Gardner 1983). Grades were to be indicators of academic achievement to show readiness for further study. Also, four-year colleges were to raise their admissions requirements and to let all potential applicants know the level of course work required and levels of achievement expected on standardized achievement tests in each of the five "new basics."

Most closely tied to college admission standards was the recommendation that standardized tests of achievement (not to be confused
with aptitude tests) should be given at major transition points, especially from high school to college (Gardner 1983). These tests should certify the student’s credentials, identify the need for remediation, or identify the readiness for advanced work. The National Commission’s specific reference to aptitude tests directly affects the status of the SAT.

Texas was ahead of many states in carrying out the recommendations of the National Commission. According to the policy statement, A State in Motion in the Midst of a Nation at Risk, approved by the State Board of Education, July 11, 1983, many efforts were already under way that would meet the National Committee recommendations. In 1979, curriculum reform studies began. In 1981, House Bill 246 passed, providing dramatic curriculum reform, especially with regard to the development of essential elements for all curriculum subjects (Butler 1983).

The Texas State Board of Education in its report paid attention to the rising ethnic diversity of Texas. Changes in the various ethnic categories were dramatic from 1972-1973 to 1982-1983. Hispanic student membership increased 32.9%. Black student membership went up 1.5%. American Indian student membership went up 17%. Asian membership increased an astounding 629.2%. During this period, white student membership dropped 3.1% (Butler 1983).

In addition, House Bill 246 brought Texas high school graduation requirements in line with the National Committee guidelines (Butler 1983).
Texas was in the process of meeting many of the National Committee
guidelines or was actively preparing to do so.

In 1987, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Select
Committee of Higher Education published the Texas Charter for Public Higher
Education (Temple). It was the first such policy document of its kind adopted
by any state legislature. Its purpose was to reaffirm "a commitment at the
highest levels of state government to improve academic quality and to bring
educational opportunity within the reach of every young Texan" (Temple 1987,
iii).

Access to higher education should be available to all those who seek
and qualify for admission, according to the charter (Temple 1987). Financial
or social status should not be a barrier, and populations that have not in the
past participated fully in higher education should be actively recruited.

One of the powers of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board,
delegated to the board by the state legislature, is to establish enrollment limits
at all institutions of higher education (Temple 1987). A possible consequence
of these enrollment caps in a rising student population could be shifts in
enrollment among the state institutions.

In April 1989, the Texas Educational Opportunity Plan for Public
Higher Education was published (Texas Higher Education Coordinating
Board). The philosophy expressed in this document is that all the people of
Texas should be assured an opportunity to participate in higher education at
their highest achievable level, regardless of race, ethnicity, or income.

Minority recruitment, enrollment, and retention are high priorities of this plan. The plan attempts to specifically address the underrepresentation of blacks and Hispanics in the Texas higher education system, relative to white student population.

According to the plan, minorities in Texas will comprise 40% of the entire population and 45% of the college-aged population by the end of the century (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 1989). The plan calls for college student representation to mirror the population representation for blacks and Hispanics.

The points at which minorities tend to leave the education pipeline include the transition from twelfth grade to freshman year in college (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 1989). To address this concern, more effective and thorough cooperation between four-year institutions, community colleges, and secondary schools must be implemented.

The first statewide objective promulgated for undergraduate recruitment is to raise the college enrollment rates of black and Hispanic high school graduates to at least equal that rate for whites (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 1989). The plan states that some means for fairly and equitably providing transition to higher education for these targeted groups needs to be achieved.
In relation to the at-risk reports and opportunity plans concerned with standards and access, Texas ranks in either second or third place in most of the education statistics which are relevant to trends in higher education. The size of Texas enrollments places the state and what it does in education standards and access in the national spotlight.


In ethnicity, Texas ranks second in the nation in Hispanic enrollment in elementary and secondary schools (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989). Only New Mexico has a larger percentage of Hispanic population in this category.

Future higher education enrollments also depend on the population that graduates from public high schools. Texas had the fifth largest number of graduates in 1969-1970, but had moved to second by 1986-1987 (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989).

The size of the public higher education system in Texas has changed. Texas was third in total enrollment in public higher education in Fall, 1970. By
the Fall of 1987, Texas was second. There was a 15.7% growth in such enrollment from 1980 to 1987 (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989).

Since the vast majority of students remain in their home state to enter higher education institutions, this creates an obligation of a state to its citizens. Texas ranks second at a .91 ratio of students remaining in their home state to total enrollment. Only California and Oklahoma, tied at .92 ratio, retain more students (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989).

Minority enrollment in higher education has an impact on the concerns that colleges must address. Texas, in Fall, 1986, had the third largest enrollment of blacks and the second largest enrollment of Hispanics in the nation (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989).

Another category of student population that is growing, besides the minority population, is that of the student aged twenty-two and up. This student is older than the "traditional" college freshman, usually defined as being from below eighteen years old to twenty-one years of age. Nationwide, students twenty-two years old and older made up 45% of the higher education population in 1970. The projection for 1990 is that 56% of the total enrollment in higher education will be twenty-two years old and older (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989).

In addition to overall population, the percentage of students in public higher education institutions in Fall, 1987 who were twenty-two years old and over was 55% (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989). Older students are
taking places in the available admissions openings of public institutions. Any schools that must cap their enrollments create competition among all potential students for the finite numbers of admissions openings.

**The Role of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in College Admissions**

So many controversies surround the use of the SAT that an examination of its background may help to clarify its uses and abuses. It is a force to be reckoned with in college admissions and at the secondary school level because of the pervasiveness of its use in Texas and throughout the rest of the United States. Approximately 1.1 million high school students a year take the SAT nationwide (Evangelauf 1988d). In Texas, in 1988, 45% of the high school graduates took the SAT (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989).

Bracey (1989) entitled his 1989 *Phi Delta Kappan* article, "The 150 Million Redundancy," in which he states that no amount of criticism seems to stop the test from being coached and taken. He relates that by adding his own estimates of costs to those reported in *U.S. News and World Report*, he believes that approximately $150 million are spent on SAT coaching and also on SAT, Preliminary SAT, and related materials.

The SAT is a measure of basic reasoning abilities in the two areas of verbal and mathematical thought according to Angoff (1971). It is intended to supplement the school record and other information about a student for the purpose of determining competence for college work. It is meant to provide
help in discriminating over most of the range of academic ability for admission to college. As a measure, it may provide help by being consistent with other applicant information; but, it may be most helpful if it sounds a warning bell when it is inconsistent with the other information available about a candidate (Angoff 1971).

The SAT was intended to help redress possible errors and inconsistencies in secondary school records. It was also intended to supplement the old essay examinations that were tailored to specific curricula (Angoff 1971). The direct measurement of basic abilities was stressed. This was meant to overcome any failures in subject-matter achievements. It was also meant to flag those candidates whose high school record reflected extraordinary effort rather than basic reasoning ability.

Actual practice finds the SAT scores often made part of a formal regression equation along with the high school record and, possibly, other factors (Angoff 1971). The SAT inclusion in such admission criteria began to be seen as contributing to the prediction of college grades as early as 1927.

It is recognized that the high school record is a reflection of local curriculum and local grading practices so that the use of the SAT as a single metric for all admissions applicants put the candidates on an even level. This helps to identify the aptitudes of students from unknown secondary school backgrounds (Angoff 1971).
The predictive validity of the SAT was first studied in 1926 (Angoff 1971). In terms of College Board recognized studies seeking to predict first-term or first year average grades in college by using SAT-verbal (SAT-V) and SAT-mathematical (SAT-M) scores along with high school records, the high school record consistently outperforms the SAT-V and the SAT-M for validity. In terms of predictive validity, the high school record consistently outperforms the SAT-V and the SAT-M for students in liberal arts, general programs, engineering, science, business, and education. The multiple correlations of the SAT-V, the SAT-M, and the high school record raise the predictive validity by only a few points above the high school record alone (Angoff 1971).

Crouse and Trusheim (1988) argue that the high school record that the Educational Testing Service uses in its studies is defined as only grades or RIC. These are the very criteria used by those Texas universities which have RIC admissions criteria published (Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation 1989). Therefore, the use of the SAT does not necessarily improve Texas admission practices even though it is widely used.

Crouse and Trusheim (1988) show that for the vast majority of universities, an admissions policy that ignores the SAT scores will admit almost the same freshman class as an admission policy that includes the SAT scores.

In 1985, 15% of the four-year public universities nationwide either did not review applicants’ academic qualifications or admitted any high school graduate (Crouse and Trusheim 1988). This is far lower than the 36% of
Texas four-year public universities who do not publish requirements for RIC combined with SAT or ACT scores (Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation 1989). The majority of Texas four-year public universities, though, rely on RIC combined with SAT or ACT scores.

The highly critical Nairn/Nader report on ETS shows that the College Board's own data reflect a systematic relationship between SAT scores and parental income (Nairn and Associates 1980). Children of professionals score higher than children of white-collar workers, who score higher than children of blue-collar workers. Also, this scoring pattern occurs across races, wherein the scores seem to reflect class rather than race. This type of argument is one of many that purport to show that the SAT is not a fair admission tool.

The success of the SAT as a prediction tool is also under attack as being much less valid than the use of achievement tests in conjunction with high school grades (Nairn and Associates 1980). The use of the high school record in conjunction with achievement tests and SAT scores does produce more validity than any one of the criteria alone.

Another of the misuses of the SAT is using the test scores as a kind of shorthand among admissions officers to compare notes on the quality of freshman classes. Using test scores produces hard data which are irrefutable when compared with narrative criteria in a student's admission folder (Dixon 1981). Scores are sometimes perceived as the sole admissions criteria when they are only a part of it. The danger here is that while admissions insiders
may know that a student's fate does not hang only on test scores, the general public does not know this; and, in fact, may believe erroneously that the SAT score is the primary deciding factor in the admissions decision process.

The ranking of colleges by SAT and ACT average test scores has come under fire. *U.S. News and World Report* has changed the way it conducts its survey of America's top universities because of rebukes from university presidents (Heller 1988) and the presidents of both the American Council on Education and the College Board (Evangelauf 1988c).

Following these changes in reporting practices, forty-four colleges stopped reporting SAT and ACT average scores so as not to discourage applicants. The schools involved decided that such reporting limited their attracting the range of applicants needed to enable them to make the kinds of admissions choices they wanted to make (Wilson 1989).

Major standardized-test makers have also endorsed a new code of fair practices. This pledge is to produce tests that are fair and accurate and to provide test takers with timely and easily understood score reports. The American College Testing Program and the College Board both endorsed this pledge (Evangelauf 1988a).

Blacks have a high stake in the use of SAT scores in college admissions criteria. The use of the SAT may exclude as many as 80 to 90% of black applicants from some schools (Crouse and Trusheim 1988). Further, while minorities, in general, have made gains on SAT and ACT tests, blacks have
not made gains as great, and their scores are not as high as other minorities and are far below the scores of whites during the same period (Evangelauf 1988b).

Hispanics, especially Mexican-Americans, have made gains on both SAT and ACT scores. However, they still fall behind the scores of whites in all categories (Evangelauf 1988b).

The concerns about misuse of information, the questions about what information is gained over the high school record alone, and the charges of possible bias against minority test-takers are the principal controversies that surround the SAT. These concerns, however, do not keep the SAT from being one of the two most-used admissions tests in the nation.

The Role of the American College Testing Program in College Admissions

The American College Testing Program garners neither the publicity nor the controversy that surrounds the SAT and the Educational Testing Service. A survey of the available literature on college admissions tests turned up very little written material on the ACT. Journal articles, books, and general information sources do not contain much about the history or use of the ACT.

The Chronicle of Higher Education offers one of the few sources for current information about the ACT. This lack of information poses the question of "why," since approximately 840,000 high school seniors, nationwide, take the ACT annually (Evangelauf 1988d). According to Owen (1985), the
ACT is by far the most popular college admissions test in some parts of the West and Midwest.

Further, 51,609 Texas high school seniors who graduated in May, 1989, took the ACT (Henderson 1990). Approximately 40% of Texas high school seniors take the ACT every year.

ACT score activity is not nearly so available either. The Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 (1989) includes five pages of data about the SAT, but only one page of ACT score information. That sole page traces the scores from 1970 to 1988.

The ACT is styled as an academic achievement test and is meant to be reflective of high school curriculum requirements deemed necessary for college performance (Henderson 1990). The test that was given until 1989 contained sections for English, math, social studies, and natural science (Digest of Education Statistics, 1989 1989). The test was substantially revised for 1989, and the social studies and natural science sections were removed (Evangelauf 1988d). Replacing them were sections testing reading and science reasoning. The revised test continues to have a multiple-choice format but has been lengthened by 15 minutes to 175 minutes. The number of questions has risen from 215 to 219 (Evangelauf 1988d). The new reading section has four prose passages from the areas of fiction, humanities, natural sciences, and social studies. The new science section covers biology, chemistry, physics, and the physical sciences.
The old and new tests are not directly comparable, and tables must be used to convert the scores for purposes of understanding the new results (Evangelauf 1988d). The change-over period will leave all persons concerned with doubts as to the meanings of the new scores.

The fact that the ACT is an achievement test seems to eliminate it from much of the controversy that surrounds the supposed "aptitude" function of the SAT. However, the ACT has been charged with bias against women and minorities. This has been denied by ACT's vice-president for public affairs, David S. Crockett (Evangelauf 1988d).

The perceived need for the leveling or validating of high school GPA/RIC information is one of the functions for which the ACT and SAT are currently used. This function of the tests has been reported by the test makers themselves (Henderson 1990; Weiss 1988).

Grade Point Average and Rank in Class in College Admissions

College admissions criteria have historically centered on two types of information--the high school record and some sort of standardized or widely administered test. Large studies of admissions criteria back up the use of these two measures of readiness for college work.

In 1980 a study was conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the College Board, the results of which were published under the title, Undergraduate Admissions:
The Realities of Institutional Policies, Practices, and Procedures. Certain minimum admissions standards reported by survey respondents were involved.

The most common minimum standard was the high school GPA, used by 40% of the survey institutions (American Association of Collegiate Registrars 1980). This was the largest category of stated minimum admission standards.

Significant proportions of both public and private four-year universities used the percentile rank in the high school class, along with the total SAT or ACT scores. Use by institutions ranged from 21% to 44% (American Association of Collegiate Registrars 1980). For four-year public institutions, 43% used high school GPA and 33% used high school RIC.

Four-year public universities reported that GPA or RIC was "the single most important factor" (43%) or a "very important factor" (35%) in their admissions process (American Association of Collegiate Registrars 1980, 18).

An especially relevant portion of this survey asked the respondents about their preferences in how GPA and RIC were determined. In order to compute GPA or RIC, the course work included is chosen by the high schools. The responses of the surveyed colleges attest to the wide range of types of computation expected or preferred.

For computing the RIC, the four-year public university respondents preferred all subjects completed (21%); academic subjects only (15%); all subjects, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses (16%); and academic subjects only, with extra weight given to honors and
advanced placement courses (17%). Thirty-one percent stated no preference or gave no response (American Association of Collegiate Registrars 1980).

The preferred bases for computation of GPA were all subjects (23%), academic only (17%), all subjects weighted (15%), academic subjects only weighted (16%), and no preference or no response given (31%) (American Association of Collegiate Registrars 1980). These figures represent 333 responding four-year public institutions.

In the 1985 report sponsored by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American College Testing Program, the College Board, the Educational Testing Service, and the National Association of College Admission Counselors, minimum admission standards for four-year public institutions rose to 51% use of high school GPA and 37% use of high school RIC (Breland, Wilder, and Robertson). High school GPA use ranged in selective four-year public institutions from 41% to 55%. In 1985, as in 1979, public and private universities overall reported GPA or RIC as the most important factor in admissions with admissions test scores being second and high school course work being third (Jaschik 1988).

It was noted in the study that four-year public institutions had increased their admissions requirements (Breland, Wilder, and Robertson 1985). Further, minority enrollment in higher education institutions was expected to rise dramatically from 1985 to 1990.
In 1988, the Summary Statistics from the College Board reported that high school achievement was rated as "very important" by four-year public institutions at the 94% level. Test scores rated at the 68% level.

The percentage of students who were state residents attending their own state's four-year public institutions was reported as 86.5% in 1980, 85.2% in 1985, and 85.1% in 1986 (The College Board 1988). Further, freshman enrollment from the home state at four-year public institutions was 76% as opposed to 24% for four-year private institutions. The percentage of students from within the state served by the four-year public institutions demonstrates the enormity of the obligation that these colleges and universities have toward their home constituency.

Practices Concerning the High School Record in Texas Public School Districts

Texas has either been ahead of national calls for excellence in education (Gardner 1983) or in the process of implementing such reforms (Butler 1983) in the past decade. In order to be in the forefront of educational reform, the Texas legislature mandated reforms, the avowed purpose of which was to create a school system dedicated to excellence (Texas Education Agency 1988). Among these reforms was the state-wide adoption of a standardized Academic Achievement Record (AAR) of high school work.

Certain sources are crucial to the way in which Texas school districts produce the AAR which also serves as the transcript that is sent to college
admissions officers. The *State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum* and *Texas Education Agency Bulletin 742* prescribe those rules that districts must follow. There are also areas in which districts have discretion as to how and what they may implement.

Graduation requirements for Texas high schools are mandated in three types of high school programs. Twenty-one units of credit are required to receive the high school diploma which is the same for all graduates (*Texas Education Agency 1988*). Seals affixed to the AAR designate the type of program the student has completed. The High School Program requires that twenty-one credits be completed. The Advanced High School Program requires that twenty-two credits be completed. The Advanced High School Honors Program requires that twenty-two credits be completed, of which five must be designated as honors courses. The completion of these programs is designated on the AAR along with the complete record of all course work done. The AAR also records the student's RIC, number of persons in the class, date of ranking, and GPA.

*Texas Education Agency Bulletin 742* provides the instructions for completing the AAR (*Texas Education Agency 1986*). Rank is defined as the standing that an individual has with respect to other classmates. The number in class is the total number of students in a graduating class. The GPA is determined by adding the total number of grade points earned and dividing
this sum by the number of courses attempted. No alphabetical grades are used on the AAR.

The nature of this AAR does meet some of the much desired criteria for uniformity in high school records hoped for in the past (American Association of Collegiate Registrars 1980; Fuess 1950; Learned 1933; Rudolph 1968). Uniformity is not required, however, in the GPA computation and weighting of grades which could give equalized recognition to the honors and advanced placement courses attempted by the student.

The definition of grade points may vary from district to district. This definition must be shown on the reverse side of the AAR. The numerical point value for each grade should be specified (Texas Education Agency 1986). Districts may weight honors or other courses, but weighting is left to the discretion of the district; and the way in which the weighting is accomplished is not mandated.

The survey conducted in 1980 by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the College Board demonstrated that admissions officers are ambivalent about which method of GPA or RIC computation they prefer. Nonetheless, these GPA and RIC criteria are very important to the admissions process. The GPA which is non-uniformly calculated yields the RIC that is used by sixteen out of twenty-five of the Texas four-year public universities (Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation 1989).
Examination of high school handbooks demonstrates that the types of courses included in calculation, the number of courses included in calculation, and the scales of numerical values for grades differ widely throughout the state. Some districts weight grades and give extra points to honors and advanced placement courses. Some districts give weights for regular academic course work but not for special education work. Some districts do not weight course work at all.

Evidence as to the differences in weighting practices that exist may be found in the College Board Guide to Secondary Schools: Texas (The College Board 1986). The public high school weighting practices represented in that guide differed according to the size of the school. Smaller high schools did not weight grades as often as did larger high schools.

Summary and Discussion

A survey of the literature demonstrates that certain major concepts exist in the college admissions process and its relationship to the high school record. Foremost among all admissions criteria is the high school record. By many historical and contemporary measures, the high school record ranks above all other criteria as an admission tool. From the high school record where the course work is averaged to produce the GPA, the rank ordering of these grades culminates in the RIC used by the majority of Texas public four-year universities as one of two major entrance requirements. Texas public school
districts do not calculate the GPA/RIC in a uniform manner, and smaller districts may not weight grades as often as do larger districts.

The second most used criterion in college admissions is some sort of standardized college entrance examination. Today, in Texas as in most of the nation, that means the SAT or the ACT. Approximately two million of these tests are taken annually. Much controversy exists about the SAT as an admissions test while the ACT is not attacked so frequently.

An awareness of the changing higher education population is revealed in national and state reports as the minority segments of the United States society grow. Specifically, in Texas, there is a concerted effort to bring minorities successfully into higher education in increasing numbers.

Texas is experiencing population growth in all areas, and will be second in total state population by 2000 A.D. Consequently, Texas also leads the nation in second or third place in educationally-related population statistics. The number of Texas students affected by any education practice is so large that those practices which may adversely affect students should be examined and remedied. GPA/RIC, as the most used and accepted admission criterion, may not be as fair or helpful as it could be if uniformly calculated for all public high school graduates in Texas, a state whose population is large and growing.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


Crouse, James, and Dale Trusheim. 1988. The case against the SAT. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.


Henderson, Roy D., Assistant Director of Assessment Services, American College Testing Program. 1990. Phone interview by author, June, Southwestern regional office, Austin, Texas.


CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Chapter III contains information about the methods and procedures of this study. Included are details of the populations involved, the construction of the two questionnaires, the methods for collecting the data, the return rates, and the methods of treating the data applicable to each research question.

Populations in the Study

The school district questionnaire was mailed to the 1,068 superintendents of the various public school districts in Texas, a 100% population attempt. The cover letter requested that the superintendent forward the questionnaire to the person in the district most familiar with the calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA) and Rank in Class (RIC) for graduating seniors.

The admissions officers' questionnaire was mailed to the directors of admissions of the twenty-five public four-year universities in Texas, a 100% population attempt.
Construction of the Questionnaires

To discover the ways in which GPA/RIC calculation differs among Texas public school districts and their high schools, a questionnaire was constructed that would provide data as to how school districts calculated GPA/RIC. The bulk of the questions reflect information obtained from eleven Texas school district handbooks gathered from Dallas-Fort Worth area school districts. Common, though non-uniform, practices used by all districts in this sample became the basis for the questions in the survey instrument located in Appendix B. Additional profile information about the districts was also obtained and is located in Appendix D.

To discover the possible relationship between the size of a district and whether it weighted its grades, specific questions were included for statistical analysis. This concern was prompted by information obtained from the College Board Guide to Secondary Schools: Texas (The College Board 1986) wherein the larger high schools weighted grades far more often than did the smaller high schools.

To discover the opinions of university admissions officers concerning the importance of non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC, a questionnaire was constructed in which the questions were the product of an extensive survey of the literature on admissions practices and higher education concerns throughout the United States. The questions were focused toward the ways in which GPA/RIC are used in Texas admissions so that the opinions of the
respondents concerning the non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC could be
collected. The instrument and profile information are located in Appendix C
and Appendix E.

**Methods of Collecting the Data**

The questions on both instruments were styled using techniques that
would allow for rapid answering by respondents. Coding was supplied for later
data entry. The cover letter included a pledge to treat all responses in a
confidential manner with results to be presented as group data only.

Both questionnaires were accompanied by stamped, self-addressed
evelopes for return. In the case of the school district questionnaire only, a
stamped, self-addressed post card was enclosed that could be filled out and
returned with the name of the person to whom the questionnaire had been
forwarded. This allowed for follow-up correspondence or contact, if necessary.

**Return Rates**

The two specific populations surveyed had differing rates of return.
Certain factors were used to measure the distribution of the returns.

Of the 1,068 school district questionnaires mailed, 415 useable returns,
or 39% of the population, were received. In addition, twenty-five
questionnaires were returned from districts that do not graduate seniors. This
possibility was known and built into the questionnaire.
The use of the Educational Service Center (ESC) membership of the responding districts allowed for a back-up validation on the return rate so as to know if any area of the state was not well-represented by returned useable surveys. The ESCs are placed strategically throughout Texas to provide training, media, and other support services to public school districts and, they represent geographic locations. Return rates from the twenty ESC regions varied from 50% to 29%. Eight out of the twenty ESC regions, or 40%, had a return rate of 39% to 50%. Seven out of the twenty ESC regions, or 35%, had a return rate of 35% to 38%. Five out of the twenty ESC regions, or 25%, returned 29% to 34% of their questionnaires. The return rate for the different regions of the state, therefore, never varied more than 11% from the overall return rate from the population sample. The returns were not disproportionate from any one area of the state to another (Texas Education Agency 1989).

Of the twenty-five questionnaires mailed to admissions officers, twenty-four usable returns were achieved, or 96% of the population, either through the return of the completed form or by having the questions answered over the telephone. One respondent declined to answer either in writing or over the telephone.
Methods of Treating the Data

To discover the ways in which Texas public school districts might differ in their calculation of GPA/RIC, frequency counts provide the primary method of viewing the data received so that differences among the responses may be seen. Non-parametric methods are appropriate when the data collected are nominal or ordinal in nature (Ferguson 1981) and no assumptions are made about the shape or variance of population scores (Borg and Gall 1983). Only certain profile information is presented as means.

To discover if Texas public school districts differ according to size in the way they calculate GPA/RIC, measures of association between district size and weighting practices were the desired statistical treatment. Chi-square is the most commonly used test of significance for independence and is used for tables that contain nominal and ordinal variables (Ferguson 1981) and for research data that are in the form of frequency counts (Borg and Gall 1983) as produced by the school district questionnaire in this study.

Chi-square was used to test for the independence of the factors of district size and weighting practices (Bailey 1987; Norusis 1988). Once the level of independence was established, the type of relationship demonstrated was clarified with the use of gamma. In two ordered variables, the direction of the relationship and the concept of correlation can be judged using gamma, which is the most commonly used measure of association for ordinal tables larger than two by two.
To discover the importance of non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC in the admissions process at the Texas public four-year universities, frequency counts and the corresponding percentages of the respondents' opinions are used. Those questions that asked for responses from a Likert-type scale (Bailey 1987) were subjected to a chi-square test of independence (Norusis 1988). These responses are also shown as corresponding percentages.

**Summary**

The collection of data was accomplished with two questionnaires. The questionnaire sent to 100% of the Texas public school districts was designed to discover the ways in which districts differ in their calculation of GPA/RIC. This GPA yields the RIC which is used as a college admissions criterion by the majority of the public four-year universities in Texas and by many other universities nationwide. Also, profile information relative to the districts' practices concerning the AAR and graduation-related practices was collected.

The questionnaire sent to 100% of the admissions officers of the twenty-five Texas public four-year universities concerned the use of various admissions criteria and the use by Texas public school districts of non-uniform calculation methods to determine GPA/RIC. Where appropriate, chi-square and gamma non-parametric techniques were used to analyze the data. For other data, means were reported or frequency counts and corresponding percentages supplied.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter reports the analysis of data that were collected and treated in relationship to the three research questions. Initially, an attempt was made to discover the ways in which Texas public school districts differ in their calculation of Grade Point Average and Rank in Class (GPA/RIC). Secondly, an attempt was made to discover whether Texas public school districts differ according to size in the way they calculate GPA/RIC, specifically through weighting practices. Finally, an attempt was made to discover what importance in the admissions process is attached to non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC. Each of the research questions was analyzed using the collected data.

Variations in Calculation of Grade Point Average/
Rank in Class in Texas Public School Districts

Research question one sought to discover the ways in which Texas public school districts differ in their calculation of GPA/RIC. The districts were asked to indicate those courses that were not used to calculate GPA/RIC. Academic core courses were not included in the question because research has already demonstrated that they are uniformly included in the calculation of
GPA/RIC. Respondents chose from a list that was a partial representation of the courses included or excluded in a sample of handbooks from school districts. The number of districts reporting courses omitted in the calculation of GPA/RIC is reported in Table 1.

### TABLE 1

**NUMBER OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS REPORTING COURSES OMITTED IN CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE/RANK IN CLASS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Number of Districts Omitting Courses in Calculation of GPA/RIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aide (AV, library, office)</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerleading</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver education</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill team</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP exam</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence courses</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening courses</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home bound</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 1 illustrate the number of courses omitted by schools in calculating the GPA/RIC. Also, the number of districts reporting omissions differs widely from 304 to 55. The differences in reporting reflect the fact that all schools do not omit any single course listed but have reported multiple courses omitted.

Excluding some of these courses raises an important question regarding the reason. These courses may be required for graduation (for example, physical education and its substitutes--athletics, cheerleading, drill team, marching band, dance I-IV, Reserve Officer Training Corps, two- and three-hour block vocational gainful employment units) (Texas Education Agency 1988). Exclusion of any course attempted for credit would seem to be placing a value judgement on the worth of the course work.

Another way of attempting to determine whether school districts vary in calculating GPA/RIC was to determine the manner in which districts adjust a grade of 100. Table 2 contains the methods of adjusting grades of 100 as reported by the school districts.

The most frequently used method of adjusting grades appears to be adding points for advanced placement and honors classes. Forty of the 166 districts which add points for advanced placement honors also subtract points for special education classes.
TABLE 2

METHODS OF ADJUSTING AND WEIGHTING GRADES OF 100
AS REPORTED BY TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Adjustment</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add points for advanced placement/honors classes</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add points for advanced placement/honors classes and subtract points for special education classes</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total adjusting</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No adjustment</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three hundred and thirty, or 80%, of the 414 respondents weight grades. Eighty-four, or 20%, do not weight grades. Districts which do weight grades do not do so in the same way.

Weighting appears to be accomplished through an array of formulas with very few districts using similar systems. The "other" responses varied greatly. Among the methods used were those that adjusted grades on a numerical scale (a grade of 100 could therefore range from 106 to 97 in one of four types of courses—advanced placement, honors, regular, special education).
Many districts reported adding five points to each advanced placement course grade and three points to each honors course grade. Some districts assigned weights of nine through five plus zero for five types of course work. The zero weight applied to grades below seventy in any course.

**Differences in Calculation of Grade Point Average/ Rank in Class by Size of District**

Research question two sought data as to whether Texas public school districts differ according to size in the way they calculate GPA/RIC. Specifically, data were sought as to whether or not districts weight grades. Examination of the *College Board Guide to Secondary Schools: Texas* (The College Board 1986) revealed that smaller high schools weighted grades less often than did larger high schools. The ways in which school districts calculate GPA/RIC, therefore, appear to differ not only in how weighting is accomplished, but also in whether weighting is used at all.

The number of districts weighting grades and the number not weighting grades in each of four size groups is shown in Table 3. Average daily attendance (ADA) figures were used to determine the size of the reporting school districts. These districts were divided into four groups. The first group represented districts with ADA from 131,582 to 2,270. The second group represents ADA from 2,270 to 797. The third group represents ADA from 797 to 348. The fourth group represents ADA from 348 to 50. The relationship between size of school districts and weighting practices is shown in Table 3.
TABLE 3
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIZE OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND WEIGHTING PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>ADA</th>
<th>Districts Weighing</th>
<th>Districts Not Weighing</th>
<th>Percent Weighting</th>
<th>Percent Not Weighing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>131,581-2,270</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>2,270-797</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>797-348</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>348-50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square 55.11544  D.F. 3  gamma value 0.62138  p < .001

The use of chi-square to determine the relationship between size and weighting practices showed a significant relationship (p < .001). Additionally it may be seen that the percentage of districts weighting grades decreases as the district size decreases. These data show that larger districts tend to weight grades more often than small districts.

The gamma value was 0.62138. The gamma value of 0.62138 demonstrates further that size and weighting practices are significantly dependent on each other.

The number of districts reporting weighting practices based on the number of high schools in the district is shown in Table 4. The ADA groups
were changed to represent the approximate number of high schools which could be assumed to be in the districts. Generally, those districts with ADA from 131,582 to 25,000 have four or more high schools. Those districts with three or two high schools, and some with one high school, fall in the range of 25,000 ADA to 11,000 ADA. Below 11,000 ADA, districts have one high school or one school that includes any number of grades, but does include grades nine through twelve and graduate seniors.

### TABLE 4

**NUMBER OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS REPORTING WEIGHTING PRACTICES BASED ON THE NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of High Schools</th>
<th>ADA</th>
<th>Districts Weighting</th>
<th>Districts Not Weighting</th>
<th>Percent Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td>25,000+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>11,000-25,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>50-11,000</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square 10.03635 D.F. 2 gamma value 1.000 p < .01

Chi-square applied to the data in Table 4 also indicates a significant relationship (p < .01) between weighting practices and size of school district as indicated by the number of high schools in the district. The gamma value
further demonstrates the significantly dependent level of the relationship (1.000). These data also further demonstrate that larger districts tend to weight grades more frequently than do smaller districts. Once again, the percentage of districts weighting grades decreases as the district size decreases. Larger districts may have been weighting grades for many years due to the greater percentage of graduates preparing for college. Many small districts may not have had large percentages of students preparing for college; and, therefore, they may not have felt justified in weighting grades when few or no honors courses were offered. The districts which do not weight grades are those that have one high school or a school that graduates seniors.

The number of Texas public school districts weighting grades based on their membership in an Educational Service Center (ESC) and, therefore, their geographic location is shown in Table 5. A map of the ESC regions is located in Appendix A (Texas Education Agency 1989).

Chi-square applied to these data demonstrates independence among the variables (significance not < .05). No particular geographic region, as defined by ESC membership, is using either of the weighting practices significantly more than any other region. The larger districts that do weight grades and the smaller districts that do not weight grades are distributed throughout the ESC regions so that no one area of the state uses either system more than the other; and, therefore, weighting practices and geographic location are not significantly related.
TABLE 5

NUMBER OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS WEIGHTING GRADES BASED ON MEMBERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Service Center Number</th>
<th>Headquarters City</th>
<th>Districts Weighting</th>
<th>Districts Not Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Huntsville</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kilgore</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mount Pleasant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Wichita Falls</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Richardson</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fort Worth</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Waco</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Abilene</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Service Center Number</th>
<th>Headquarters City</th>
<th>Districts Not Weighting</th>
<th>Districts Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>San Angelo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Amarillo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lubbock</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square 28.12006  D.F. 19  p 0.0811

**Importance of Non-Uniform Calculation of Grade Point Average/ Rank in Class as Reported by Admissions Officers**

Research question three sought data to determine the importance of non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC in the admissions process. To obtain these data, opinions were sought from the admissions officers of all Texas public four-year universities.

The responses of admissions officers to the statements regarding non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC are displayed in Table 6. The Likert-type
### TABLE 6

**RESPONSES OF ADMISSIONS OFFICERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE/RANK IN CLASS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Chi-Square Significance</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The method of GPA/RIC calculation needs to be standardized for all Texas high schools.</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Our admissions decision process would be made easier if all Texas high schools calculated GPA/RIC in a standardized manner.</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Our admissions decision process would be more fair and/or equitable if Texas had a standardized GPA/RIC calculation by all high schools.</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Our admissions decision process could rely less on SAT/ACT scores if Texas had a standardized GPA/RIC calculation by all high schools.</td>
<td>&lt;.266</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. We are concerned that Texas high schools do not calculate GPA/RIC in a uniform manner.</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We feel that non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC is unfair to graduates who seek admission to higher education.</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Number
responses were subjected to chi-square analysis. The percentages of responses were also calculated.

Five of the questions had significant chi-square levels, while one did not. The percentages of responses at the strongly agree and agree levels represent a large majority concurring that calculation should become standardized, that the admissions process would be easier with standardized calculation of GPA/RIC, that the admissions process would be more fair with standardized calculation, that non-uniform calculation is unfair, and that concern exists about Texas having non-uniform calculation.

The respondents were almost evenly divided on the issue of whether admissions decisions could be based less on the SAT/ACT scores if GPA/RIC calculation were uniform. Having a larger percentage of respondents disagreeing means that SAT and ACT scores will apparently continue to be used as admissions criteria.

Additional data concerning calculation practices were obtained to further explore the question of the effect of non-uniform calculations upon admissions practices. Table 7 contains the opinions of the admissions officers concerning calculation practices and the changes which might result from the standardization of calculation.

A large majority prefer that TEA mandate standardized calculations. However, the question concerning the SAT/ACT scores reveals that these tests
will most likely continue to be used as admissions criteria despite any implementation of uniform calculation of GPA/RIC.

**TABLE 7**

**OPINIONS OF ADMISSION OFFICERS CONCERNING CALCULATION PRACTICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you prefer that TEA standardize GPA/RIC calculation methods?</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that SAT/ACT scores will always be necessary to validate GPA/RIC even if calculation becomes standardized?</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you keep any records as to how Texas high schools calculate GPA/RIC?</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you make use of a specific list of Texas high school calculation methods if such a list were available from TEA?</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There seems to be little use of or need for admissions officers to know how schools presently calculate grades. Comments from these admissions officers indicated that college and university admissions personnel do not have
enough time to incorporate this information into admissions procedures effectively.

These officials were also asked to respond to the importance of criteria most significant in the admissions process in two different hypothetical situations: (1) if the university were not attempting to manage enrollment and (2) if the university were attempting to manage its enrollment. The ranking by admissions officers of the importance of admissions criteria when not managing enrollment is presented in Table 8.

Admissions officers rank RIC as the most important criterion when management of enrollment in the college/university is not necessary. SAT/ACT scores are ranked as the criterion of second importance.

When management of enrollment is necessary, RIC and graduation from an accredited high school are rated evenly while SAT/ACT scores are only slightly below these two in rank (see Table 9). Approximately 30% of these same admissions officers rank these three factors as first choice.

Admissions officers vary in their ranking of a criterion as most important. They do tend to agree more on the second ranking. More admissions officers rank SAT/ACT in second place than they rank any other criterion at any rank. This indicates that admissions officers believe that SAT/ACT will continue to be a major criterion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admission Criterion</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank in class</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT/ACT</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation/accredited high school</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma/transcript type</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid cases</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Criterion</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in class</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT/ACT</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation/accredited high school</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma/transcript type</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid cases</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Summary of Major Findings**

The following is a summary of the major findings of this study.

1. Texas public school districts do differ in the calculation of GPA/RIC. A variety of courses is reported to be omitted in the calculation of GPA/RIC. When districts weight grades, the methods of weighting vary. Some add points to a grade of 100 for honors and advanced placement classes. Some add points for honors and advanced placement classes and subtract points for special education classes. Many other districts report other practices.

2. Texas public school districts differ significantly (p < .001) in their use of weighting grades depending on the size of the school district. Smaller school districts do not weight grades as often as larger school districts do.

3. Admissions officers report that they are concerned that non-uniform calculation exists (p < .001), and that they feel the calculation methods should be standardized (p < .001).

4. They report that uniform calculation methods would make the admissions process easier (p < .001). They also feel non-uniform calculation is unfair (p < .01), and that the admissions process would be more fair if calculation were standardized (p < .05). In addition, they prefer that the Texas Education Agency mandate standardized GPA/RIC calculation methods.

5. Admissions officers report that RIC is the single most important admissions criterion. The two most important admissions criteria for the Texas
public four-year universities are the RIC and SAT/ACT scores whether
management of enrollment is a factor or not. Also, SAT/ACT scores would
probably continue to be used at the current rate even if GPA/RIC calculation
became standardized.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This study sought to verify the non-uniform calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA) and Rank in Class (RIC) in Texas public school districts. The study also sought to determine the effect of such calculations on admissions to college.

A questionnaire was sent to all 1,068 public school districts in Texas to secure data regarding the weighting of grades and the courses not included in GPA/RIC calculations. In addition, admissions officers in all twenty-five Texas public four-year universities were sent questionnaires to secure their opinions about the effect of non-uniform calculations of GPA/RIC on admissions to institutions such as theirs. Useable returns were received from 415 districts, or 39%. Only one admissions officer did not respond, as 24 questionnaires, or 96%, were returned.

The responses were analyzed using both descriptive and non-parametric techniques. Chi-square and gamma were calculated where needed.
Summary of Major Findings

The following is a summary of the major findings of this study.

1. Texas public school districts do differ in the calculation of GPA/RIC. A variety of courses are reported to be omitted in the calculation of GPA/RIC. When districts weight grades, the methods of weighting vary. Some add points to a grade of 100 for honors and advanced placement classes. Some add points for honors and advanced placement classes and subtract points for special education classes. Many other districts report other practices.

2. Texas public school districts differ significantly (p < .001) in their use of weighting grades depending on the size of the school district. Smaller school districts do not weight grades as often as larger school districts do.

3. Admissions officers report that they are concerned that non-uniform calculation exists (p < .001), and that they feel the calculation methods should be standardized (p < .001).

4. They report that uniform calculation methods would make the admissions process easier (p < .001). They also feel non-uniform calculation is unfair (p < .01), and that the admissions process would be more fair if calculation were standardized (p < .05). In addition, they prefer that the Texas Education Agency mandate standardized GPA/RIC calculation methods.

5. Admissions officers report that RIC is the single most important admissions criterion. The two most important admissions criteria for the Texas
public four-year universities are the RIC and SAT/ACT scores whether
management of enrollment is a factor or not. Also, SAT/ACT scores would
probably continue to be used at the current rate even if GPA/RIC calculation
became standardized.

Discussion of the Findings

There are several possible reasons why Texas public school districts
differ in how they calculate GPA/RIC. The Texas Education Agency, while
following legislative mandates, allows the individual school districts great
discretion as to the ways in which rules may be implemented. The vast
differences in size among the districts may have an effect on what courses are
taught beyond the requirements for graduation. Differences in size may also
affect whether some activities are utilized as courses or as extra-curricular
activities.

The population of a district and the preferences, desires, and needs of
the region may also contribute to the way in which course work is viewed. The
wealth and resources of a district undoubtedly contribute to the scope of
curriculum available. It should be noted, however, that even the smallest
districts can implement those courses for which they are willing to get approval
and are able to fund. Beyond the course work required for graduation, it may
not be feasible for a district to hire a teacher for a few students for one
subject even if such a need exists. Also, finding teachers who are certified in all the subjects requested is not always possible.

While weighting grades is the prevalent practice reported, the fact that a highly significant difference exists between smaller and larger districts in weighting practices could stem from a long history of weighting grades. These practices may be in the process of change.

Some of the respondents who did not weight grades at the time of the survey noted that they were considering changing to weighted grades. Smaller schools may have traditionally not weighted grades because they have not had many students involved in honors programs. If a district has had a small percentage of college-bound students in the past, it may have opted not to weight grades since there were no honors classes at all. Weighting grades causes the district to have to design a weighting system. Some may have simply evaded the problem.

The responses from the admissions officers appear to reinforce the strong product positions of ETS and the American College Testing Program. Their products seem to be assured of a place in the college admissions equations. The admissions officers who responded made their positions clear that use of SAT/ACT scores would continue even if GPA/RIC calculation were standardized. The historical use of a comprehensive entrance examination apparently will continue.
The desire that standardized GPA/RIC calculation be mandated in Texas public high schools is a strong preference and should alert the TEA. It seems apparent that many people in the Texas education community are aware of the non-uniform calculation but that few have tried or been able to get changes made. Perhaps the opinions of Texas admissions officers will influence a change. Certainly, standardizing the calculation process would be a large task. It is, however, one worthy of a state that is one of the top two in the nation in the number of high school graduates.

Conclusions

The following conclusions appear to be warranted from the findings of this study:

1. Valid comparisons cannot be made among high school records for admissions purposes.

2. Those districts which do not weight grades at all appear to penalize their graduates in the college/university admissions process.

3. Standardization of GPA/RIC calculations would seem to be beneficial to both prospective college/university students and the institutions.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study call for continuing and expanding, but not replicating, this study. The GPA/RIC calculation practices used and
the concerns raised as a result of the study should be researched and analyzed. The recommendations are as follows:

1. The most significant need for further research as a result of this study is for additional research to be conducted among the Texas private four-year universities to determine the opinions of those admissions officers concerning the admissions criteria addressed in this study. Comparison between the public and private university outlook would be useful.

2. More research would be useful at all levels of Texas higher education to determine the ways in which standardized calculation of GPA/RIC would be of help in the admissions process.

3. A continued and more complete assessment of the ways in which GPA/RIC is calculated in Texas public school districts would be useful. This should include all the practices of weighting, courses included in the calculation, and what problems might arise from standardization of GPA/RIC calculation. The research needs to be conducted by TEA which has the ability to demand responses from districts.

4. Further research is needed to demonstrate the degree of impact the various methods of calculation might have. Several combinations of courses, weighted and unweighted, need to be recorded into existing completed class records of graduates from Texas public high schools such as was done by Attaway so that the need for uniformity of calculation methods can be shown in terms that Texas educators may more readily accept.
5. Further study to determine the level of awareness of university faculty about non-uniform GPA/RIC calculation would be useful. Texas public four-year universities continue to raise entrance requirements, and university faculty are sometimes asked to vote on or be consulted about raising requirements. For this reason, university faculties should become aware of the non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC in Texas public school districts. Such knowledge might dissuade faculty members from supporting higher entrance requirements until calculation can become more uniform.

6. Studies aimed at gathering information about student and/or parent awareness of non-uniform GPA/RIC calculation would be useful. Such studies could focus on either those students still in high school or those who are in college and have already been subjected to the scrutiny of admissions criteria. From a survey of the literature, it appears that the whole area of college admissions is frequently examined in light of the well-known, highly selective universities whose actions make the news. The bulk of the nation's colleges and universities only get local headlines. High school students and their parents, as potential consumers of Texas public higher education, could be a useful source for learning what facts and myths may be circulating about college admissions practices in Texas.
APPENDIX A

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER REGIONS
APPENDIX B

SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear Superintendent:

Your assistance is requested to secure data for a doctoral dissertation in the Department of Higher Education at the University of North Texas. The questionnaire was developed to determine the degree of non-uniformity that exists among districts in the way grade point average (GPA) and rank in class (RIC) for graduation are calculated and their impact on college admissions practices. This study is endorsed by the J.C. Matthews Chair of Higher Education at the University of North Texas.

Please assist me in getting this questionnaire to the person in your district who is most familiar with the calculation of grade point average and rank in class for graduating seniors. Fill out the enclosed post card and return it to me so I may address future correspondence to the respondent.

Dear Respondent:

This questionnaire is being sent to every school district in Texas. A study this large depends on your response so that the information gathered represents the broadest possible picture of district GPA and RIC calculation practices. All responses will be treated in a confidential manner with results presented as group data only. Your name, position, and district are needed to determine how many respondents have completed the questionnaire.

Thank you for your prompt reply. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sandra E. Carr, M.A.
Assistant Principal
Lake Dallas Elementary
Lake Dallas, Texas 75065

Dwane Kingery, Major Professor
J.C. Matthews Chair of Higher Education
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas 76203
HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY ON GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK IN CLASS (Ric)

Please enter the answer number or the actual answer into the blank at the right of the question. Use the space provided to write in answers that do not correspond to the choices provided.

1. Please enter:
   Name of your District: ____________________________________________
   Your name (Respondent): __________________________________________
   Your title and office address: _______________________________________

2. Please enter your October, 1989 District ADA: _______________________
   (1-2-3-4-5-6)

3. Enter the percentage of each ethnic group from your October, 1989 ADA:
   American Indian or Alaskan Native ______ %(7-8)
   Asian or Pacific Islander ______ %(9-10)
   Black, not of Hispanic Origin ______ %(11-12)
   Hispanic ______ %(13-14)
   White/not of Hispanic Origin _____ %(15-16)

4. To which Education Service Center region do you belong? ____________
   (17-18)

5. Indicate how many schools you have that graduate seniors:
   (high schools or schools that include grade 12) _______________________
   (19-20)

   IF YOU DO NOT GRADUATE SENIORS, PLEASE INDICATE THE ISD TO WHICH YOUR
   STUDENTS TRANSFER FOR HIGH SCHOOL: _____________________________

   Please return this questionnaire with no further answers indicated

6. Enter the size (exact number) of your Spring, 1989, graduating class
   (total of all ISD graduates if more than one high school): _____________
   (21-22-23-24-25)

7. Enter the percentage of types of diplomas received by your Spring, 1989
   graduating class (classes):
   Advanced Academic Honors Diploma ______ %(26-27)
   Honors Diploma ______ %(28-29)
   Regular Diploma ______ %(30-31)

8. Do you graduate students with full honors placement at end of the Fall
   semester also?
   (1) YES
   (2) NO
   _____ (32)

   +++THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO RANK IN CLASS+++  

9. Which students are ranked?
   (1) All graduating Seniors
   (2) Only college-bound Seniors
   (3) All graduating Seniors except Special Education
   (4) OTHER
10. When are students FIRST ranked within their class?
(1) End of Freshman year
(2) End of Fall semester, Junior year
(3) End of Spring semester, Junior year
(4) End of Fifth Six Weeks, Senior year
(5) End of Sixth Six Weeks, Senior year
(6) OTHER

11. When are Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and top ten graduates decided?
(1) End of Fifth Six Weeks, Senior year
(2) OTHER

12. Do you have a differentiated scale combining courses and grades for Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors graduates?
(1) YES
(2) NO

13. If you have two or more students who tie for first or second rank in class, what is your decision process?
(1) All eligible students share in the title
(2) Tie is broken by highest SAT score
(3) Tie is broken by highest GPA
(4) Tie is broken by highest numerical grade average
(5) OTHER

14. How long must an in-state transfer student be enrolled at your school to be included in the ranking of the graduating class rank?
(1) All of the final semester, Senior year
(2) All of the Senior year
(3) OTHER

15. What GPA earns a GENERIC classification of HONORS GRADUATE?
(1) 85 and above
(2) 90 and above
(3) OTHER

+++THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO THE CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK IN CLASS (RIC)+++}

16. Do you weight courses in order to differentiate for purposes of calculating GPA/RIC?
(1) YES
(2) NO

17. Please indicate the names of your weighting categories (or fill in the blanks):
ADVANCED CATEGORY:
(1) Advanced Placement
(2) AP Accelerated
(3) Advanced
(4) Honors
(5) Bonus
(6) 

REGULAR CATEGORY:
(1) Regular Academic
(2) Regular
(3) Standard
(4) 

18. When you report GPA and/or RIC to colleges (other than the required numerical average on the Academic Achievement Record—AAR), do you use:
  (1) Letter grades
  (2) Number grades
  (3) Both letter and number grades

19. Please indicate the steps you assign to the letter grade system
   (A+/A/A-, etc.)
   (1) A+ to C-/D/F
   (2) A to F/no + or -
   (3) A+ to C-/C
   (4) no letter grades/only numerical values used

20. Please indicate the steps you assign to the numerical grade values for assignment of weights (90th percentile examples)
   (1) 90-94/95-100 = A,A+
   (2) 91-100 = A
   (3) 90-92/93-97/98-100 = A-,A,A*
   (4) 90-92/93-96/97-100 = A-,A,A-

21. Please indicate how a grade of 100 is adjusted for weighting:
   (1) Add points for AP and Honors classes
   (2) Add points for AP and Honors/subtract points for Special Ed. classes
   (3) OTHER

22. CHECK courses NOT included when you calculate GPA and/or RIC:
   GPA
   (50) P.E.
   (51) Athletics
   (52) Drill Team
   (53) Cheerleading
   (54) Newspaper
   (55) Yearbook
   (56) Student Council
   (57) Correspondence Courses
   (58) Home Bound
   (59) Evening Courses
   (60) Local Credit
   (61) AP Exam
   (62) Aide (AV, Library, Office)
   (63) Driver Education
   (64) OTHER

   RIC
   (65) P.E.
   (66) Athletics
   (67) Drill Team
   (68) Cheerleading
   (69) Newspaper
   (70) Yearbook
   (71) Student Council
   (72) Correspondence Courses
   (73) Home Bound
   (74) Evening Courses
   (75) Local Credit
   (76) AP Exam
   (77) Aide (AV, Library, Office)
   (78) Driver Education
   (79) OTHER

23. Please enclose a copy of the portion of your student handbook that shows your district GPA/RIC weighting and/or ranking system. Thank you for your help and prompt reply.
University of North Texas  
Office of Admissions

Dear Director of Admissions:

I am currently involved in a doctoral dissertation study in the Department of Higher Education at the University of North Texas. Don Palermo, Director of Admissions at North Texas is on my doctoral committee as my University Professor. With his help, this questionnaire was developed after a pilot study of Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex high school handbooks demonstrated that non-uniformity exists among districts in the way they calculate grade point average (GPA) and rank in class (RIC) for graduation. The degree of diversity and non-uniformity in these calculations and its bearing on college admissions practices is the subject of my study which has the endorsement of the J.C. Matthews Chair of Higher Education at the University of North Texas.

The focus of this study is Texas public education. Only directors of admission of Texas four-year public colleges and universities are being polled. A companion questionnaire is being sent to every public school district in Texas which asks information about methods of GPA and RIC calculation.

All responses will be treated in a confidential manner with results presented as group data only. Your name, position, and institution are needed to determine how many respondents have completed the questionnaire.

Your prompt reply will be greatly appreciated. I will be happy to furnish you with the results of this study if you wish.

Sincerely,

Sandra E. Carr, M.A.  
Assistant Principal  
Lake Dallas Elementary  
Lake Dallas, Texas 75057

Don C. Palermo  
Director of Admissions  
University of North Texas  
Denton, Texas 76203
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICERS ON GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK IN CLASS (RIC)

Please enter the code number next to your answer into the blank at the right of the question. Use the blank space to write in answers that do not correspond to the choices provided.

1. Enter your institution's name ________________________________

Enter your name (Respondent) __________________________________

Enter your title ________________________________________________

2. What percentage of your Fall, 1989, freshman enrollment is made up of Texas high school graduates who have come directly from high school to college (those students you admit through consideration of their high school record and SAT/ACT scores)? %

(1-2)

3. If you have a separate figure available, what percentage of your Fall, 1989, freshman enrollment is made up of Texas high school graduates who have stopped out for one to five years? %

(3-4)

4. Please rank (1 being first choice) these criteria in the order of most significant use to you in admissions decisions WHEN YOU DO NOT NEED TO MANAGE OR CONTROL YOUR ENROLLMENT:

   (1) RIC (5)
   (2) SAT/ACT scores (6)
   (3) Graduation from accredited high school (7)
   (4) GPA (8)
   (5) Type of diploma received (Regular, Honors, Advanced Academic Honors) (9)
   (6) GED (10)

5. Please rank (1 being first choice) these criteria in the order of most significant use to you in admissions decisions WHEN YOU ARE ATTEMPTING TO MANAGE OR CONTROL YOUR ENROLLMENT:

   (1) RIC (11)
   (2) SAT/ACT scores (12)
   (3) Graduation (13)
   (4) GPA (14)
   (5) Type of diploma received (15)
   (6) GED (16)

6. Do you give equal weight to RIC and SAT/ACT scores when considering an applicant's record?

(1) YES (17)
(2) Use combination scale of RIC with SAT/ACT
(3) OTHER ________________________________

7. After how many years do you no longer require high school GPA for entrance?

(1) One (4) Four (18)
(2) Two (5) Five
(3) Three (6) Over five
8. After how many years do you no longer require high school RIC for entrance?
   (1) One  (4) Four  (19)
   (2) Two  (5) Five
   (3) Three  (6) Over five

9. If a Texas high school graduate stops out before coming to college, for how many years do you accept his/her RIC from high school before requiring additional tests other than TASP?
   (1) One  (4) Four  (20)
   (2) Two  (5) Five
   (3) Three  (6) Over five

10. If a Texas high school graduate stops out before coming to college, after how many years do you no longer accept his/her SAT or ACT scores before requiring additional tests other than TASP?
     (1) One  (4) Four  (21)
     (2) Two  (5) Five
     (3) Three  (6) Over five

+++PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE IN THE BLANK TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS+++ -

11. The Texas three diploma system helps our admissions decision-making process.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

12. We expect RIC to correlate with the type of diploma received.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

13. We are concerned that Texas high schools do not calculate GPA/RIC in a uniform manner.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

14. We feel that non-uniform calculation of GPA/RIC is unfair to graduates who seek admission to higher education.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

15. The method of GPA/RIC calculation needs to be standardized for all Texas high schools.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

16. Our admissions decision process would be made easier if all Texas high schools calculated GPA/RIC in a standardized manner.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

17. Our admissions decision process could rely less on SAT/ACT scores if Texas had a standardized GPA/RIC calculation by all high schools.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

18. Our admissions decision process would be more fair and/or equitable if Texas had a standardized GPA/RIC calculation by all high schools.
    (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree
19. Do you keep any records as to how various Texas high schools calculate GPA/RIC?

(1) YES
(2) NO
(3) OTHER (Explain)

20. Would you make use of a specific list of Texas high school calculation methods if such a list were available from Texas Education Agency (TEA)?

(1) YES
(2) NO
(3) OTHER (Explain)

21. Would you prefer that TEA standardize GPA/RIC calculation methods?

(1) YES
(2) NO
(3) OTHER (Explain)

22. Would the combination of a standardized GPA/RIC calculation and the type of diploma received eliminate the need for SAT/ACT scores?

(1) YES
(2) NO

23. Do you believe that SAT/ACT scores will always be necessary to validate GPA/RIC even if calculation becomes standardized?

(1) YES
(2) NO
(3) OTHER (Explain)

24. Do you anticipate, or now have, a cap on enrollment?

(1) Anticipate
(2) Now have
(3) Neither

25. Enter the percentage of each ethnic group of your Fall, 1989, Freshman enrollment:

American Indian or Alaskan Native  % (36-37)
Asian or Pacific Islander  % (38-39)
Black, not of Hispanic Origin  % (40-41)
Hispanic  % (42-43)
White/not of Hispanic Origin  % (44-45)
APPENDIX D

PROFILE OF RESPONDING TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PROFILE OF RESPONDING TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The responding Texas public school districts, from which 415 useable surveys were received, are profiled from the data they supplied in their responses to the questionnaire. The following items present a picture of the districts:

The mean percentage of each ethnic group from the October, 1989, ADA was:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native ................. 1.691%
- Asian or Pacific Islander ............................ 2.317%
- Black, not of Hispanic origin ....................... 12.395%
- Hispanic ............................................. 25.331%
- White, not of Hispanic origin ...................... 66.165%

The total does not equal 100% due to groups with dissimilar numbers of responses. The mean number of schools in the districts that graduate seniors was 1.836 schools. The mean response possible for the entire state would be 1.467 schools per district (1,567 schools that graduate seniors out of 1,068 districts) (Texas Education Agency 1989).

The mean size of the Spring, 1989, graduating class or classes combined was 226.6 graduates.
There were differences in the ways in which ranking of students is done. The "other" responses generally stated that those students not bound for college were not ranked. The responses were:

- All graduating seniors ........................................... 306
- Only college-bound seniors .................................... 2
- All graduating seniors except special education ............. 89
- Other ........................................................................ 16

Respondents were asked when students were first ranked within their class. Some schools indicated they had an early ranking system that allowed them to assist students with remediation as needed. Some schools use continuous ranking to allow competitive students to know where they stand for purposes of applying for scholarships and early acceptance into highly selective universities. The responses were:

- End of freshman year ................................................. 162
- End of Fall semester, junior year ................................. 32
- End of Spring semester, junior year ............................. 88
- End of fifth six weeks, senior year .............................. 65
- End of sixth six weeks, senior year .............................. 11
- Other ........................................................................ 5

As to when the valedictorian, salutatorian, and top ten graduates were decided, many of the "other" responses emphasized that a final calculation of
GPA and RIC did not occur until after all grades were in at the end of the senior year. The responses were:

End of fifth six weeks, senior year .................. 331
Other .................................................. 81

Asked if a differentiated scale combining courses and grades was used to designate honors, high honors, and highest honors graduates, some schools designated criteria for honors awards. In order to qualify, a student must not only attain a certain GPA but must also have earned credit in designated honors or AP courses. The responses were:

Have a differentiated scale ................................. 214
Do not have a differentiated scale ......................... 189

Districts were asked to tell the ways in which a tie for first or second rank in class is decided. The responses were:

All eligible students share in the title .................... 155
Tie is broken by highest SAT score ........................ 10
Tie is broken by highest GPA .............................. 53
Tie is broken by highest numerical grade average .......... 136
Other .......................................................... 49

Districts were asked how long an in-state transfer student must be enrolled at a school to be included in the ranking of the graduating class.

Some of the responses indicated that transfer grades were accepted at any
time. Transferring within a large district also was accepted with no penalty.

The responses were:

All of the final semester, senior year ...................... 89
All of the senior year ........................................ 134
Other ............................................................ 184

Districts were asked what GPA earns a generic classification of honors graduate. The responses were:

85 or above ...................................................... 26
90 or above ..................................................... 201
Other ............................................................ 157

Districts were asked to indicate the names given to weighting categories (or fill in the blanks). This question arose from the wide spectrum of choices found in the original sample of handbooks, indicating the non-uniformity that exists in how districts label their course work. In an age when population mobility causes students to transfer from district to district, the possible confusion and added counselor workload could be reduced with a more uniform labeling for course work that is essentially correlated with the type of transcript a student works toward. The responses were:

Advanced Category:

Advanced Placement ............................................ 3
AP Accelerated ...................................................... 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Category:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Academic</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Category:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlated</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Education Category:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Programs</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

PROFILE OF RESPONDING TEXAS PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES
PROFILE OF RESPONDING TEXAS PUBLIC
FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES

The responding Texas public four-year universities are profiled from the data they supplied in their responses to the questionnaire. The ESC locations are additional information not asked for in the survey.

Profile of Respondents’ Fall, 1989 Freshman Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2.905%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, not of Hispanic origin</td>
<td>11.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>17.458%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, not of Hispanic origin</td>
<td>67.375%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>2.167%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total does not equal 100% due to groups with dissimilar numbers of responses. The ESC regions do not all have a public four-year university in them. Regions 3, 8, 12, and 14 have none. Regions 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 each have 1. Regions 6 and 13 each have 2. Region 11 has 4. Region 4 has 5. A 100% return from each ESC region was received with the exception of Region 4 (Texas Education Agency 1989).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Crouse, James, and Dale Trusheim. 1988. The case against the SAT. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.


Henderson, Roy D., Assistant Director of Assessment Services, American College Testing Program. 1990. Phone interview by author, June, Southwestern regional office, Austin, Texas.


Palermo, Don, Director of Admissions, University of North Texas. 1989. Interview by author, July, Denton, Texas.


105


