

A resolution of the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) supporting the removal of the graduate record examination (GRE) as a mandatory element for admission to all graduate programs at Duke University

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Whereas studies have demonstrated that among enrolled students at graduate programs, the GRE has a limited predictive validity¹ [2-4]

Whereas the cost of presenting the GRE (\$205 USD) and sending results to universities (\$27 USD per university) [5] adds to a total cost of ~\$286 USD (assuming only three recipients), which equates to 8.5% and 6.8% of the monthly household income (median) of a Black and Hispanic family in U.S., respectively [6]²

Whereas the cost to access a premiere GRE preparation course oscillates around \$500 USD [7], which, when added to the cost of presenting the exam, exceeds the weekly household income (median) of a Black family in U.S. [6]

Acknowledging that GRE results have a correlation with gender and ethnicity that varies among individual groups, and whose magnitudes are not commonly well-known by admission committees when defining minimum thresholds for applicants [2] (e.g. Quantitative Reasoning scores (mean) of U.S. citizens self-identifying as Black or Hispanic are the lowest from all racial/ethnic groups as shown in Table 1.3 of [8])

Recognizing that the aforementioned contributes to restricting an increase in the diversity of graduate programs at Duke, by limiting the number of candidates from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds [2]

Considering that from the 3,358 master and doctoral students affiliated to the Graduate School [9] (~36.9% of the graduate and professional students and ~21.5% of all students at Duke) [10], only

¹ The studies referenced in this resolution represent a minor sample of the available peer-reviewed studies that have analyzed this problem. As described in [1], there are more than 1,700 studies that have explored the benefits and limitations of using the GRE during admission processes.

² This calculation is based on taking the GRE only once, and does not recognize that students with enough financial resources are able to repeat the test more than once until they achieve their desired score.

7.9% self-identify as African American and only 9.2% as Hispanic or Latino [9], in contrast with 13.4% and 18.5% of the U.S. population classified as African American and Hispanic, respectively [11]

Whereas an increasing number of PhD programs across the globe have decided to drop the GRE as a mandatory admission requirement³, including programs from peer-institutions like Brown University and Princeton University [13]

Whereas from the 27 Master of Science and 50 PhD programs at Duke's Graduate School, only 11.1% and 18.0%, respectively, have removed the GRE requirement as a mandatory admission requirement permanently [14]

Whereas from the 27 Master of Science and 50 PhD programs at Duke's Graduate School, 55.5% and 70.0%, respectively, have waived the GRE requirement as a mandatory admission requirement for the 2020-2021 admission cycle [14] in response to the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 epidemic

Now, therefore be it resolved by the GPSC that the graduate and professional student body of Duke University:

Supports that the GRE is removed as a mandatory requirement for admission to all graduate programs at Duke University (i.e. the MSc and PhD programs associated to the Graduate School, and all master programs associated to the other eight schools)

Recognizing that the current admission procedures established by the different schools would need to be modified, GPSC **calls** the Provost, Sally Kornbluth, Ph.D., to implement a transition period of three years after which the GRE would not be required as a mandatory element by any graduate program at Duke (i.e. all applications to graduate programs in the 2023-2024 academic year should be *GRE-less*)

Calls the Provost, Sally Kornbluth, Ph.D., and the Vice Provost of Graduate Education, Paula McClain, Ph.D., to finance a study to curate literature and construct a database of admission metrics that provide a holistic evaluation of all applicants, with a particular emphasis on excluding elements that would prevent members of under-represented groups from applying to graduate programs

Petitions the school's Deans and directors of graduate studies (DGS) of all master and doctoral programs at Duke to work with the Graduate School to implement a new set of admission procedures based on empirical analysis of the aforementioned database. As part of this commitment, it would be expected that each school establish mechanisms by which the programs representatives

³ For example, to the date the resolution was introduced, more than 360 Biology or Biomedical graduate programs at United States have eliminated the GRE as a mandatory requirement [12]

will be trained to ensure that the implementation of the new metrics translate into new admission processes that allow candidates from minority groups to be screened adequately

Introduced by the six general assembly members who sponsored the resolution at the GPSC general assembly of October 20th, 2020, for general comments. Re-introduced to the GPSC general assembly on November 5^h, 2020, for a final vote and approval.

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