

## Wayne State must become selective

Sad graduation rates result of catering to lowest common denominator

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Oct 5, 2010

Wayne State has the lowest graduation rate of any public university in the state of Michigan. According to the college comparison site [collegeresults.org](http://collegeresults.org), in 2008, the six-year graduation rate was only 34 percent. Compare this with Michigan State University and University of Michigan that have six-year graduation rates of 75 percent and 88 percent respectively.

This striking statistic, however, could be remedied with one simple solution: Wayne State must end its open-enrollment policy.

To be factual, Wayne State does not actually admit every student who applies. The university's requirements for admission include a 2.75 high school grade-point average as well as an ACT composite score of 21 or an SAT score of 990. GED students must have an overall test score of 450.

These requirements are far from selective; Wayne State's admission rate is about 87 percent. Furthermore, the university offers special admissions, APEX for low-income students and DCE for remedial students, which bypass the normal requirements.

Lack of selectivity is not a problem exclusive to Wayne State. Schools with similar admission requirements, including Eastern Michigan and Saginaw Valley State University, have comparatively poor graduations rates. By contrast, Michigan Technological University, where the average admitted student has a 3.50 high school grade-point average and an ACT composite score of 26, has a six-year graduation rate of 65 percent according to [collegeresults.org](http://collegeresults.org).

While high school grads are often excited by the prospect of attending a university, WSU's current admissions policy does a disservice to students who are unprepared for college-level work. In fact, students who drop out are often worse off than they were before they attended

college. After acquiring loans to attend WSU in the first place, many former students face the prospect of working a low-wage job while paying back lenders.

To help students who are behind academically, Wayne offers remedial classes in various subjects. Unfortunately, this is a flawed strategy. A student who takes a course-load of remedial classes pays the same tuition as any other student. Most of these classes do not give credit towards graduation, which amounts to paying thousands of dollars for practice courses.

In terms of reputation, Wayne State is handicapped by its academic profile. U of M and MSU consistently rank within the top 100 of U.S. News & World Report's "Best College's" list. Comparatively, Wayne State's ranking is so low that the magazine doesn't publish it.

"The view from the basement isn't good," WSU interim president Allan Gilmour said during a question-answer session Sept. 13.

Wayne State's ranking is negatively affected in several ways, including the lack of admissions selectivity, the school's median grade point average and the low graduation rate.

The worst result of the admissions policy actually has nothing to do with students who perform poorly. Instead, it impacts the school's brightest and best. When instructors have to scale back coursework due to many students' lack of ability, it negatively impacts all those enrolled at the school. This collective "dumbing down" of instruction hurts the school's regard and can even affect student morale.

Many will continue to argue that Wayne's essentially open enrollment helps give those from poorly performing school districts and low-income families a chance to succeed. This belief is incorrect. WSU's current policy helps students get into unnecessary debt. The school should not be playing the role of a big community college when there are a multitude of schools in the area that already provide this service.

Furthermore, community colleges are better equipped to provide the services and assistance that remedial students need without the costs. Providing developmental courses at the university level does nothing but add to Wayne State's rising tuition costs.

In many ways, Wayne State is a bright spot in the city of Detroit. Midtown is largely one of the safest and most diverse areas of the city due to the presence of Wayne. The university's slogan is "World class education in the real world." Wayne could do much toward making Detroit a

“world class” city by ending its current enrollment policies and increasing its academic standards. It benefits no one for Michigan’s worst university to reside in what many perceive as its worst city.