

Examining the Private Undergraduate Admission Exemption to Title IX’s Prohibition on Sex Discrimination

Ryan Creps
University at Buffalo

ABSTRACT

This study examined the implications of the statutory exception that allows private undergraduate institutions to be excluded from Title IX’s prohibition on considering an applicant’s sex in admissions decisions. Across both public and private institutions, applicant pools with larger proportions of women tended to correspond to higher admission rates for men. In contrast, institutions with higher proportions of enrolled women were associated with higher admission rates for women. Notably, lower overall admission rates at private institutions had a statistically significant correlation with higher admission rates for men, indicating a possible male admission advantage at selective private institutions. These results motivate further research on this topic using student-level admissions data to better assess whether such patterns reflect systematic differences among applicants or potential bias.

Keywords: Title IX, college admissions, enrollment management, education policy, access

It has been over 50 years since the passage of Title IX, a landmark achievement for women’s equity in education, and yet this widely celebrated legislation contains a surprising exemption. Admission to private undergraduate colleges is not covered by Title IX’s prohibition on sex-based discrimination.¹ While the legislation

¹ The text of Title IX refers specifically to “sex” discrimination in educational programs. However, in academic literature and everyday conversation, the term “gender” is often used when discussing Title IX.

unequivocally states that no individual should face discrimination “on the basis of sex” in federally funded education programs, this protection explicitly does not extend to private undergraduate admissions, as the groups subject to legislation are specifically listed as,

... institutions of vocational education, professional education, and graduate higher education, and to public institutions of undergraduate higher education. (Title IX, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681(a)(1))

While the exemption was originally introduced due to concerns among private institutions about legal liability during the initial implementation of Title IX (Rose, 2015), shifts in student demographics and outcomes have arguably weakened this justification over time. Private institutions, at the time, lobbied for the exemption due to concerns that increasing female enrollment would decrease academic standards, upset alumni, and deter donors leading to possible legal challenges during the initial implementation of the policy (Lew, 2021). The substantial increase in women’s application rates, college enrollment, and postsecondary success relative to men over the last half century undermines arguments that sex-conscious admissions are necessary to maintain academic standards.

The continued inclusion of this exemption in Title IX presents two core questions for lawmakers. First, the ethical question of whether it is justifiable for private colleges to retain the legal ability to use an applicant’s sex as an influential factor in undergraduate admissions decisions. And second, the empirical question of whether sex-based discrimination actually occurs in practice within private undergraduate admissions. Because this study relies on aggregated institutional data rather than student-level records, it cannot establish causality or speak to discriminatory intent. However, the results show a pattern in which highly selective private institutions appear to admit men at higher rates than less selective private colleges, offering suggestive evidence that warrants closer scrutiny and further research on this topic.

Analysis of institutional data from 2019 and 2022 indicates that highly selective private colleges more frequently exhibited patterns in admission that favored men compared to less selective private colleges. These observations raise important questions for policymakers about maintaining the Title IX exemption for private college admissions. They also highlight the need for further research using student-level admissions data to better understand whether these outcomes stem from differences among applicant groups, institutional bias, or other factors.

This conflation arises partly because discussions about equity, identity, and discrimination increasingly address not only biological distinctions (sex) but also social and cultural constructs (gender). Throughout this paper, I use the term “sex” to reflect the language of the statute, but when referencing sources that explicitly use “gender,” I preserve their original terminology to accurately represent the focus and analytic framework of these researchers. It is important to note that some studies used “sex” and “gender” interchangeably, which may reflect evolving perspectives on identity in policy and research. In this paper, I attempt to be both legally accurate and precise in describing the diversity of approaches used in the scholarly literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the disparate outcomes between sexes in college admissions, though limited, highlights important differences in how men and women experience the admissions process. A study that pre-dates Title IX found that some universities favored male applicants among the group of students admitted with lower academic qualifications (Walster et al., 1971). A later study found that declining numbers of male applicants at residential liberal arts colleges led to higher admission rates for men, particularly among less academically accomplished applicants (Baum & Goodstein, 2005). Practitioners have known of these differences for years and a former dean of admission at Kenyon College, a private selective institution in Ohio, addressed the issue in a *New York Times* op-ed, writing: “The elephant that looms large in the middle of the room is the importance of gender balance. Should it trump the qualifications of talented young female applicants?” (Delahunty Britz, 2006, p. 25). Nearly two decades later, the *Times* dubbed this pattern “affirmative action for men” (p. 54) in a story highlighting widespread institutional efforts to preserve balance between the sexes on campuses as the share of female applications continued to grow (Dominus, 2020).

To understand the role of an applicant’s sex in the admissions process, it is essential to first examine how colleges and universities evaluate applications. Most U.S. colleges use holistic admissions, an evaluation process that considers not just an applicant’s academic record, but the whole applicant and their fit with the institutional mission and priorities (Bastedo et al., 2018). Admission officers consider a combination of academic achievement (e.g., grades, test scores), nonacademic qualities (e.g., personal attitudes and character), and an applicant’s background (e.g., family and school environment) when making decisions (Hossler et al., 2019). While balancing the sexes may factor into admissions decisions, it is presented in this literature as one priority among many. However, whether it is a thumb on the scale favoring an equally qualified male applicant over a female applicant or an elephant providing a substantial advantage to men is not easily discernible to admission outsiders.

Differences in how applicants are evaluated and the relative weight assigned to components of the application, such as academic achievement, nonacademic qualities, and background characteristics, may influence the composition of the admitted student cohort, reflecting differences between men and women in these areas of assessment. An ideal analysis of admission differences by sex would utilize student-level data to enable matching techniques, such as propensity score matching, across multiple admission criteria. In the absence of such data, analyses should seek to account for potential group-level average differences informed by existing research on these factors. The following subsections review research related to the primary areas of holistic admission evaluation, highlighting documented differences between men and women in academic achievement, nonacademic qualities and applicant background.

Academic Achievement

The primary metrics for assessing academic achievement include standardized test scores, high school grades, and the rigor of a student's high school curriculum. Standardized test scores have been associated with higher admission rates for male applicants (Bielby et al., 2014). Colleges aiming to raise their average test scores may, therefore, exhibit admission patterns favoring men without specifically intending to increase the male student population. However, improvements in female performance on standardized tests (Cho, 2007; Goldin et al., 2006) may weaken this association and updated research in this area would be valuable. Conversely, admissions practices that emphasize high school grades, where women have generally outperformed men (Flashman, 2013; Fortin et al., 2015), may correspond with higher female admission rates. Policies such as test-optional admissions and automatic admission based on class rank, which could be viewed as putting less weight on test scores in admissions, have been documented to advantage female applicants (Bennett, 2022; Conger, 2015; Conger & Dickson, 2017).

The question of whether to prioritize test scores or high school grades in admissions remains highly contested and is ultimately determined by institutional priorities and values. One factor that institutions might consider is whether testing or high school performance is a better predictor of college success, which could be defined as first-year GPA, likelihood of persisting from the first to second year of college, or college graduation. Some research suggests that standardized test scores are more predictive of college success (Chetty et al., 2023; Friedman et al., 2025), while other studies find high school GPA and performance in rigorous courses to be stronger predictors (Galla et al., 2019; Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005; Koretz et al., 2016). Other studies offer evidence that combining test scores with high school performance may offer the best prediction of college success (Marini et al., 2021; Sawyer, 2013; Westrick et al., 2020; Zwick, 2019).

Another factor that institutions might consider is whether standardized testing poses a potential barrier for some students.² For instance, Dartmouth College reinstated its standard testing policy after the COVID-19 pandemic based on internal data that indicated that the inclusion of test scores would benefit students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in its admission process (Sacerdote et al., 2025). Meanwhile, other researchers (Bennett, 2022; Bleemer, 2024; Zwick & Himelfarb, 2011) have found evidence that requiring test scores may serve as a barrier to students from low-income backgrounds, noting that higher income students have greater access to test prep services. The discrepancy between these studies may indicate differences in how test scores are used across institutions.

The landscape of standardized testing has shifted notably since the COVID-19 pandemic, with most institutions having adopted test-optional policies. For the 2025

² In addition to the example of socioeconomic disparities, concerns have also been raised that the predictive validity of test scores vary by race and ethnicity (Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005) and language background (Zwick & Sklar, 2005).

fall semester, over 80% of four-year institutions did not require standardized test scores (FairTest, 2024), including both test-optional institutions, where submission is voluntary, and test-blind institutions, which do not consider test scores at all. Assessing the impact of test-optional policies on admissions by sex is complex without student-level data. Some applicants submit test scores and others do not, which could vary by sex. Moreover, institutions weigh test scores or the absence of test scores differently. The literature is inconclusive about how test scores may affect admission offers made to male and female applicants, but there is some evidence that requiring test scores may contribute to the differences in outcomes.

Despite the widespread move away from mandatory testing, a subset of institutions continues to require test scores. According to the College Board, 19 private and 35 public institutions will require SAT or ACT scores for admission in the 2025–26 cycle (College Board, 2025). These include most U.S. service academies, several southern public institutions, and some of the nation's most selective private institutions, such as Harvard, Stanford, and MIT. At highly selective institutions with large applicant pools, standardized test scores function as a tool to narrow the pool of qualified candidates. At the same time, when institutions have an abundance of choice amongst their applicants, they can consider nonacademic factors and applicant backgrounds when making admission offers. As such, it is also important for college admission researchers to consider how these factors may also influence male and female admission rates.

Nonacademic Qualities and Applicant Background

Nonacademic and contextual components of applications, which can be evaluated through components such as recommendation letters, play a significant role in admissions decisions at selective institutions and have the potential to introduce sex-related differences in admission outcomes. An analysis of over 600,000 applications found letters for female students tended to be longer and emphasize personal qualities and leadership, whereas letters for male students more often highlight intellectual promise, extracurricular involvement, and classroom behavior (Kim et al., 2025). While this research did not account for how these differences influenced admission decisions, it offers compelling evidence to differences in how male and female applicants are presented by recommenders. Research has shown that boys tend to receive lower grades when teachers include behavior assessments (Contreras, 2023; Ferman & Fontes, 2022). This may mean that recommendation letters, which often comment on student behavior, could be detrimental for male applicants.

It is also important to recognize that admission officers' interpretations of application materials can vary across institutions and may be affected by both individual biases and institutional priorities (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2024). Experimental evidence indicated admission officers responded more positively to communications from female applicants than male applicants, revealing a possible unconscious bias amongst admission officers that may affect decisions (Hanson, 2017). Regarding broader institutional priorities, research at the University of California, Berkeley indicated recommendation letters for underrepresented student

groups tended to be less strong on average, but admission officers placed less emphasis on these letters for such applicants due to the institutional desire to increase college access for these groups of students (Rothstein, 2022). This highlights how institutional goals can shape individual admissions decisions by shifting the weight of different components of the application and ultimately the composition of an admitted cohort of students.

Furthermore, broader institutional priorities may extend beyond applicant-level factors. Recent research found that institutions not meeting Title IX requirements for proportional female participation in athletics were more likely to admit men at higher rates (Creps, 2025). Efforts to limit female enrollment may represent an attempt to maintain compliance with Title IX athletic standards by controlling the ratio of female students and athletes, allowing institutions to avoid expanding women's athletic programs. This study did not differentiate between public and private institutions, underscoring a critical avenue for future research, particularly given the differing Title IX regulations governing admissions in these sectors.

Positionality Statement

Research on the differences in male and female admission outcomes is limited, partly due to restricted access to student-level data. My interest in this issue stems from nearly a decade of experience as a college admission officer at two highly selective private institutions with predominantly female applicant pools. Consistent with previous reports of a male admission advantage (Delahunty Britz, 2005; Dominus, 2023; West, 2021), I witnessed practices aimed at *sex balancing* admission cohorts. In these instances, the institutional preference for enrolling a similar share of men and women resulted in moving many qualified female applicants, whom the admission committee initially selected based on their academic and nonacademic achievements, to waitlists or denial, then filling those spaces with male applicants, who had originally been waitlisted or denied. This process, commonly known as *shaping*, motivated my investigation into the extent of such practices across undergraduate admissions.

While my motivation is grounded in my professional experience and supported by the aforementioned anecdotal report, this study intentionally shifts from anecdotal observation to systematic analysis by using publicly available institutional data. Unlike internal admissions records, which provide detailed student-level insight, publicly reported data such as IPEDS enable cross-institutional comparison. However, this approach masks within-institution variation and the institutional priorities that shape individual applicant decisions. This methodological reliance on aggregated data complements but cannot confirm my institutional insights as it cannot make any causal claims. With that in mind, my analysis of institutional data revealed patterns suggesting that selective private colleges may favor male applicants.

Although Title IX's exemption for private undergraduate admissions makes sex-conscious admissions legally permissible for these institutions, legal permissibility does not necessarily imply fairness, which can be understood as equitable treatment of applicants irrespective of their sex. While relying on institutional data limits claims

about individual-level treatment, these findings provide broader evidence beyond my own institutional context, indicating that sex-conscious practices warrant further suspicion and scrutiny. This study's results align with my professional observations and public reports from other former admissions officers. They underscore the importance of policy discussions concerning the continued inclusion of this exemption within Title IX and the need for more detailed research on this subject.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study leverages the theoretical framework of discrimination economics (Arrow, 1973; Becker, 2010) to investigate the possibility of sex differences in undergraduate admission outcomes. Becker conceptualized discrimination as a *taste* or preference that leads individuals or institutions to treat some groups differently, even when all observable qualifications are equal. In labor markets, this manifests as unequal wages or hiring practices that disadvantage certain groups, such as women. Translating this model to the sphere of college admissions, an institution or admissions officer might consciously or unconsciously prefer one sex over another. This could result in systematically higher or lower acceptance rates for similarly qualified applicants.

Arrow's (1973) statistical discrimination framework builds upon taste-based discrimination by considering the impact of imperfect information. Admission committees lack perfect insight into every applicant's ability and character and therefore may rely on group characteristics, such as sex, as proxies for unobservable attributes like leadership potential or perseverance. As noted in the literature review, these intangible factors can be presented differently for male and female applicants in recommendation letters (Kim et al., 2025), suggesting that institutions that prize certain factors over others may unintentionally bias admission offers to men or women. Arrow's (1973) emphasis on the limitations of market forces to self-correct underscores the potential need for policy intervention in admissions. This idea is at the heart of Title IX and its mandate to end sex-based discrimination in education. Thus, an exemption from this legislation leaves private undergraduate admission decisions subject to the limitations of market forces to correct any potential discrimination.

Empirical evidence from related fields add to this theoretical framework. For example, a study of *blind* auditions in orchestras revealed that removing personally identifying information increased the likelihood that women advanced through competitive selection, suggesting that processes designed to reduce the prominence of group identity can mitigate bias against a disadvantaged group (Goldin & Rouse, 2000). Similarly, research on double- and triple-blind peer review in scientific publishing provides mixed but suggestive evidence that anonymizing both applicant and reviewer identities can help diminish the effects of implicit or explicit gender bias, but these studies also caution that such procedural changes alone may not deliver complete equity (Conklin & Singh, 2022; Kern-Goldberger, 2022).

Combining these theoretical models and empirical studies offers a framework that suggests that both taste-based and statistical discrimination can influence outcomes in undergraduate admissions. Preferences of admission officers, reliance

on group-based heuristics, and institutional priorities are possible contributing factors to potential gaps between male and female acceptance rates. This framework provides both a theoretical rationale and empirical grounding for investigating sex-based inequities in college admissions.

METHOD

This study leverages a dataset derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) to explore possible determinants of male-female admission rate disparities across private and public postsecondary institutions. The sample comprises 377 public and 480 private co-educational institutions that participated in intercollegiate athletics. This exploratory analysis used the following cross-sectional analytical framework applied to 2022 data,

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \sum_j \gamma_j (X_{1i}^* + Z_{ji}) + \varepsilon_i$$

where Y is the difference in the male and female admission rates at institution, i . β_0 is the intercept and β_1 , β_2 , β_3 are the coefficients for the three different groups of variables: institutional characteristics, admission requirements, and admission statistics. X_{1i} is the vector of all institutional characteristics, including the binary indicator for private institutions, X_{1i}^* . X_{2i} is the vector of admission requirement variables, and X_{3i} is the vector of admission statistics variables. γ_j is the interaction term between private institutional status and all other variables in the model, Z_{ji} . Interaction effects allowed for the identification of how these associations differed between private and public institutions. The error term is ε_i .

To assess the robustness of the findings, parallel analyses were conducted using data from 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic to account for any potential pandemic-related effects in the model. The models also accounted for potential heteroskedasticity by estimating robust standard errors. This approach enabled evaluation of the consistency and reliability of observed relationships across different time points.

Measures

The dependent variable is defined as the difference between male and female admission rates, calculated by subtracting the female admission rate from the male admission rate. A positive value indicates a higher admission rate for males, whereas a negative value indicates a higher admission rate for females.

Admission factors and institutional characteristics were selected as independent variables based on the findings in the literature review. The descriptive statistics for the independent variables are presented in Table 1. The model incorporates binary indicators for institutionally reported admission requirements, specifically whether an institution required students to complete a college preparatory curriculum, request recommendation letters, and submit standardized test scores. Consistent with prior research, an applicant's performance in high school (Conger, 2015; Conger &

Dickson, 2017), their test scores (Bielby et al., 2014; Bennett, 2022), and their recommendations (Kim et al., 2025) can play a role in shaping admission decisions and may explain any observed difference in admission outcomes between men and women.

In 2022, public institutions were more likely to require a college preparatory curriculum and standardized test scores compared to private institutions, though only 13% of public institutions required standardized tests, reflecting the widespread adoption of test-optional policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, private institutions were far more likely to require recommendation letters, with 48% having this requirement compared to just 13% of public institutions. Both institution types had predominantly female applicant pools. Previous studies suggest that a higher female applicant share may be associated with a relative admission advantage for male applicants (Baum & Goodstein, 2005; Creps, 2025). Public institutions showed marginally higher admission rates on average, admitting 77% of applicants compared to 68% at private institutions. Admission selectivity varies widely across institutions, ranging from highly selective with single-digit admission rates to nearly open admission.

Institutional control variables include undergraduate enrollment size, the share of female students enrolled, tuition levels, and net assets per full-time student. Prior literature indicates that enrollment size and female enrollment share may influence institutional preferences for men or women in admissions (Baum & Goodstein, 2005; Creps, 2025), while tuition and net assets serve as proxies for institutional resources and prestige, factors potentially affecting admission strategies. Given the wide range, skewness, and potential for non-linear relationships, log-transformations were applied to enrollment, tuition, and asset variables. While this analysis primarily focuses on admission factors, caution is advised when interpreting coefficients of logged control variables, which should be understood as the estimated change in the male-female admission rate gap associated with a 1% increase in the corresponding variable.

RESULTS

The analysis identified statistically significant factors associated with the observed admission gap, including the share of female students enrolled, the share of female applicants, and the admission rate of public and private colleges. To address potential heteroskedasticity in the error terms, robust standard errors were calculated. The results were consistent when using robust standard errors compared to conventional standard errors, lending greater confidence to the findings.

Notably, the degree of selectivity at private institutions, which was the interaction effect between admission rate and private institution status, indicated that lower admission rates correlated with a relative preference for male applicants in admissions. This was a highly significant negative association ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating a substantial difference in admission rates for men and women between highly selective and less selective private institutions. For example, a private

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Independent Variables by Institutional Control, 2022-23

	Public		Private	
	Average (SD)	Range	Average (SD)	Range
Institutional Characteristics				
Undergraduate Enrollment	10,741 (9,487)	679-59,765	2,915 (3,654)	337-33,203
Enrollment (log)	3.860 (0.405)	2.832-4.776	3.302 (0.342)	2.528-4.521
Female Enrollment (%)	57.0% (6.8)	23.3-75.6	55.4% (8.3)	22.9-77.1
Tuition	10,528 (3,130)	3,356-23,970	42,963 (12,516)	6,304-66,490
Tuition (log)	4.021 (0.128)	3.543-4.397	4.629 (0.143)	3.817-4.840
Net Assets / FTE (log)	3.685 (1.902)	0-5.902	5.201 (0.498)	0-6.950
Admission Requirements				
College Prep Curriculum	56.0% (49.7)	0-100	41.5% (49.3)	0-100
Recommendation Letter(s)	12.7% (33.4)	0-100	47.9% (50.0)	0-100
Standardized Test Scores	13.3% (34.0)	0-100	1.9% (13.6)	0-100
Admission Statistics				
Female Applications (%)	59.1% (6.3)	31.1-73.3	55.7% (0.092)	15.4-79.8
Admit Rate	76.9% (18.3)	8.6-99.9	67.6% (0.250)	2.7-99.9
Observations	377		480	

SOURCE: IPEDS and EADA.

Table 2: Regression of Male-Female Admission Rate Gap by Institutional Control, 2022-23

	Main Effects			Private Interaction Effects		
	Coeff.	SE	RSE	Coeff.	SE	RSE
Institutional Characteristics						
Private	0.078	0.143	0.172	-	-	-
Enrollment (log)	-0.002	0.007	0.005	0.009	0.011	0.012
Female Share of Enrollment	-0.297	0.075***	0.070***	-0.126	0.089	0.111
Tuition (log)	-0.020	0.022	0.019	0.006	0.031	0.037
Net Assets / FTE (log)	0.001	0.001	0.001	-0.007	0.007	0.008
Admission Requirements						
College Prep Curriculum	-0.006	0.006	0.004	0.005	0.008	0.007
Recommendation Letter(s)	-0.012	0.008	0.006+	-0.001	0.010	0.009
Standardized Test Scores	0.010	0.008	0.007	0.045	0.020*	0.020*
Admission Statistics						
Female Share of Applications	0.316	0.080***	0.073***	0.087	0.091	0.109
Admit Rate	0.039	0.016*	0.013**	-0.078	0.021***	0.019***
Observations				857		
Prob > F				<0.0001		
R-squared				0.1645		
Adj. R-squared				0.1456		
Root MSE				0.0511		

SOURCE: IPEDS and EADA. NOTE: + = $p < 0.1$, * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$. Coefficients, standard errors, and robust standard errors are reported as decimals, but are referred to as percentages within the text for interpretability.

institution with a 10% admission rate, compared to one with a 70% rate, would be predicted to offer a male admission advantage approximately five percentage points higher than the less selective institution.

Additional findings point to positive main effects for both the female share of applications ($p < 0.001$) and undergraduate admission rates, with the statistical significance of admission rates increasing under robust standard error estimation from $p < 0.05$ to $p < 0.01$. The practical impact of the admission rate effect, however, is relatively small. A 50-percentage point difference in institutional admission rates was associated with only a 2-percentage point greater predicted male admission advantage. This finding runs counter to the assumption that more selective institutions would exhibit greater opportunities for sex-based selection bias but does not fully offset the male advantage at highly selective private colleges. The share of female applicants had a greater practical impact. A 10-percentage point difference in the share of female applications was predicted to correspond with a 3-percentage point higher male admission advantage.

The admission requirement variables did not demonstrate significant main effects except for the requirement of recommendation letters when robust standard errors were applied. Institutions requiring recommendation letters exhibited a modest but statistically marginal tendency to admit women at a rate 1.2 percentage points higher than men (coefficient: -0.012 , $p < 0.1$). A positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) interaction between private institutions and the requirement for standardized test scores was found, implying that private institutions that required test scores had a predicted 4.5-percentage point greater male admission advantage compared to their counterparts without such a requirement. However, this result should be interpreted extremely cautiously, as only 1.9% of private institutions required standardized test scores in 2022.

The analysis of institutional characteristics revealed a statistically significant negative main effect of the female share of enrollment on the male-female admission rate gap ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that colleges with higher proportions of enrolled women, regardless of sector, tended to exhibit relatively higher admission rates for women. Specifically, a coefficient of -0.297 suggests that an institution with a 10-percentage point higher share of female enrollment (for example, 60% versus 50%) is predicted to admit women at a rate approximately 3 percentage points higher than men compared to the institution with balanced enrollment.

Robustness Check

Given that the primary analysis used data collected during the post-COVID-19 period, it is important to consider how pandemic-related shifts in student and institutional behaviors may have influenced these findings. To assess the stability of

the results, a robustness check was conducted using cross-sectional data from 2019, which represents the last pre-pandemic cohort.³

Descriptive statistics for the independent variables from this period are presented in Table 3. Institutional characteristics and admission outcomes were largely consistent with those observed in 2022, however, some differences existed regarding admission requirements. Most importantly, the share of institutions requiring standardized test scores was substantially higher in 2019, with 87% of public and 63% of private institutions requiring testing, compared to only 13% and 2% respectively in 2022. Additionally, while slightly fewer private institutions required a college preparatory curriculum in 2019, 36% versus 42% in 2022, a greater share required recommendation letters, 55% compared to 48%. This may mean as a group, private institutions were more influenced by test scores and recommendation letters in this cohort than in 2022. Similarly, admission decisions from public institutions may have been more influenced by test scores in 2019.

The 2019 regression analysis revealed that the negative interaction effect between private colleges and admission rates remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), reinforcing the finding that more selective private colleges tended to exhibit a male admission advantage. The main effect of admission rates retained a positive association but was not statistically significant. The effect size for the female share of applications (0.303) was nearly identical to 2022 (0.316), reflecting a consistent influence of the demographics of the applicant pool on admission outcomes. While the 2019 data suggested a potential interaction effect between private colleges and their female share of applications ($p < 0.05$), this effect did not hold under robust standard error estimation.

Unlike the 2022 findings, the interaction effect for the requirement of standardized test scores and private colleges was not significant in 2019. This supports my initial concerns that the 2022 result may have been influenced by the small subset of private colleges requiring test scores during this time. Further examination of the data revealed that these institutions tended to be highly selective with high average test scores. However, in 2019, requiring standardized test scores was positively associated with a male admission advantage across all institutions, with an estimated effect size of approximately a 2-percentage point higher male admission rate for institutions requiring scores compared to those that did not. Since this association did not differ between public and private institutions, it raises further speculation that preference for standardized test scores may explain part of the male admission advantage. In other words, men may be advantaged by institutions requiring test scores, not because they are male, but because their test scores meet a specific institutional priority.

³ In addition to the 2019 analysis, I conducted several other analyses of pre-pandemic admission cycles and found similar results. I can include these analyses in an appendix if reviewers feel this would strengthen the robustness of this research.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Independent Variables by Institutional Control, 2019-20

	Public		Private	
	Average (SD)	Range	Average (SD)	Range
Institutional Characteristics				
Undergraduate Enrollment	11,219 (8,981)	596-47,537	2,993 (3,389)	421-28,434
Enrollment (log)	3.903 (0.377)	2.775-4.677	3.334 (0.322)	2.624-4.454
Female Share of Enrollment	56.1% (6.7)	23.9-76.0	55.9% (8.0)	21.9-77.6
Tuition	10,051 (2,891)	3,260-23,628	39,885 (11,001)	5,790-61,788
Tuition (log)	4.061 (0.122)	3.589-4.450	4.658 (0.135)	3.539-4.867
Net Assets / FTE (log)	3.344 (2.065)	0-5.790	5.137 (0.496)	0-6.904
Admission Requirements				
College Prep Curriculum	58.3% (49.4)	0-100	35.6% (47.9)	0-100
Recommendation Letter(s)	13.5% (34.2)	0-100	54.6% (49.8)	0-100
Standardized Test Scores	86.8% (33.9)	0-100	63.3% (48.2)	0-100
Admission Statistics				
Female Share of Applications	58.8% (6.5)	28.5-73.2	57.2% (8.9)	21.8-77.1
Admit Rate	71.9% (17.1)	12.3-100.0	62.8% (22.6)	4.3 -100.0
Observations	379		480	

SOURCE: IPEDS and EADA. NOTE: Admission requirements are binary variables indicating whether an institution required these materials for admissions. The average is the share of institutions requiring this material.

Table 4: Regression of Male-Female Admission Rate Gap by Institutional Control, 2019-20

	Main Effects			Private Interaction Effects		
	Coeff.	SE	RSE	Coeff.	SE	RSE
Institutional Characteristics						
Private	-0.102	0.131	0.165	-	-	-
Enrollment (log)	-0.003	0.007	0.007	0.18	0.010+	0.011+
Female Share of Enrollment	-0.386	0.066***	0.114***	-0.098	0.081	0.134
Tuition (log)	-0.027	0.020	0.024	0.019	0.028	0.036
Net Assets / FTE (log)	< 0.001	0.001	0.001	-0.004	0.006	0.006
Admission Requirements						
College Prep Curriculum	-0.004	0.005	0.004	-0.003	0.007	0.007
Recommendation Letter(s)	-0.008	0.007	0.006	-0.002	0.009	0.008
Standardized Test Scores	0.022	0.007**	0.007***	-0.004	0.008	0.008
Admission Statistics						
Female Share of Applications	0.303	0.067***	0.128*	0.156	0.079*	0.146
Admit Rate	0.008	0.014	0.015	-0.045	0.019*	0.019*
Observations				859		
Prob > F				<0.0001		
R-squared				0.2196		
Adj. R-squared				0.2019		
Root MSE				0.0443		

SOURCE: IPEDS and EADA. NOTE: + = $p < 0.1$, * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$. Coefficients, standard errors, and robust standard errors are reported as decimals, but are referred to as percentages within the text for interpretability.

Consistent with the 2022 data, the female share of enrollment maintained a highly significant negative association with the male admission advantage ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that institutions with higher proportions of enrolled female students tended to admit female applicants at relatively higher rates than male applicants compared to institutions with balanced student bodies.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study align with the claims of former admission officers and with my own professional experience, indicating that private institutions with selective admission processes possess the capacity to balance the sexes of their admitted cohorts. This association between admission selectivity at private institutions and higher admission rates for male applicants compared to female applicants persisted after controlling for institutional characteristics and accounting for variation in admission requirements. Taken together, these patterns sharpen the ethical question of whether it remains defensible for private institutions to retain a legal exemption that permits the use of an applicant's sex as an influential factor in undergraduate admissions. Private colleges and universities would likely contest any effort to remove this exemption by invoking principles of institutional autonomy and limited governmental intrusion into academic affairs, yet in a period of declining public trust in higher education, particularly among elite private institutions, securing broad public support for such a position may prove especially difficult.

Assessing Admission Outcomes Using Aggregated Data

While statistical evidence is not necessary to examine the ethical question of whether the exemption should be eliminated, it is essential for addressing the empirical question of whether private institutions are discriminating against female applicants. The patterns documented in this analysis in combination with anecdotal reports provide suggestive but not definitive evidence that the exemption is being misused. Private institutions could make a case that, in the absence of student-level evidence of discriminatory treatment, the differences observed in the aggregated institutional data merely reflect underlying differences in applicant characteristics, and that institutional preferences correlated with those characteristics may, in turn, generate the observed differences in admission rates.

For instance, the literature suggests that requiring standardized test scores may advantage men (Bielby et al., 2014), whereas test-optional policy may advantage women (Bennett, 2022). Consistent with these studies, the 2022 results indicate that private colleges requiring test scores were associated with admitting men at rates approximately 4.5 percentage points higher than the private colleges that did not require scores, although this pattern may be partly due to the limited number of private institutions requiring test scores in 2022 and was not present in the 2019 data when more than half of private institutions required test scores. Instead, in 2019, there was a main effect for test requirements, where both public and private institutions requiring test scores were predicted to admit men at rates 2.2 percentage point higher than institutions that did not require scores, an association that may reflect differences

in test scores between men and women rather than bias in the admission process. Notably, in both years, the male admission advantage at selective private institutions existed in addition to the male admission advantage associated with test requirements, indicating that above and beyond differences related to testing, private colleges with lower admission rates still offered a relative admission advantage to male applicants, underscoring the need for additional research on how test-required and test-optional policies shape sex differences in admission results.

The irony of private institutions potentially asserting that there is no evidence of discrimination is that they already possess the student-level data necessary to evaluate this empirical question. Their unwillingness to share anonymized student-level admissions data, such as test scores and transcript information disaggregated by sex, helps to sustain the evidentiary gap that limits empirical scrutiny. Although the federal government has proposed requiring institutions to report more detailed admission data disaggregated by race and sex beginning in 2026 (IPEDS 2025-26 through 2026-27, 2025), these data will still be aggregated at the institutional level, limiting strong causal inferences about any observed asymmetries across groups. From a research standpoint, a better approach would involve the collection of anonymized student-level data that could be made available to researchers under restricted-use agreements. However, critics already contend that the new federal reporting requirements are administratively burdensome for colleges and universities and exceed the capacity of a downsized Department of Education to collect, manage, and monitor such information (Barshay, 2025; Peters & Velez, 2025). These critiques would almost certainly grow much louder if institutions were required to submit anonymized student-level data, even if the mandate applied only to a limited set of highly selective institutions.

The Difficulty of Defining Discrimination in Holistic Admissions

Additional data for empirical inquiry would still face difficulties in effectively assessing all components of holistic admissions review, many of which may vary systematically between male and female and could lead to different admission outcomes without necessarily reflecting bias in the process. For instance, the literature suggests that the information and characteristics presented in recommendation letters may differ for men and women, possibly reflecting teacher's assessments of behavioral differences (Contreras, 2023; Ferman & Fontes, 2022; Kim et al., 2025). The 2022 analysis found marginal evidence for the claim that requiring recommendation letters is linked to differences in admission rates between the sexes. Institutions requiring recommendation letters had 1.2 percentage point higher admission rate for women ($p < 0.1$) compared to institutions that did not require recommendation letters, although this correlation was not significant in 2019 and is complicated by that fact that fewer than 15% of public institutions required recommendation letters in either year. The finding is generally weak, but the detection of statistical significance encourages further quantitative analysis into the effects of recommendation letters on admission outcomes, especially given that much of the research on this topic is qualitative or descriptive (Kim et al., 2025; Rowan-Kenyon

et al., 2024) and has rarely examined its direct links to admission decisions (Rothstein, 2022).

There is no policy solution that can easily define discrimination in holistic admissions. A federal mandate for additional data alone would not resolve this challenge because the evaluation of essays and letters of recommendation are inherently subjective and these components are difficult to systematically compare across applicants. Even if lawmakers were to rescind the Title IX exemption for private institutions, regulators would still need a mechanism to monitor institutional practices and to investigate suspected discrimination. A radical alternative would be for the federal government to prohibit the collection of applicants' sex at Title IV institutions, in essence creating a sex-blind admission process for all federally funded institutions. Such a mandate, however, would require reenvisioning the college application since interviews, essays, recommendations letters, and even applicants' names or extracurricular activities can reveal or strongly signal sex.

Focusing on the Highly Selective Institutions

A striking takeaway from this analysis was the main correlations of the female share of enrollment and the female share of applications with the male admission advantage. The literature indicates that higher female representation in the applicant pool and among enrolled students has been associated with an admission advantage for men at selective institutions (Baum & Goodstein, 2005; Creps, 2025). Consistent with this work, this analysis found that a larger share of female applicants was associated with higher admission rates for men, whereas higher rates of female enrollment were surprisingly associated with lower admission rates for men. These results were statistically significant and indicate a potential nonlinear relationship or interaction effect between these two variables.

When considering the dynamic between female applicants and female enrollment among private institutions of different degrees of selectivity, it may be explained as a tipping point in enrollment management. As the share of female applicants increases, highly selective institutions can strategically adjust admission offers to balance the sexes, while non-selective institutions, which admit most applicants, have less capacity to confer a male admission advantage and therefore enroll more women as the applicant pool becomes more female. These findings motivate further research on how the interaction between the share female application and female enrollment is linked to differences in admission outcomes between men and women across institutional tiers of admission selectivity.

From a policy perspective, these findings highlight the heterogeneity of colleges and universities within the higher education system. Since most institutions are not selective and admit most of their applicants, concerns about sex-based discrimination in admissions are most salient at institutions that can choose among many qualified applicants. One possible regulatory approach would be for the federal government to focus monitoring, investigation, and enforcement efforts on a narrower set of highly selective institutions, both public and private, requiring only these institutions to submit detailed admissions data for review. To buffer against any potential political

interference, responsibility for routine data review and audit could be assigned to accrediting agencies, with cases exhibiting strong signals of discrimination referred to the Office for Civil Rights for formal investigation. This policy would have to address difficult questions about how to define which institutions are sufficiently selective to fall under such requirements, how frequently audits should occur, and what evidentiary thresholds should trigger a finding of bias.

Limitations

As noted in the positionality statement, while the current findings suggest a potential link between highly selective private institutions and a male admission advantage, the available data are insufficient to establish a causal relationship. IPEDS data, which are aggregated at the institutional level and cannot be disaggregated to the student level, present several limitations: they cannot account for sex-based variation in admissions factors such as test submission status, test scores, or admission rates by score and status; they may incorporate internal institutional priority biases; and they do not capture holistic application elements such as essays or letters of recommendation.

The evidence in combination with my professional experience and publicly reported observations of other former admission officers provides initial support for an association (Delahunty Britz, 2005; Dominus, 2023; West, 2021), but important criteria such as exclusion of alternative explanations cannot be fully evaluated with the use of institutional data. Therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution while also inviting further inquiry and encouraging deeper dialogue regarding the Title IX exemption for private undergraduate admissions. Further research with student-level data is needed to clarify whether the observed association reflects a causal effect. Until such evidence is available, the interpretation of these findings remains suggestive rather than conclusive.

CONCLUSION

The private college admission exemption reflects a tradition of granting private institutions autonomy in academic decisions; however, sex-based admission practices raise important questions about equity and reveal enduring resistance to demographic change within higher education, particularly among the most selective institutions. This research may lead to calls to rescind the private undergraduate admissions exemption under Title IX, requiring private colleges to meet the same federal standards in undergraduate admissions as all other postsecondary institutions. This change would require congressional action, a process fraught with political challenges. If rescinded, practical questions would need to be addressed, such as how to monitor and enforce compliance and whether institutions could continue collecting sex-related data or would this change lead to sex-blind admissions requirements.

A blinded review of applications has demonstrated the potential to reduce bias in other highly selective venues, including academic research (Conklin & Singh, 2022; Kern-Goldberger, 2022) and orchestra selections (Goldin & Rouse, 2000), though this approach does not necessarily eliminate all disparities and may not be a perfect

corollary to undergraduate admissions. Further, a move to sex-blind policies in college admissions could require revisions to application materials, potentially requiring the omission of references to sex or gender in recommendation letters and personal essays, which would add complexities to its implementation and impact public institutions as much as it does private institutions.

As noted in my positionality statement, based on my experience as an admission officer, I can confirm that at least at the institutions where I worked, there were significant disparities in the academic and nonacademic accomplishments of average admitted male and female applicants. Public reports and personal conversations have indicated that this situation was not unique to my experience. The analysis in this study raises further suspicions about the extent of a male admission advantage in higher education and especially at highly selective institutions.

Yet, until large-scale student-level admission data is made available to researchers, the strength of these claims remains suspect at best. Advancing research on this topic using student-level data is vital for understanding the factors behind disparities in the admission rates of men and women. Although institutional reluctance to share their data creates barriers to this work, the involvement of independent, nonpartisan research organizations and anonymized data could foster trusted, rigorous analysis that could shed more light on this issue and reveal greater nuance across the higher education landscape. Increased transparency into admissions data is important for evidence-based policymaking and institutional reforms that promote diversity and access across higher education.

REFERENCES

- Arrow, K. (1973). The theory of discrimination. In O. Ashenfelter, & A. Rees (Eds.), *Discrimination in Labor Markets*, Princeton University Press.
- Barshay, J. (2025, August 18). Inaccurate, impossible: Experts knock new Trump plan to collect college admissions data. *The Hechinger Report*. <https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-new-college-admissions-data-collection/>
- Bastedo, M. N., Bowman, N. A., Glasener, K. M., & Kelly, J. L. (2018). What are we talking about when we talk about holistic review? Selective college admissions and its effects on low-SES students. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 89(5), 782-805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1442633>
- Baum, S., & Goodstein, E. (2005). Gender imbalance in college applications: Does it lead to a preference for men in the admissions process?. *Economics of Education Review*, 24(6), 665-675. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2004.09.008>
- Becker, G. S. (2010). *The economics of discrimination*. University of Chicago Press.
- Bennett, C. T. (2022). Untested admissions: Examining changes in application behaviors and student demographics under test-optional policies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 59(1), 180-216. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312211003526>
- Bielby, R., Posselt, J. R., Jaquette, O., & Bastedo, M. N. (2014). Why are women underrepresented in elite colleges and universities? A non-linear decomposition

- analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, 55, 735-760. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-014-9334-y>
- Bleemer, Z. (2024). *Top percent policies and the return to postsecondary selectivity*. SSRN. <https://economics.princeton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/BleemerZachary-JMP.pdf>
- Chetty, R., Deming, D. J., Friedman, J. N. (2023). *Diversifying society's leaders? The determinants and causal effects of admission to highly selective private colleges* (NBER Working Paper No. w31492). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w31492>
- Cho, D. The role of high school performance in explaining women's rising college enrollment. *Economics of Education Review* 26, no. 4 (2007): 450-462. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2006.03.001>
- College Board. (2025). *Complete list of colleges that require SAT or ACT scores admissions*. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/find-your-fit/what-colleges-require-SAT>
- Conger, D. (2015). High school grades, admissions policies, and the gender gap in college enrollment. *Economics of Education Review*, 46, 144-147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2015.03.003>
- Conger, D., & Dickson, L. (2017). Gender imbalance in higher education: Insights for college administrators and researchers. *Research in Higher Education*, 58, 214-230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-016-9421-3>
- Conklin, M., & Singh, S. (2022). Triple-blind review as a solution to gender bias in academic publishing, a theoretical approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47(12), 2487-2496. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2081681>
- Contreras, D. (2023). Gender differences in grading: teacher bias or student behaviour? *Education Economics*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2023.2252620>
- Creps, R. (2025). Reconsidering determinants of Title IX compliance: Introducing admission factors disaggregated by gender and female athletic expenditures. *Educational Policy*, 08959048251345826. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048251345826>
- Delahunty Britz, J. (2006, March 23). To all the girls I've rejected. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/23/opinion/to-all-the-girls-ive-rejected.html>
- Dominus, S. (2023, September 8). 'There was definitely a thumb on the scale to get boys'. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/08/magazine/men-college-enrollment.html>
- FairTest. (2024, February 21). Overwhelming majority of U.S. colleges and universities remain ACT/SAT optional or test-blind/score-free for fall 2025. *FairTest*. <https://fairtest.org/overwhelming-majority-of-u-s-colleges-and-universities-remain-act-sat-optional-or-test-blind-score-free-for-fall-2025/>
- Flashman, J. (2013). A cohort perspective on gender gaps in college attendance and completion. *Research in Higher Education*, 54, 545-570. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9285-8>

- Fortin, N. M., Oreopoulos, P., & Phipps, S. (2015). Leaving boys behind: Gender disparities in high academic achievement. *Journal of Human Resources*, 50(3), 549-579. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.50.3.549>
- Friedman, J. N., Sacerdote, B., Staiger, D. O., & Tine, M. (2025). *Standardized test scores and academic performance at ivy-plus colleges* (NBER Working Paper No. w33570). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w33570#fromrss>
- Galla, B. M., Shulman, E. P., Plummer, B. D., Gardner, M., Hutt, S. J., Goyer, J. P., D'Mello, S. K., Finn, A. S., & Duckworth, A. L. (2019). Why high school grades are better predictors of on-time college graduation than are admissions test scores: The roles of self-regulation and cognitive ability. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(6), 2077-2115. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219843292>
- Goldin, C., Katz, L. F., & Kuziemko, I. (2006). The homecoming of American college women: The reversal of the college gender gap. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(4), 133-156. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.20.4.133>
- Goldin, C., & Rouse, C. (2000). Orchestrating impartiality: The impact of "blind" auditions on female musicians. *American Economic Review*, 90(4), 715-741. <https://www.doi.org/10.1257/aer.90.4.715>
- Hanson, A. (2017). Do college admissions counselors discriminate? Evidence from a correspondence-based field experiment. *Economics of Education Review*, 60, 86-96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2017.08.004>
- Hoffman, J. L., & Lowitzki, K. E. (2005). Predicting college success with high school grades and test scores: Limitations for minority students. *The Review of Higher Education* 28(4), 455-474. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2005.0042>.
- Hossler, D., Chung, E., Kwon, J., Lucido, J., Bowman, N., & Bastedo, M. (2019). A study of the use of nonacademic factors in holistic undergraduate admissions reviews. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 90(6), 833-859. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1574694>
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2025-26 through 2026-27, 90 F.R. 217 (proposed November 13, 2025). <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/13/2025-19874/agency-information-collection-activities-submission-to-the-office-of-management-and-budget-for>
- Kern-Goldberger, A. R., James, R., Berghella, V., & Miller, E. S. (2022). The impact of double-blind peer review on gender bias in scientific publishing: a systematic review. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 227(1), 43-50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2022.01.030>
- Kim, B. H., Park, J. J., Lo, P., Baker, D., Wong, N., Breen, S., Truong, H, Zheng, J., Rosinger, K., & Poon, O. A. (2025). Letters of recommendation by high school counselors in selective college admissions: Differences by race and socioeconomic status in letter length and topics discussed. *Research in Higher Education*, 66(5), 30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-025-09847-5>
- Koretz, D., Yu, C., Mbekeani, P. P., Langi, M., Dhaliwal, T., & Braslow, D. (2016). Predicting freshman grade point average from college admissions test scores and state high school test scores. *AERA Open*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858416670601>

- Lew, K. (2020). Unbalanced: The case for removing Title IX's private college admissions exemption. *Duke Law Journal*, 70(4), 847-884.
- Marini, J. P., Westrick, P. A., & Shaw, E. J. (2021). Examining the Stability of SAT Predictive Relationships across Cohorts and over Time. *College Board*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED613436.pdf>
- Peters, E. E., & Velez, E. D. (2025, December 15). Three major concerns about ed's new admission data collection. *Institute for Higher Education Policy*. <https://www.ihep.org/three-major-concerns-about-eds-new-admissions-data-collection/>
- Rose, D. (2015). Regulating opportunity: Title IX and the birth of gender-conscious higher education policy. *Journal of Policy History*, 27(1), 157-183. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898030614000396>
- Rothstein, J. (2022). Qualitative information in undergraduate admissions: A pilot study of letters of recommendation. *Economics of Education Review*, 89, 102285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2022.102285>
- Rowan-Kenyon, H., Carroll, S., Creps, R., Brown, L., Xiang, Z., & Savitz-Romer, M. (2024, November). *The role of counselor recommendation letters in the holistic admissions process*. [Paper presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), Minneapolis, MN.
- Sacerdote, B., Staiger, D. O., & Tine, M. (2025). *How test optional policies in college admissions disproportionately harm high achieving applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds* (NBER Working Paper No. w33389). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w33389>
- Sawyer, R. (2013). Beyond correlations: Usefulness of high school GPA and test scores in making college admissions decisions. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 26(2), 89-112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08957347.2013.765433>
- Title IX, Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§1681 - 1688 (2018). <https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-ix-education-amendments-1972>
- Walster, E., Cleary, T. A., & Clifford, M. M. (1971). The effect of race and sex on college admission. *Sociology of Education*, 237-244. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2112017>
- West, C. (2021, October 27). An unnoticed result of the decline of men in college: It's harder for women to get in. *Hechinger Report*. <https://hechingerreport.org/an-unnoticed-result-of-the-decline-of-men-in-college-its-harder-for-women-to-get-in/>
- Westrick, P. A., Marini, J. P., Shmueli, D., Young, L., Shaw, E. J., & Ng, H. (2020). Validity of SAT® for predicting first-semester, domain-specific grades. *College Board*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED603085.pdf>
- Zwick, R. (2019). Assessment in American higher education: The role of admission tests. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 683(1), 130-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716219843469>
- Zwick, R., & Himelfarb, I. (2011). The effect of high school socioeconomic status on the predictive validity of SAT scores and high school grade-point average. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 48(2), 101-121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3984.2011.00136.x>

Zwick, R., & Sklar, J. C. (2005). Predicting college grades and degree completion using high school grades and SAT scores: The role of student ethnicity and first language. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(3), 439-464. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312042003439>

Ryan Creps, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy within the Graduate School of Education at the University at Buffalo. His research interests focus on college admission practices and postsecondary enrollment trends. Email: rcreps@buffalo.edu
