

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UC Santa Barbara to Host National Conference on the SAT and the Future of Standardized Testing

Over the past four decades, most colleges and universities have looked to standardized tests to help them decide which high school students are best prepared to pursue higher education within their walls.

But are such tests a true measure of academic potential?

Can racial, class or gender bias be found in the questions?

Are better ways of admitting students being developed?

Academics, researchers and test officials will participate in a conference at the University of California, Santa Barbara next week (Friday and Saturday, Nov. 16 and 17) that will seek answers to those questions and more.

Titled "Rethinking the SAT: The Future of Standardized Testing in University Admissions," the conference will be highlighted by a keynote address by University of California President Richard Atkinson.

Other featured speakers include Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board; Richard Ferguson, president of the ACT, Inc. testing firm; and Nicholas Lemann, author of *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*.

Though the conference is aimed at University of California faculty, it is open to all. Registration is \$90 (\$45 for students). More information is available at www.ucsb.edu.

One portion of the conference that will be free and open to the public is a town hall meeting to address the topic, "Who Should Get Into the University of California and How."

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Saturday in Campbell Hall at UCSB.

All other conference meetings will be in Corwin Pavilion on the campus.

Walter Yuen, a professor of mechanical and environmental engineering at UCSB, said the conference was organized following remarks by Atkinson earlier this year calling for a reexamination of the SAT's use in admissions.

Yuen and conference co-chair Michael Brown a professor in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, realized that the faculty of the UC system might soon be called on to make a decision regarding the SAT and they wanted to be well informed about the options.

"I think the most important thing is to educate the faculty because the faculty in the end will have to make a decision on admissions," Yuen said. The conference is sponsored by the UCSB Academic Senate's Center for Faculty Outreach and its Committee on Admissions and Enrollment, and by the Chancellor's Outreach Advisory Board.

New research on standardized testing will be presented and discussed by speakers and panelists from a variety of institutions and organizations.

They include representatives of the California Department of Education, College Board, Educational Testing Service, FairTest, Princeton Review, Columbia and Rutgers universities, the University of Illinois, the University of California Office of the President, and UC campuses at Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Diego.

Panel topics include the effects of race, class and gender on the SAT; the predictive validity of SATs I and II; alternative ways of student assessment and admission; and equity and academic preparation.

The conference begins at 8 a.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. Saturday and will be broadcast live on the web at www.bookstore.ucsb.edu.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.