

# NACAC

## National Association for College Admission Counseling

*...guiding the way to higher education*

December 12, 2008

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1050 N. Highland Street  
Suite 400  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Phone: 703/836-2222  
800/822-6285  
Fax: 703/243-9375  
Web: [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)

Richard L. Ferguson  
CEO and Chairman of the Board  
ACT, Inc.  
500 ACT Drive  
P.O. Box 168  
Iowa City, IA 52243

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

On behalf of the 11,000 members of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, we are pleased to share the Report of the NACAC Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Admission. The Commission issued its report in September, and the NACAC Board of Directors approved the recommendations contained therein at its subsequent meeting in November, 2008.

The report contains numerous recommendations, several of which pertain directly to ACT, intended to promote best practice with respect to the use of standardized tests in undergraduate admission. While Joyce Smith and David Hawkins of NACAC have had a meeting with Jon Erickson and Steve Kappler of ACT in October, this letter initiates our formal follow up with ACT.

The Commission identified several areas in which it believed ACT could play a role in the improvement of admission practice. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the members of NACAC, we officially convey these recommendations and comments to you.

The Commission identified the following concerns regarding the possible misuse of college admission tests:

1.) **Institute Admission Test Usage Audit.** The Commission recommended that an audit of admission test usage by the College Board and ACT, similar to the auditing system currently in place for the College Board's Advanced Placement curriculum, may help limit the misuse of tests by bringing the organizations' combined weight to bear on those institutions and organizations that misuse admission test scores. We would like your opinion about how a procedure such as this could be formalized.

2.) **State Use of Admission Tests for K-12 Accountability.** The Commission expressed concern over the use of admission tests, without modification, as accountability measures for secondary schools—a purpose for which admission exams were not designed. The Commission believed that states should be careful not to assume that admission tests are aligned with high school standards, and that the process of aligning curricular standards with concepts measured in tests is a necessary first step toward considering their use as high school assessments. Several states that use admission tests in this manner have found it necessary to modify the exams to properly align with state standards. We would like to initiate a formal conversation among testing agencies and policymakers to determine how future admission policy can be better aligned with college preparatory coursework in secondary schools without stretching either beyond their practical limits, and would ask for

your support in helping to raise awareness among policymakers and the public about the purposes of admission tests.

The Commission also identified opportunities to conduct further research:

1.) **Test Preparation.** NACAC will seek external support from foundations to conduct an independent evaluation of test preparation to ensure that admission practitioners, students and families have access to proper consumer information about the effects of test preparation programs. As we begin the process of outlining our research process, we would like to ask for ACT's assistance in assembling research and designing research to more fully explore this issue.

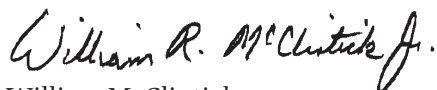
2.) **Independent Training for College Admission Counseling Professionals.** College Board and ACT provide excellent training for college admission counseling professionals. However, the Commission recommended that NACAC develop training on the fundamentals of admission testing that is independent of either test agency. Work is already underway on this project, and ACT staff has been assisting NACAC staff in the completion of this project.

3.) **Predictive Validity.** The Commission recommended that NACAC develop a body of knowledge related to predictive validity research on testing in admission. We have begun the process of reaching out to our members, and will reach out to ACT for research it may want to contribute.

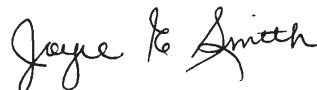
The Commission's work has generated considerable interest among our membership, the media, and the public concerned with admission practice in the United States. We would welcome the opportunity to work with ACT to ensure that the recommendations provided by the Commission come to fruition.

We have made this letter and other communications related to the NACAC Testing Commission public via the NACAC web site ([www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)). With your permission, we would like to make as much of the communications surrounding this report available to the public as possible to ensure an inclusive and transparent process of following up on the Commission's recommendations. A reply to this communication by January 15, 2009 will ensure that the NACAC Board of Directors can follow up on the Commission's recommendations in a timely fashion. We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,



William McClintick  
President



Joyce E. Smith  
CEO

cc: NACAC Board of Directors  
NACAC Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Admission