

Rethinking Admissions At a Glance

Wake Forest University is bringing together foremost experts from Berkeley, Harvard, Princeton, Texas, Virginia, Yale and other universities to present groundbreaking new research on college admissions practices. New findings on the predictive power of the SAT will also be presented along with inside information on how consumer magazines rank the nation's best colleges. Here is an overview of the *Rethinking Admissions* conference, scheduled for April 15 and 16, 2009 on the Wake Forest campus.

Day 1: Wednesday, April 15

Evaluating Standardized Testing, Part 1

9:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Claudia Buchmann, Associate Professor of Sociology, Ohio State University - As president of the American Sociological Association's education section, Dr. Buchmann will offer an eagle's eye view of how standardized tests are being used today in the college admissions process.

John Douglass, Senior Research Fellow, Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California at Berkeley – The University of California system was among the first to object to the use of the SAT in admissions. Their research and decision to discontinue using the SAT led to the development of the new SAT. Dr. Douglass, who is considered among the foremost experts on public university admissions, will provide an insider's view on California's history with standardized tests and admissions, including its new policy guaranteeing admission to the top 9 percent from any California high school.

Kevin Rask, Professor of Economics, Wake Forest University – Dr. Rask will present new findings on the predictive power of the SAT by family income, gender and race.

Robert Schaeffer, Public Education Director for FairTest - **Moderator**

Evaluating Standardized Testing, Part 2

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Thomas Espenshade, Professor of Sociology and Faculty Associate of the Office of Population Research, Princeton University – Dr. Espenshade will report new findings on the effects of going SAT optional on both the social diversity and academic quality of undergraduates at public and private selective colleges.

Jesse Rothstein, Assistant Professor of Economics and Public Affairs, Princeton University –

Based on years of work with the University of California system, Dr. Rothstein will discuss the extent to which the SAT has a social class bias that misestimates how well a student with a low or high socioeconomic status (SES) will perform academically in college. Dr. Rothstein will look in particular at SAT, family SES, and high-school-level measures that predict college performance.

Jessica VanParys, University of Georgia. VanParys, who co-authored a study with two of the university's top economists, will report new findings from the only national, empirical study by independent academics on the validity of the new SAT to date. The research will show how well the new SAT helps predict first-year college grades for different genders and racial groups.

Akbar Salam, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Wake Forest University - Moderator

Crafting a Class: The Academic and Social Goals of Admissions

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Arlene Cash, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Spelman College

Sally Donahue, Director of Financial Aid and Senior Admissions Officer, Harvard University

Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Admissions, Duke University

Martha Allman, Director of Admissions, Wake Forest University - Moderator

Four top admissions officers from leading universities will address the broader topic of how they determine which students they accept to their institutions of higher learning. They will discuss the importance of crafting a class with a diversity of talents and social characteristics. They also will talk about the role that grades and standardized test scores play in their decisions.

Keynote Address: Slumdog Ivy Leaguer

4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Daniel Golden, author of *The Price of Admission: How America's ruling Class Buys its Way into Elite Colleges – and Who Gets Left Outside the Gate*

Golden, who won the Pulitzer Prize for a series of articles he wrote on inequities in college admissions, will deliver the keynote address. He will draw parallels between the obstacles faced by low-income students trying to get into Ivy League schools and the homeless hero in the Academy Award-winning movie *Slum Dog Millionaire*. Golden is currently a senior editor at *Conde Nast Portfolio*.

Day 2: Thursday, April 16

Assessing the High School Record

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Greg Roberts, Dean of Admissions, University of Virginia – Roberts, the new dean of admissions at UVA, will present a case study that shows how his university has successfully recruited and enrolled high-achieving, low-income students.

Lloyd Thacker, Director, Education Conservancy – Thacker will present an overview of how selective universities send signals to high school students that influence their choice of classes and extracurricular activities. He will show that many of those signals are focused on the importance of standardized testing rather than on the value of critical thinking skills.

Bruce Walker, Vice Provost and Director of Admissions, University of Texas at Austin – Since its enactment in 1997, Texas' top-10-percent rule has been the subject of controversy. The law guarantees admission at any public university in the state to students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class. Dr. Walker will present new research that shows why high school ranking is an excellent and reliable measure for predicting academic performance.

Peter M. Siavelis, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Fellow and Associate Professor of Political Science, Wake Forest University – Moderator

How to Predict Engaged and Successful Students

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Steve Chatman, Project Director, Student Experience in the Research University, Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California Berkeley – Dr. Chatman will present results from a study of 92,000 students in the University of California system. The new research will show which types of students are making the most of their college experience by engaging in both academic work and campus life and student organizations.

Scott Highhouse, Professor of Industrial-Organizational Psychology, Bowling Green State University – It is not always easy to predict which students will succeed in college from a creativity standpoint. Dr. Highhouse will discuss the difficulty of conducting a holistic assessment of students to identify the creative leaders of tomorrow.

Omari Swinton, Assistant Professor, Howard University - Dr. Swinton will present new, empirical findings on the characteristics of students who are most likely to succeed in non-selective colleges. The research will show how non-cognitive abilities, such as work ethic, best predict persistence at an open-admit, historically black college.

Eric R. Stone, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Wake Forest University - Moderator

Outcomes Assessment: Evaluating College Ranking Systems and the Meaning of College Success

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Jeffrey Brenzel, Dean of Admission, Yale University

Robert Morse, Director of Data Research, U.S. News & World Report

Richard Vedder, Professor of Economics, Ohio University

Michele Gillespie, Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives and Kahle Associate Professor of History, Wake Forest University - Moderator

Brenzel, who is an outspoken critic of commercial magazine college rankings, will exchange views with *U.S. News & World Report's* Morse, and Vedder, who developed *Forbes'* new college ratings system.