

FCAFA Proceedings - 29 March 2023

Present: Ron Lembo (chair and Professor of Sociology), Matt McGann (Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, ex officio), Cate Zolkos (Dean of Admission, ex officio), Gail Holt (Dean of Financial Aid, ex officio), Sonya Clark (Professor of Art and Art History), Maria Heim (Professor of Religion), Jill Miller (Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies), Nicholas Torres '24, Jalen Woodard '23

1. FCAFA Listening Session with Faculty

- a. Recapped discussion during Listening Session in CHI the evening before with faculty about the merits and downsides of continuing test-optional in Admission
- b. There seems to be a possibility that a test-optional policy could impact faculty and staff if students are not coming into classrooms with the same level of preparedness (as measured by standardized test scores).
- c. What seems to matter more to professors is supporting their students as best they can once the students are actually here, regardless of their past test scores, and that placement into appropriate courses is critical in achieving that.
- d. The ultimate goal in addressing Amherst's test-optional program right now is to equip current high school students, who need to start working on their standardized test plans and prep, with updated and relevant information about what Amherst will be expecting from them by the time they apply to college. Whether test-optional continues as a pilot program or is adopted as a regular part of Amherst's admission process, the goal of this committee will be to regularly consider and assess whether it could present barriers to student success at Amherst.
- e. One of the things this Committee would like to do is focus on the role of standardized testing in possibly helping faculty in placement of students into their courses, regardless of the more general sense of "preparedness." This is especially relevant and important in STEM courses, which often require preparedness in multiple disciplines in order to successfully complete a single course (e.g. certain level of math required for a chemistry course, which could also inform biology course placement, and so on).