



WHY TEST?

RECENT RESEARCH INTO THE ROLE OF STANDARDIZED TESTING IN ADMISSIONS

Dan Escott and Jason Smith
UES Education

UES

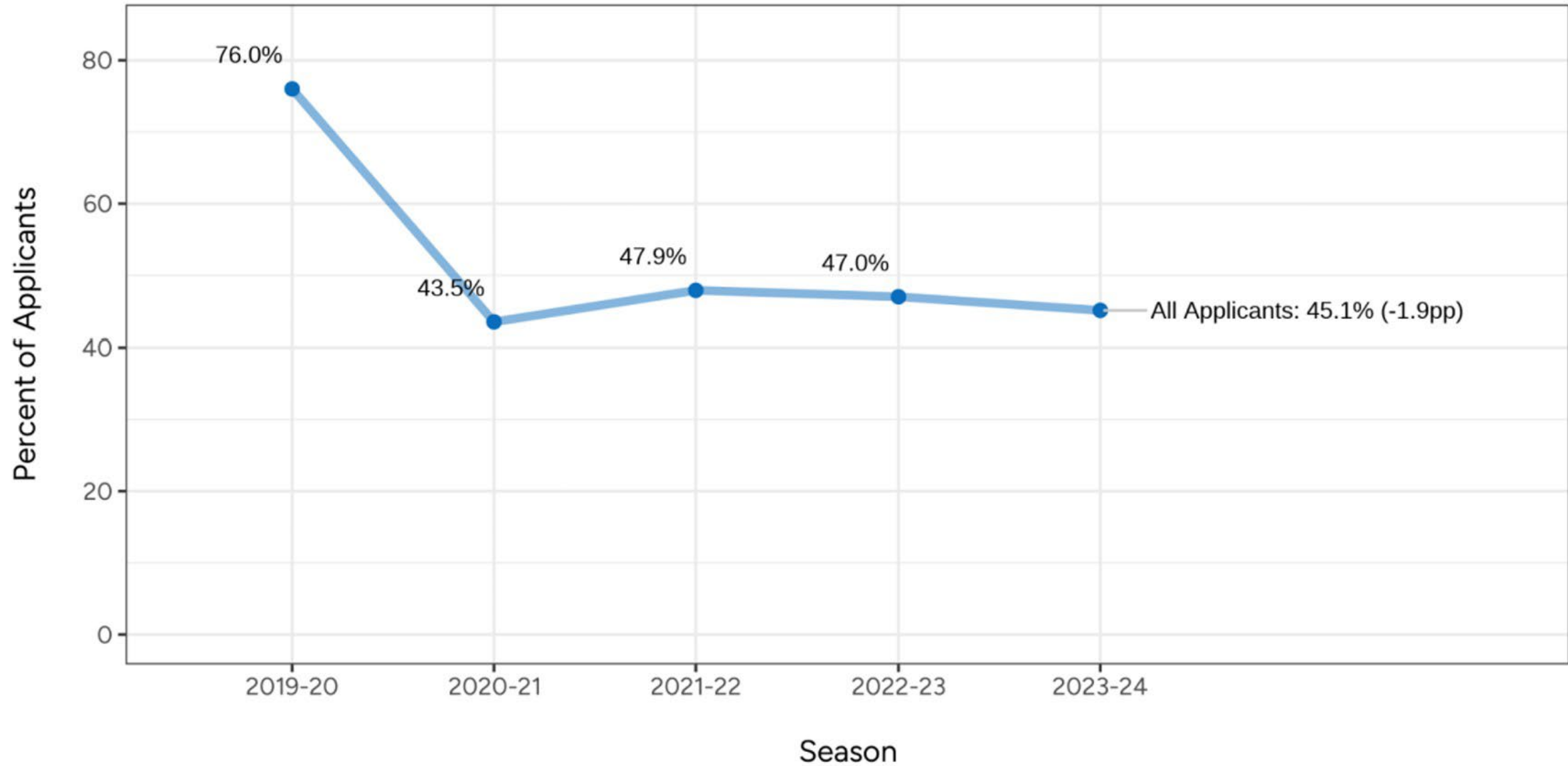
EXPERT ADMISSIONS

Member of





Figure 1. Percent of applicants reporting a test score since 2019–20





OBJECTIVES

- 1) To synthesize headlines about testing
- 2) To outline critical thinking skills on the SAT
- 3) To critique the SAT on what could be better



QUOTES

"With an abundance of high school GPAs surrounding 4.0...an SAT or ACT score is a proven differentiator that is in each student's and the University's best interest" [Those who opted in had an average GPA of 0.86 grade points higher during their first fall semester, controlling for a wide range of factors] – *UT Austin*

"Standardized tests help us identify academically prepared, socioeconomically disadvantaged students who could not otherwise demonstrate readiness because they do not attend schools that offer advanced coursework, cannot afford expensive enrichment opportunities, cannot expect lengthy letters of recommendation from their overburdened teachers, or are otherwise hampered by educational inequalities." – *Stu Schmill MIT Dean of Admissions*



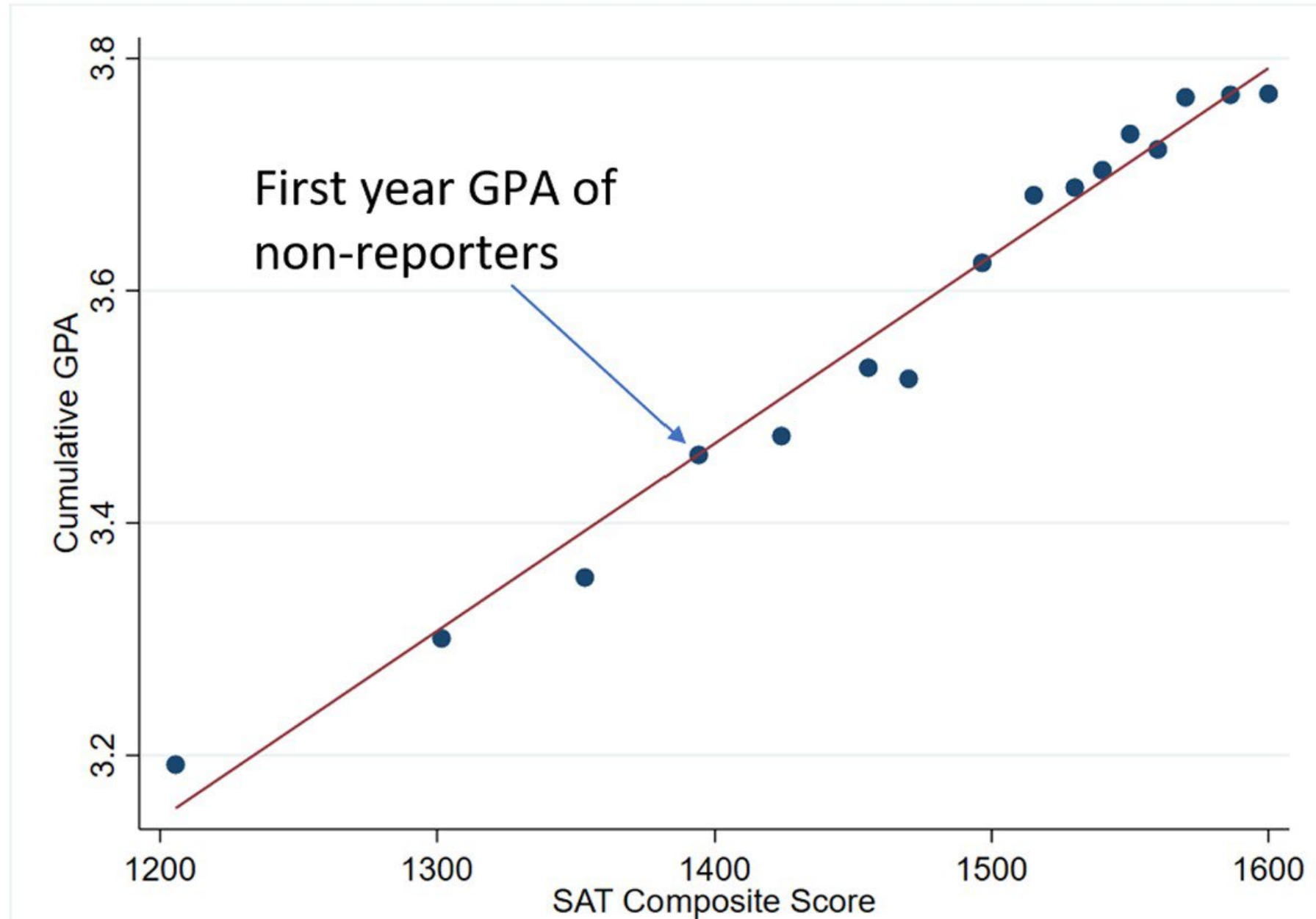
QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE INPUTS FOR DARTMOUTH STUDY

- Interviews & Commentary from Admissions
- White Paper by Institutional Research
- Dozens of Published & Unpublished Academic Papers on SAT & ACT scores & admissions
- Data on Dartmouth Applicants & Students
- Conversations w/ Other Institutions Asking the Same Questions

Relationship Between Cumulative First-Year GPA and Composite SAT Scores: Dartmouth Students



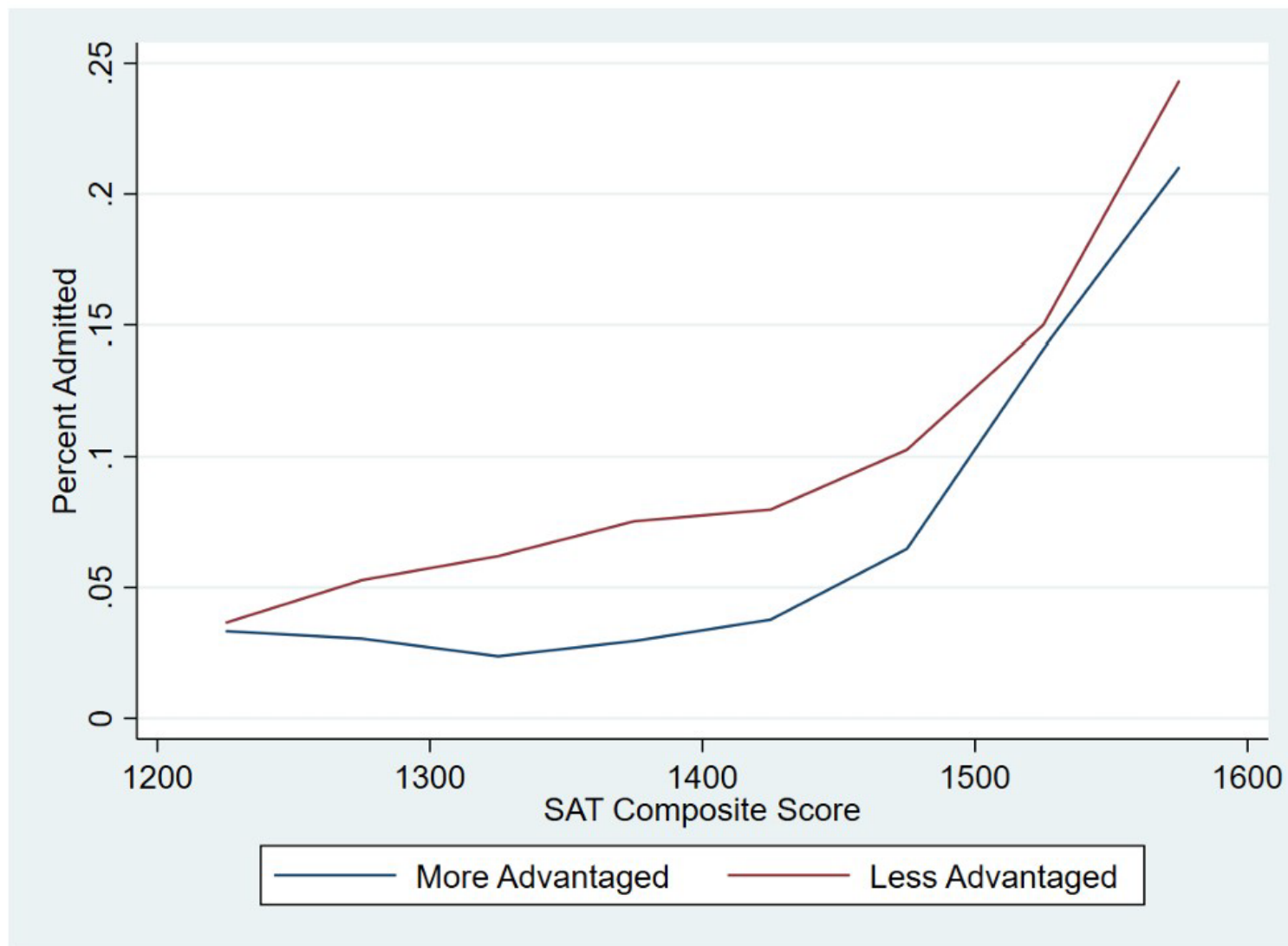
SAT SCORE VS GPA





Fraction admitted: by advantage

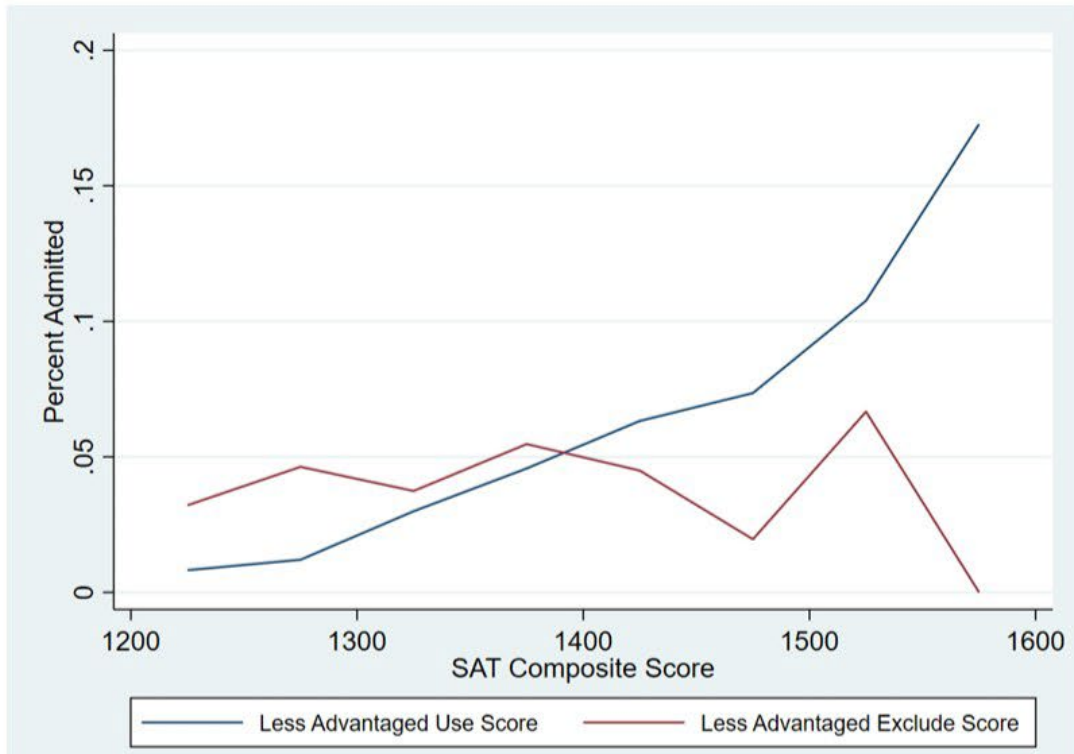
LESS-ADVANTAGED
STUDENTS AND
SAT SCORES



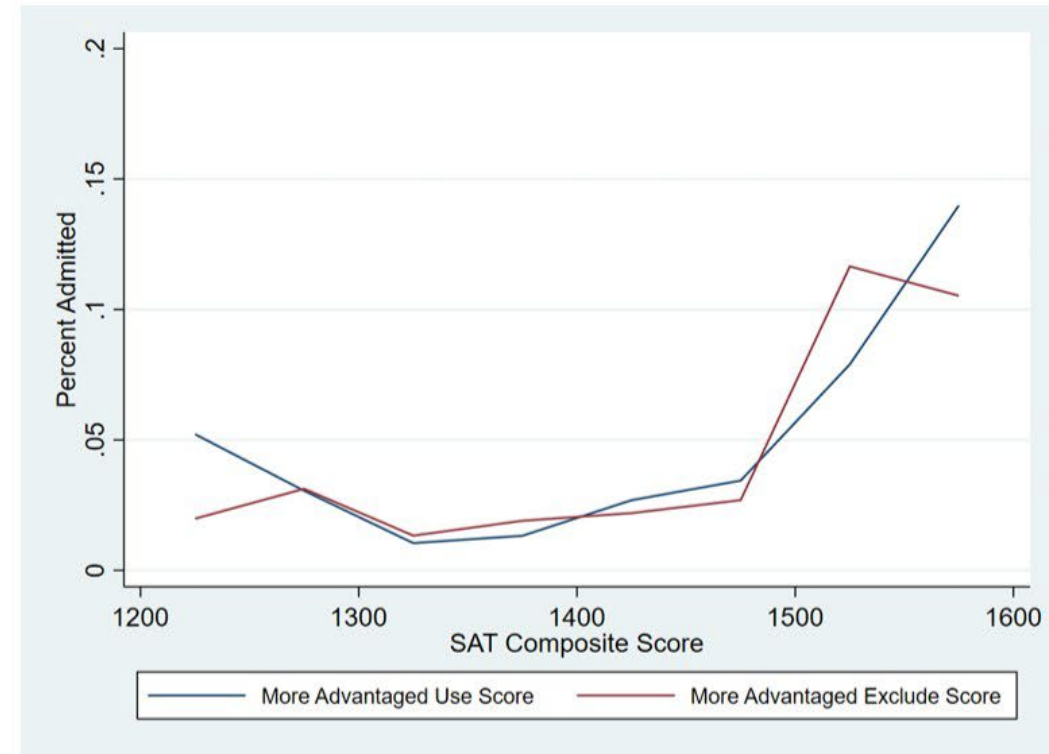


LESS-ADVANTAGED STUDENTS AND SAT SCORES

a. Less-Advantaged Applicants



b. More-Advantaged Applicants



Value of High School GPA and the SAT Composite in Predicting Cumulative First-Year GPA at Dartmouth



	(1) First Year GPA	(2) First Year GPA	(3) First Year GPA	(4) First Year GPA	(5) First Year GPA Less Adv	(6) First Year GPA More Adv
SAT Composite Score	0.00158*** (4.64e-05)		0.00139*** (4.88e-05)	0.00140*** (6.56e-05)	0.00129*** (0.000132)	0.00158*** (5.31e-05)
HS GPA		0.550*** (0.0261)	0.322*** (0.0263)	0.220*** (0.0485)		
Class Rank				-0.490*** (0.124)		
Constant	1.271*** (0.0687)	1.447*** (0.101)	0.304*** (0.103)	0.703*** (0.197)	1.630*** (0.185)	1.275*** (0.0794)
Observations	4,051	4,507	3,937	1,920	580	3,471
R-squared	0.222	0.090	0.255	0.260	0.141	0.203



ACADEMIC & CRITICAL REASONING SKILLS: VERBAL

- Vocab in Context: Approx 20%
- Reading Comprehension Stated or Implied: Approx 15%
- Hypothesis or Claim Support both Qualitative & Quantitative: approx 15%
- Grammar: approx 20%
- Prompt Based Reasoning: Approx 15%
- Logic and Relationships w/ Transition Words: 15%



ACADEMIC & CRITICAL REASONING SKILLS: MATH

- Algebra (Systems of Equations. Linear Relationships): 30%
- Advanced Math (Quadratic & Exponential Relationships): 20%
- Data & Problem Solving: 25%
- Geometry & Trigonometry: 25%



WHAT COLLEGEBOARD COULD DO BETTER: TRANSPARENCY & OPPORTUNITY

- 1) Nullify Score Choice 2009
- 2) Share Specifics on Test Scoring
- 3) Greater Access to Tests in All Markets and More Test Dates



ADVISING STUDENTS WHETHER TO SUBMIT SCORES

- Colleges publish “**mid-range**” for incoming freshman class:
25th and 75th percentile
- Students should ideally be above the **mid-point of the mid-range**
- NB: Mid-ranges generally **increase** when colleges go test-optional
- Between 25th percentile and mid-point: seek advice
 - Less-advantaged students should consider submitting scores
- Below the 25th percentile: probably better not to submit
- There is test-optional, and there is ‘test-optional’.



SUMMARY

- Testing can feel like an obstacle and improvements need to be made.
- But there is strong evidence behind why it's used.
- Can help highly-selective colleges find good students and identify high-quality students who are less advantaged.
- Ambitious students should consider testing early.