

SAT revamp makes test harder

Hannah Whaley
Staff Writer

If a random sample of 500 high school students across the nation were polled and asked which measure would carry the most weight in deciding their college entrance, the answers might be as follows. About 30 percent might indicate grades, 20 percent might choose extracurricular activities, and, according to a recent poll taken by The Kaplan Company, a whopping 50 percent would put the weight on their SAT scores.

The SAT is a nearly four-hour test that measures critical reading, writing, and mathematical reasoning skills that students have developed over time and skills the U.S. government has accepted as necessary for successful academic performance.

According to Collegeboard.com, the SAT is the best independent, standardized measure of a student's college readiness. This Scholastic Aptitude Test has also been called "Sick and Twisted" and "Slimy Atrocious Torture."

Over the years many students and educators have criticized the SAT for being too streamlined and not having the capacity to accurately measure a student's applied knowledge. In attempts to avoid further criticisms, the College Board has reformatted the test. They have added two more challenging sections in hopes of improving overall accuracy in the actual measure of academic intelligence.

This new test will cover

third-year college-preparatory math, such as exponential growth, absolute value, functional notation, and negative and fractional exponents. In addition, a writing section will require students to write an essay in which they take a position on an issue and use reasoning and examples to support their position.

According to a recent press release by the College Board, the test will be first administered on March 12. This means that all juniors in high school and below have to prepare for an even more rigorous exam that will set the standard for excellence.

"I don't see how multiple choice questions can accurately measure a student's writing ability," said Early College (E.C.) junior Alden Mueller. "I am concerned with the scoring of the new writing section. Regardless of how detailed a rubric might be, there is still room for the opinion of the reader to affect the score."

According to Mike Harrison, student counselor at EC, the essays will be scored using a holistic approach. This means that a piece of writing is considered as a total work, the whole of which is greater than the sum of its parts. Each essay will be scored independently by two qualified readers and will be scored on a scale of 1 to 6 by each reader, with the combined score ranging from two to 12. If the two readers' scores differ by more than one point, a scoring leader will resolve the difference.

Harrison urges his students to participate in Barnes and Noble SAT prep sessions,

which will be led by the founder of Sparknotes and the author of a Sparknotes SAT prep manual.

While each year E.C. students are urged to participate in a school wide PSAT (Practice Scholastic Aptitude Test), many are required by teachers to take the real test each year. "I'm not worried," said E.C. first-year William Hahn, demonstrating that the underclassman perception of invincibility will always be present.

However, graduating seniors at E.C. have found ways to move forward without having to take the new version of the SAT. Hadley Illiff, E.C. '05, took the SAT II writing exam over the summer.

"If you add that score to the ones I got on my SAT I, I did pretty well," said Illiff. "I think the new test will make it a lot harder to get a perfect score, which I like."

While it's becoming more difficult to get a good enough SAT score to get into The Early College at Guilford, which has seen a handful of perfect scores already, the average SAT score of a student admitted to Guilford is only 1143. In addition, students applying to Guilford are allowed the option of withholding their scores from the application process.

The difference in the two schools is apparent in the varying amount of weight placed on the scores. At Guilford, withholding SAT scores neither helps, nor hurts the student's eligibility. At E.C., the higher the score, the better your chances of entrance.☞

Country proposes public affection ban

Holly Butcher

Staff Writer

Indonesia, a country with one of the largest Muslim populations in the world, proposed a new law banning the public display of affection. If the new law passes, unmarried couples will be forbidden to kiss in public.

The proposed law does not stop with restrictions on kissing. It also gives police officers the authority to search homes of all suspected unmarried couples living together.

"If neighbors think the presence of an unmarried couple living together is a nuisance, they can report it to the police," said Justice Ministry Official Abdul Gani Abdullah to the BBC.

Pornography and the exposure of "certain sensual body parts" will also be forbidden. There will be more censorship for movies, music and other forms of media, reported Scottish online source NEWS.Scotsman.com.

Many Muslim leaders have recently spoken out against Hollywood movies and TV programs, saying they "violate religious tenants on decency," reports the BBC.

According to the *Jakarta Post*, offenders of these laws could be fined 300 million rupiah - almost \$33,000 - as well as sentenced to jail for up to 10 years.



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"I think that's really messed up," said junior philosophy major Michael Zielinski. "Even if a country is primarily Muslim, you should still not try to force government authority on any part of private life."

This law is an attempt to bring

Indonesia together with other Muslim states by passing stern restrictions on sexuality. Public displays of affection are considered indecent in the Muslim tradition, and Indonesia is starting an enormous clean-up with these restrictions.

"Kissing in public is a crime if the people around are not happy and will lodge a complaint," said Abdullah to the BBC. "But if they think it's all right, then no action will be taken."

Although some appreciate the proposed law, others seem skeptical

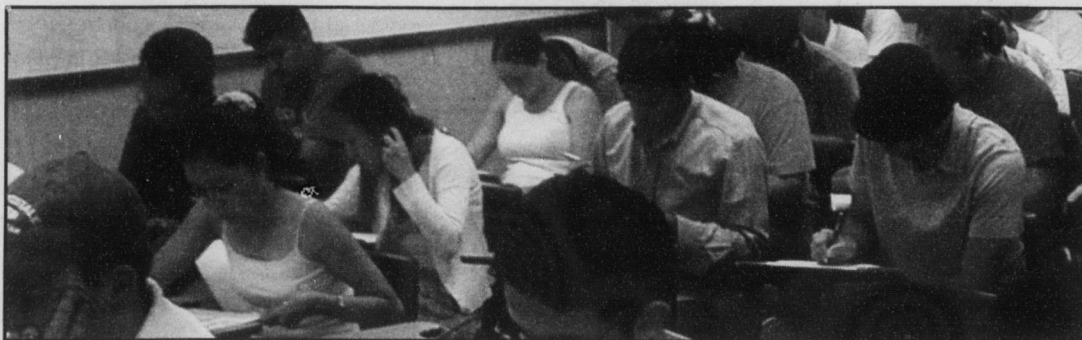
Some Indonesians are worried about what effect this will have on tourism. Others, like women's rights activist Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, accused the new order of being excessive and infringing on human rights, reported the *Jakarta Post*.

The law won't be official for another two years. During this time, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Indonesian legislature will debate the new law and evaluate its support.

These restrictions are a part of recent reforms to old laws implemented from Indonesia's Dutch colonial rulers in the late 1800s. The reforms will hopefully "set environmental protection standards and punish human rights violations and terrorism," reported the *Jakarta Post*.

Here at Guilford, some students disagree with the proposed laws: "Being from the US, it's hard to fathom putting religious beliefs ahead of your social rights," said criminal justice major and junior Sarah Green.

"I think it's outrageous," said political science major Andy Kilibarda. "If we let the religious right take over this country, similar laws could be passed."☞



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