



Testimony by
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to the
Joint Committee on Administrative Rules and Regulations
Monday, November 26, 2012

Chairwoman Schmidt and members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you review the new admission standards for the University of Kansas.

These standards are designed to encourage student achievement and increase the number of students who go on to graduate from KU. Doing so will benefit not only these students, but also our entire state.

The new admission standards were developed in concert with Governor Brownback and his administration, subsequent to a request from the Kansas Board of Regents in December 2011. Regent Fred Logan entered a motion to the Board of Regents on December 14, 2011 requesting that KU develop admission standards that would enhance student success at the University of Kansas. Regents unanimously accepted the motion. We incorporated input from more than 200 stakeholders across Kansas, including prospective students and their families; teachers, principals and superintendents; alumni; community leaders; and policymakers.

What we found through talking with these stakeholders, as well as through analysis of past entering classes, is that the current standards do not reflect what it takes to succeed at the University of Kansas. As a result, some students do not take a rigorous enough curriculum in high school to prepare them for classes at a research university. These students all too often leave the university before earning degrees, costing them and their families both money and time.

We want to be clear: these standards are designed to ensure students are prepared to attend the university, and not to exclude any student who could be successful here. We want every student who is interested in attending the University of Kansas and who can be successful here to come study with us.

As part of our mission of educating leaders, and consistent with our efforts to increase the number of students who successfully earn degrees, we need to give students and families an accurate picture of what it takes to succeed at KU. The proposed admission standards encourage students to strive for excellence in high school so they'll be ready to do well when they arrive at the university.

In addition to reducing the initial challenges some students experience, these standards also give families extra reason to encourage students to work hard throughout high school so they'll be

ready for college. And for those students who need additional assistance, this process will enable us to direct the right services to them after they arrive at KU.

By starting college strong, students will also have more opportunities to make the most of their classes, as well as experiences such as study abroad, service learning and undergraduate research, which prepare them for successful careers and lives.

Under the standards, to be admitted to KU automatically, new freshmen would need to take the Kansas Qualified Admissions Precollege Curriculum, graduate from a high school or home school, and meet one of two GPA/ACT thresholds. The first would require a minimum 3.0 high school GPA combined with a 24 on the ACT (1090 SAT), while the second would require a minimum 3.25 high school GPA and a 21 on the ACT (980 SAT).

Students who do not meet the automatic admission criteria would have their applications reviewed by a committee. In making its decision on whether to admit a student, the committee would consider such factors as strength of high school coursework, grade trend, academic potential, diversity, family circumstances and the student's ability to benefit from support services available at the university.

We chose a deadline for automatic admission of February 1 because research on student retention indicates that students who apply by that date have a much higher retention rate and are more likely to succeed than those who apply later. This deadline allows the admissions committee to examine late applications carefully, to admit those students likely to succeed, and to recommend interventions and first-year experiences that are tailored to each student's specific needs.

These standards would take effect for the fall 2016 entering class. During the intervening years, we would undertake a campaign to let students, families and educators know about these standards and how students can be ready to meet them. Since approval of the standards by the Board of Regents, we have continued to meet with stakeholders statewide. They continue to support the standards because they set out clear goals for students and also reflect the differences among the missions of Kansas' universities.

Again, we want every student who is interested in attending the University of Kansas and who can be successful here to come study with us. These new standards will let students and parents know what sort of preparation is needed to be successful at KU, and will encourage students to strive for excellence in high school so that they're ready when they arrive on campus.

These standards are consistent with that intent. They will result in more students successfully earning their degrees from the University of Kansas, and going on to contribute to our economy and state.