

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on March 4, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Senator Tim Huelskamp- absent

Committee staff present:
Kristen Kellems, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Matt Sterling, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dorothy Gerhardt, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:
Regent Gary Sherrer, Chair, State University Admissions Task Force
David Brant, Senior Vice President, Central National Bank, Topeka &, Admissions Task Force

Member
Jonathan Krueger, ESU Student Government Legislative Director &, Admissions Task Force

Member
Jackie Vietti, President, Butler Community College (written only)

Others attending:
See attached list.

Hearing on **HB 2197 - State educational institutions; admission standards**

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, provided a summary of the proposed legislation. She stated **HB 2197** was introduced by the Committee on Higher Education at the request of the State Board of Regents. The bill amends K.S.A. 76-717 which establishes the minimum standards for admission to a state educational institution. Under the bill, a resident who graduated from a non-accredited school would qualify for admission if the applicant has a composite ACT score of not less than 21 points or upon reaching age 21. In addition, a non-resident who graduated from a non-accredited school would qualify for admission if the applicant has a composite ACT score of not less than 21 points.

Under current law, institutions may admit resident transfer students who do not meet the minimum standard of 24 credit hours of transferrable work with a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. The bill would create a separate category of exception to the minimum admission standard for resident transfer students. The number of students that may be admitted under this provision cannot exceed 10% of the total number of resident transfer admissions. Institutions may admit non-resident transfer students who do not meet the minimum standard of 24 credit hours of transferrable work with a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. The bill would create a separate category of exception to the minimum admission standard for nonresident transfer students. The number of students that may be admitted under this provision cannot exceed 10% of the total number of nonresident transfer admissions.

The Board is required to adopt rules and regulations prescribing criteria and guidelines to be applied on a system-wide basis to policies adopted by institutions for the purpose of admitting students as exceptions to the minimum standards. Also under current law, the Board is required to submit to the legislature a report containing the number of students admitted as exceptions to the minimum standards. The bill would extend these requirements to each of the categories of allowable exceptions to the minimum standards.

The bill would delete the requirement that the pre-college curriculum include one unit in the field of computer technology. Under subsection (f), the bill would authorize the Board to adopt standards for the admission of students which differ from the standards listed in subsection (a). Any rules and deregulations which provide for standards which exceed those listed in subsection (a), could not be effective prior to academic year 2014-2015.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on March 4, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

Regent Gary Sherrer, Chair, State University Admissions Task Force, ([Attachment 1](#)) testified as a proponent of **HB 2197**. He stated the largest part of the bill would give the Regents the power to establish admissions standards. He stated this change does not represent a transfer of power; rather it puts the responsibility and accountability for admissions standards with the Regents. The responsibility for admissions standards residing in a Regents-like body is common across the U.S. Kansas is unique in its approach to state university admissions, and is the only state found that places the responsibility for admissions standards with the Legislature. He stated it is not about creating higher standards but about creating better standards.

David Brant, Senior Vice President, Central National Bank, Topeka, and Admissions Task Force Member, ([Attachment 2](#)) also spoke in support of the proposed legislation. Jonathan Krueger, Emporia State University Student Government Legislative Director, and Admissions Task Force Member, ([Attachment 3](#)) spoke in support of **HB 2197**. His testimony included support of the proposal to remove the computer technology requirement in the existing pre-college curriculum as an integrated approach to technology is currently used in almost every high school now. He also stated the current admissions standards for home schooled and non-accredited high school students of having to be admitted through the exception window is unnecessary and creates a negative perception to families and students. Jackie Vietti, President, Butler Community College, ([Attachment 4](#)) provided written testimony of the proposed legislation.

The hearing on **HB 2197** was closed.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: March 4, 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING
Julene Miller	KBOR
Kip Peterson	KBOR
Vanessa Lamoreaux	KBOR
Lauren Shuman	KBOR
Daniel Brant	Central National Bank
- Jonathan Krueger	KBOR
Kathy Demmon	HU
Steve Iverson	Sen. Teichman
- Travis Love	Pinejas, Smith, & Assoc.
Tom Krutz	IRASB
Andy Schlapp	WSU
Todd Powell	FHSU
Brad Stauffer	Carter Group
Diane Gjerstad	USD 259



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**Senate Education Committee
March 4, 2009**

Testimony in Support of HB 2197

Regent Gary Sherrer

Good afternoon Chairwoman Schodorf, Ranking Member Hensley, and members of the Committee. On behalf of the Kansas Board of Regents, and as the Chair of the Board's State University Admissions Task Force, I am here to testify in support of HB 2197, legislation that embodies the recommendations of the Admissions Task Force, and was approved by the House last month in a 116-3 vote. Joining me this afternoon are some members of the Task Force, who will provide brief comments following my testimony.

In 1996, Kansas shifted from an open admission policy to a qualified admissions statutory framework. After a decade of operation under this framework, the Kansas Board of Regents established a State University Admissions Task Force to complete a review of the standards and to make recommendations for university admissions policies for the year 2010 and beyond.

The charge of the Board of Regents specifically asked the Task Force to consider optimal admissions policies from a state higher education system perspective that reflected 5 principles:

1. Provide widespread access for qualified students;
2. Retain the state's best and brightest students for postsecondary study in Kansas;
3. Enhance prospects for student success;
4. Foster seamlessness across the state's postsecondary system; and
5. Promote the efficient use of limited state education resources.

Sixteen individuals from all regions of the state with outstanding civic and professional backgrounds joined me to begin a critical examination of admission to our state's universities.

Before I talk about the specifics of the Task Force recommendations and HB 2197, I would like to take a moment to discuss the Task Force itself. Their names are found on page 15, Appendix A of the Task Force report.

First, the Task Force was not composed entirely of education professionals. In fact, a majority of the members would best be described as "consumers" of higher education including current postsecondary students and representatives from business and industry.

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Second, the members that were education professionals were not just from the realm of higher education. We know that families and students begin preparing for higher education early. We also know that adults are an important group in higher education that can be overlooked. The Task Force reflected this diversity with members from K-12, postsecondary, and adult education.

With a diverse roster, the Task Force determined it would receive testimony from education professionals who work on the "front lines" everyday. All told, the Task Force received over 16 hours of testimony from June through August. All state universities were asked to provide testimony. Also providing testimony were the Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Association of School Boards, USA Kansas (representing the United School Administrators of Kansas, the Kansas Association of Supervision & Curriculum Development, and the Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals), the Kansas National Education Association, the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (representing the community colleges as a whole), the Kansas Association of Technical Colleges (representing the technical colleges as a whole), and Washburn University.

Each presenter was asked to frame their testimony by addressing three questions:

1. What is working with the current qualified admissions standards?
2. What is not working?
3. What recommendations does the stakeholder have for improving the policies?

While listening, the Task Force found that qualified admissions, or QA, has served a number of purposes, including communicating that admission to Kansas' universities is not automatic and helping to structure the high school experience through the creation of the QA pre-college curriculum. The testimony also revealed that there are issues that must be addressed if the standard is to remain relevant in the 21st Century.

Ultimately, the Task Force made 11 recommendations to the Board; 8 related to qualified admissions, 2 related to transfer, and 1 related to concurrent enrollment. While some of the recommendations do not require statutory change, those requiring statutory change are included in HB 2197. There are 3 I would like to discuss at this time.

When QA standards were passed the Legislature could not have foreseen the changes in educational trends. Increasingly students are graduating from non-accredited high schools, most notably home-schooled students. Currently these students must be admitted through the exception window which reduces the slots available for other deserving students. Admission through the exception window is also reported to be viewed negatively by prospective students and parents.

The solution to this issue is addressed in HB 2197 with the provision that students, both resident and non-resident, be allowed admission by earning a composite ACT score of 21 or higher.

Another issue that was consistently discussed by presenters concerns transfer students. The modern college student is very likely to attend multiple institutions. Students may be enrolled in and taking courses simultaneously from a university, an area community college, and through an

online institution. Currently some students that transfer must be admitted in the exception window, reducing the over-all number of slots available. This means there may be fewer slots open to those graduating from high school and may close the exception window to deserving students.

In answer to this issue the legislation includes provisions for the creation of exception windows designed specifically for transfer students with at least 24 credit hours and a GPA of 2.0. A transfer exception window would be established for resident and non-resident students and mirrors the current 10% exception window for incoming freshman.

HB 2197 also changes the pre-college curriculum, specifically the computer literacy requirement. The Task Force heard consistently from K-12 stakeholders that this requirement is outdated and must be changed. Because technology is now integrated into most classes, this requirement represents an unnecessary burden. From higher education stakeholders the report was also consistent on two items. One, in many cases, students are more knowledgeable than the classes require. And, two, the requirement may be especially challenging to meet for non-resident students who are unable to test-out of the requirement and who come from schools where technology courses that meet the statutory requirement are not available.

In answer to these consistent arguments from front-line professionals, HB 2197 removes the one unit in the field of computer technology requirement from the statutorily defined pre-college curriculum.

The single largest change included in this bill is the provision that gives the Board the responsibility to establish admissions standards to state universities. This change does not represent a transfer of power; rather it puts the responsibility and accountability for admissions standards with the Regents.

The responsibility for admissions standards residing in a Regents-like body is common across the U.S. In fact, Kansas is unique in its approach to state university admissions, and is the only state we could find that places the responsibility for admissions standards with the Legislature.

A survey of all the Regents-like bodies in the U.S. was conducted to inform the Task Force and Board's recommendation to present this statutory change. Of the responding 37 states, only Florida and Colorado include admissions requirements in statute. And, in both cases, the relevant statute establishes minimum standards with institutions allowed to set higher standards consistent with their missions and roles, or a Regents-like body is allowed to set higher standards.

In neighboring states the Regents-like bodies are authorized to set admissions criteria at some level. In Missouri, for example, their Regents-like body establishes selectivity levels. In Oklahoma the regents establish minimum requirements, and in Colorado, statute provides general guidance for admission with most requirements set by their Department of Higher Education.

Even the general public supports the Board having authority to set admissions standards. A public opinion poll, conducted by a nationally respected firm, showed that 71% of Kansans support the recommendation included in HB 2197 to give this authority to the Regents.

And, finally it is worth noting that many of the changes included in HB 2197 would not have been necessary (for example the homeschooled issue) if the Board had the responsibility to set admissions standards initially. Placing responsibility with the Board allows the necessary flexibility to adapt to evolving educational trends and brings Kansas "up-to-date" with our national counterparts.

With this new responsibility comes accountability. The Board stands ready to accept the responsibility, and will remain accountable to higher education professionals, consumers, and the Legislature concerning the impact of more rigorous admissions standards.

It is important to note that any changes cannot be made without adequate time provided to allow students and the system to adjust to new standards. In fact, any changes more restrictive than current standards cannot take effect until the 2014-2015 Academic Year.

The alignment of the K-12 and higher education system plays, and will continue to play, the largest role in the success of students. While admissions standards and statutes cannot be the only lens through which education success is gauged, these issues play a role in fostering that success.

The critical examination of the current state university admissions standards was guided by input from stakeholders and constituents with a shared interest in fostering student success in education and the workforce. The legislation before you seeks to capitalize on their efforts to position Kansas in the context of the rapidly changing workforce environment, and the context of fostering the necessary alignment between all levels of education.

In conclusion, it is important that I stress a few key points. HB 2197 is not about setting "higher" admissions standards, it is about establishing "better" standards which will enhance student preparation and ultimately foster increased student success. Please make no mistake, this legislation is not about excluding students, it is about, as the Board's mission statement outlines, "expanding participation for all qualified Kansans." Rest assured, the Board of Regents will take great care in upholding this important tenet as it continues to examine the admissions standards of the six state universities.

I hope that you will join the Regents, the Task Force members, stakeholders, and the people of Kansas in supporting these changes in admissions standards to position Kansas higher education for the future.

Members of the Committee, thank you for your time this afternoon. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have about the legislation or items included in the Task Force Final Report that was distributed to each of you with a copy of this testimony.



Senate Education Committee
March 4, 2009

Testimony in Support of
HOUSE BILL 2197

David Brant

Senior Vice President – Central National Bank
Member of the 2008 State University Admissions Task Force

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for HB 2197 which would update the admissions standards for our Kansas colleges and universities.

I had the privilege of serving on the Task Force last year. In addition to the education representatives on the Task Force, there were six of us from various businesses representing the private sector. Also, my wife and I are the parents of three children: a daughter who is a sophomore in college; a son who is a high school senior headed to K-State next fall; and a 7th grade daughter who will be applying for admission in 2014.

As a taxpayer, as a parent of college students, and as a business leader, I was pleased to learn about the overall success of college admissions in Kansas. However, I was amazed as to how complicated our admissions requirements can be for certain groups of students, such as those that have been homeschooled or from non-accredited schools, and for both resident and non-resident transfer students. Further, it quickly became apparent that the 1996 “qualified admissions” statute has become outdated and is now hindering an effective admissions process and the logical coordination between high schools, community colleges, and our state universities.

I endorse HB 2197 as it encompasses many of the Task Force’s recommendations. Our higher education admissions policies and the process should adapt and be competitive in the 21st century. It’s time for Kansas to update our admissions requirements and for the Legislature to encourage and empower the Board of Regents to make the admissions process both relevant and effective to best serve our State and today’s students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Member ED.I.C.

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Attachment # 2*

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2197
JONATHAN D. KRUEGER

Thank you, Regent Sherrer, for that introduction and opportunity to serve on this task force. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Jonathan Krueger and I am a Junior Political Science Major at Emporia State University. The opportunity that I had to serve as a member of this task force was very exciting and it was refreshing to note that students were included in a process that we had experienced. Both Lydia and I had the unique experience to bring to the task force of having been admitted to college through the current qualified admissions process. As a college student, the legislation has an impact on the future students of Emporia State University, and students at all of our state's universities. I am proud to stand in support of House Bill 2197 and would like to address two specific points of that legislation for you briefly.

First, the computer technology requirement in the existing pre-college curriculum is terribly out-dated and must be removed. During the period in which we received more than sixteen hours of testimony, we heard consistently from all constituency groups about the same issues surrounding this technology requirement. Striking it from the statute, as this legislation does, enables the curriculum to mirror the already integrated approach to technology almost every high school employs.

Keeping up with trends is important, and just as integrated technology has found its way into grade schools, the growing home schooled and non-accredited high school student population trend must be acknowledged. The negative perception of some families and students of having to be admitted through the exception window is completely un-necessary. House Bill 2197 enables these bright students to proudly enter their college experience and enables Kansas to be responsive to these changing trends. And, I might add, these trends are always changing. Granting the authority to the Board to set admissions standards enables Kansas Universities to be responsive to these trends, enhance their students' experiences, and it positions Kansas higher education to excel and be the premiere higher education choice of students in the future. I thank you for your time and would be happy to stand for questions following the conclusion of the testimony.

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Members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am Jackie Vietti, President of Butler Community College where I have served in that capacity for nearly fourteen years. I regret being unable to present my testimony in person today, particularly since HB 2197 will make a significant positive impact on those served through the Kansas system of higher education. From my perspective this bill is well-grounded in research and coupled with extensive deliberation by the Qualified Admissions Task Force about how to improve upon the current criteria.

One key piece of this legislation that directly benefits Butler students, as well as those at other community and technical colleges in our state, is the creation of a designated transfer student exception window. The reasons follow:

- Approximately 96% of the students served by the two year colleges are Kansas residents and many of those students select our state universities as their transfer colleges of choice.
- Approximately 50% of the two year college students are traditional in age; the other 50% are non-traditional. Regardless of age, nearly all these students work part or full-time while attending classes. Although they are dedicated and have demonstrated the ability and determination to achieve academic success, they sometimes encounter life circumstances beyond their control. Unfortunately, sometimes these circumstances then impinge on their academic records.
- When the above occurs the affected students must be admitted to their transfer institutions within the existing exception window. This is certain to have precluded opportunity for some, given the existing 10% cap that must accommodate all the other student exceptions as well.
- The passage of HB 2197 will extend opportunity and access for community and technical college students across the state, who are destined to become a major part of the future Kansas workforce.

Another piece of this bill which is vital to ensuring that our students are being equipped with the skills and knowledge required in today's ever-changing world is granting the Kansas Board of Regents the responsibility to set admissions standards. The rationale for doing so is based upon the following:

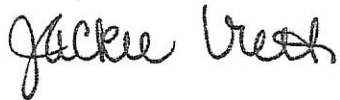
- New knowledge and emerging technology require a higher education system that can be more agile in making changes in curriculum requirements for the purpose of ensuring relevance.
- Many of the changes sought in this legislation would not have been necessary if the Kansas Board of Regents currently had the ability to adjust admissions standards as deemed necessary.

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- There are several stakeholder groups that are prepared to hold the Kansas Board of Regents accountable for the standards it sets, beginning with the Legislature and including educational institutions, parents, students, and business and industry.

In closing and without reservation, I believe this legislation is good for the state's higher education system and its citizens. It enables the Kansas Board of Regents to continue its tradition of excellence in spite of a rapidly transforming environment. Additionally, it offers increased opportunities for students to pursue their hopes and dreams through access to the best possible higher education system.

Sincerely,



Jackie A. Vietti
President