

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 5 – A

DATE: October 6, 2020

SUBJECT

Test Optional Policy Endorsement

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2:3](#) – System Undergraduate Admissions

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

BOR Policy 2:3 (System Undergraduate Admissions) in Section 11, Applications and Procedures, allows for students to be accepted without the formal tests of ACT/SAT. South Dakota Board of Regents has in the past approved multiple pathways for student acceptance into the University System (see Section 11.3.1.1).

The impact of COVID-19 on universities and colleges alike has created a challenge for students due to testing centers, locations, rescheduling, etc. In addition, for some students, there are other impacts that create obstacles to taking the ACT/SAT. Therefore, many universities and colleges have waived their ACT/SAT for a period to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the National Association for College Admission Counseling has been promoting a test optional affirmation (see the [Press Release](#) in the linked URL).

Since BOR policy allows multiple pathways to admissions, this is already enacted for the universities to utilize. It is important to note that this does not bypass the scholarships that continue to rely on ACT/SAT scores for eligibility. Hence, the Test Optional is only for admissions and not for eligibility to scholarships as outlined within the rules/eligibility of those scholarships.

The admissions directors/leadership and student affairs council requested a letter to support and endorse this Test Optional BOR policy. Attachment I and II serves as endorsements for your admissions teams to utilize as they recruit students for the Fall 2021.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

There is no impact to BOR policy as the policy already provides for test optional language. The discussion should rather be focused on needs for recruitment and the impact then on campus scholarships and other scholarships that require ACT/SAT for eligibility.

ATTACHMENTS

Test Optional Attachment I – School Leadership (*to be provided at meeting*)

Test Optional Attachment II – Public Relations Memorandum (*to be provided at meeting*)

INFORMATIONAL ITEM