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(Note: Release date requested by ACT to coincide with nationwide release of similar stories)

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY, APRIL 13

An unprecedented effort to reduce the guesswork in college admissions for Montana students was announced by Leo Smith, state coordinator of the American College Testing Program in Montana.

"Predictive indices" made possible by a new Research Service will be reported to each college in which the student is interested, stated Smith, registrar and professor of education at Montana State University.

How well the student will do in freshman-year studies at each college can be predicted by the indices, Smith said.

"Hundreds of colleges will thus be able to give sounder advice and to make better informed decisions concerning students applying for admission," he commented.

Five predictive indices for each student applying for admission or scholarship aid can be reported by the service to each of the eight Montana colleges participating in the American College Testing Program.

Through affiliation with the ACT program, indices for Montana students can be computed for any of the 535 colleges and universities that take part in the program. ACT is a federation of testing programs in 23 states, and the ACT test is given at centers in all 50 states.

As with other ACT program services, Smith pointed out, no charge is made because all ACT costs are covered by the three-dollar testing fee paid by students registered to take the ACT test.

Immediate uses of the indices include counseling young people on college selection, advising them on applications for admission, placing them in appropriate sections of freshman courses, judging their applications for scholarship aid and counseling them on freshman programs and study efforts.

(more)

One of the five indices computed by the service will predict a student's over-all freshman grade average at the college. The other four will predict his average freshman grades in English, mathematics, social sciences and natural sciences.

For example, Smith said, the indices for a certain college might show that a high school senior is likely to make an over-all freshman grade average of B-minus at the college, and grades averaging B-plus in English, B-minus in social studies and C-plus in natural sciences. But the same student's indices for another college, which has a more highly selected student body, show that he may be expected to have a failing freshman-year average at that school, with average grades above C only in English courses.

Elaborate statistical data provided each college in addition to the predictive indices will consist of five expectancy tables, five multiple correlation analysis tables and one table showing frequency distribution or "local norms" of the five ACT test scores, Smith said.

College officers may use the expectancy tables to make rough probability estimates of the grades that any given applicant will make at the college. Suppose, Smith said, that one of the college's expectancy tables shows that 80 per cent of its students who have made composite ACT test scores ranging from 24 to 27 earn freshman English grades averaging B. The college officer could conclude that an applicant who made a composite score of 25 probably has about 80 chances in 100 of also averaging B in the college's freshman English courses.

From the table giving the college's local norms of ACT test scores for its own students, the college officer could determine in still another way where any given applicant would be likely to stand in the college's student body, he added.

(more)

Both the predictive indices and the additional data are based on correlations between ACT test scores and freshman grades computed for the student body at each individual college by the service, Smith said. Colleges will receive materials that will enable them to compare their own correlations between ACT test scores and freshman grades with those of all other colleges, he noted.

The service is made possible by the most extensive installation of electronic data-processing equipment used for educational testing and research anywhere in the world, according to Smith.

Montana colleges participating in the program have been asked to register for the service by April 15, the coordinator said. Reports of the freshman-year grades earned by their students who have taken the ACT test should be submitted by the colleges before July 15.

By Sept. 15 the tabular Research Service reports for each college will be mailed. The predictive indices on individual students will be routinely reported to each college with its regular reports of the students' test scores.

The third regularly scheduled ACT test this school year will be given Saturday, April 22, at centers all over the country, Smith reported.

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