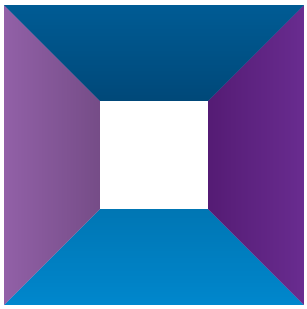


ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT & RIGOR | PROCESS EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT | NONACADEMIC FACTORS

Introduction

The College Board is pleased to share early research and updates from the Future Admissions Tools and Models Initiative. The documents we are sharing are works in progress, and we hope they, as well as the more complete reports that follow, will engage your interest, spur your own thinking, and lead to ideas for future areas of focus and work. If you would like to get involved in this work, please email us at **futureadmissions@collegeboard.org**.

About the Initiative

Building on a history of partnering with higher education thought leaders, the College Board has launched a new initiative to study and improve the practice of admission, with a special focus on holistic and individualized review, in order to expand student access and success.

Developed and structured as a partnership with member institutions, the **Future Admissions Tools and Models Initiative** brings together practitioners from a wide range of colleges and universities, along with expert researchers, to identify, extend, and scale innovative and promising practices through the development of research-based frameworks and tools. The Initiative's objectives are to:

- Explore, document, and share recent trends and emerging needs in how colleges admit students.
- Identify and develop new sources of information and practical tools.
- Promote a systematic, research-based approach to admission practice that will help colleges meet their goals in an effective, efficient, and transparent manner.

Need Areas

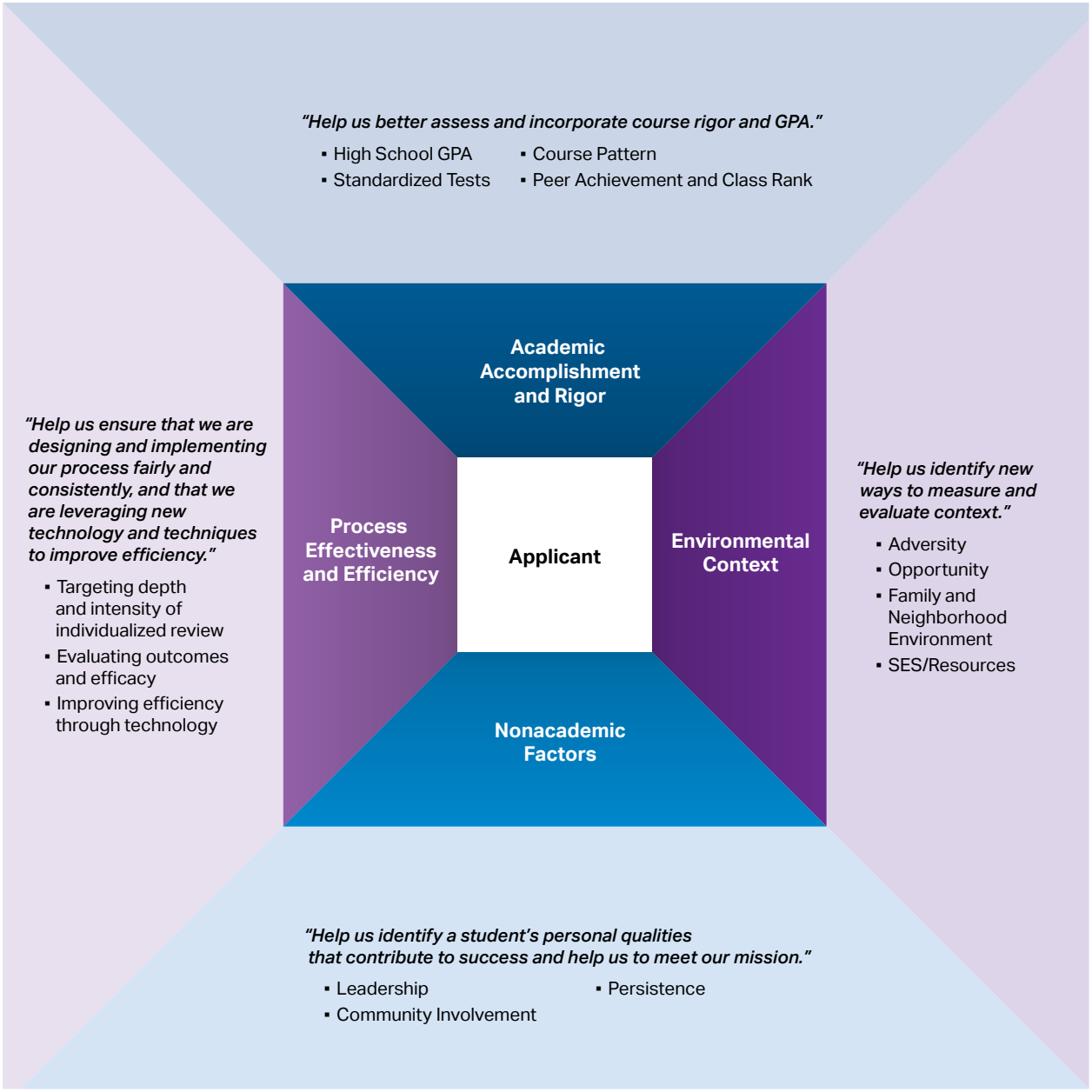
The modern task of college admission is not an easy one. Admission practitioners must be able to design, implement, and manage a decision-making process that is mission-aligned, effective, and efficient. They must ensure that decision making is fair, consistent, and effective; manage the logistical aspects of application review; and respond to increasing demands for transparency.

Based on extensive input from admission practitioners, the **Future Admissions Tools and Models Initiative** is focused on four main areas of need:

1. Helping colleges to better understand and incorporate **context**, including Identifying and developing new context measures and tools.
2. Helping to improve colleges' ability to assess **academic accomplishment and readiness** through research-based tools that combine GPA, test scores, and course rigor.
3. Strengthening the identification, measurement, and evaluation of **nonacademic factors** in admission.
4. Developing tools, frameworks, and techniques to make admission more **effective and more efficient**.

Cornerstones Framework

Each admission office approaches its work in its own way, and the decisions are frequently governed by considerations that are as unique to the college as to the student. These considerations typically include mission-based priorities, fiduciary responsibilities, and the practical constraints of constructing a well-rounded class one decision at a time. While the precise details may vary from college to college, our research and conversations suggest that the admission process is built on four distinct cornerstones:



Research and Project Updates

As a first phase of the Future Admissions Tools and Models Initiative, the College Board has been partnering with practitioners and researchers on four applied research projects. These projects are in a preliminary phase and the enclosed documents give a progress update on the following:

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT AND RIGOR

Exploring a New Framework for Sorting Applicants provides an initial outline of a new conceptual segmentation model, supported by an empirically based methodology that can help colleges seeking to enhance or adopt individualized review. A research study examining the model will be published as results are finalized.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Data-Driven Models to Understand Environmental Context provides a preliminary description of the role of environmental context in the admission process and gives an overview of a new pilot Environmental Dashboard. A research study examining environmental context will be published as results are finalized. A full discussion of the dashboard pilot will be delivered at the 2016 College Board Forum.

NONACADEMIC FACTORS

Insights into Nonacademic Factors and Practice offers an initial summary of a comprehensive study examining the history and current use of nonacademic factors in admission. The full study includes historical context, a review of the research literature, an analysis of relevant theoretical frameworks, and a set of in-depth case studies of how nonacademic factors are used in practice.

BEST ADMISSION PRACTICES

Innovative Practices of Interest on Campus is composed of six case studies that detail pioneering admission processes in higher education today. These case studies highlight how and why institutions developed these distinct approaches, provide descriptive information on the practices, and showcase the impact these approaches have had.

In addition to the enclosed documents and the forthcoming full reports, we will present our progress to date during two sessions at the 2016 College Board Forum in Chicago, and seek further input and guidance from practitioners as we look to expand our work with a more operational focus in the second year of the project.

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