

ABSTRACT

Key Terms: Achievement Gaps,ETS, Standardized Testing, Test-Taking Strategies

Criticism of standardized tests is nothing new [1]. Banesh Hoffman, professor of mathematics and former collaborator with Albert Einstein, made exactly this point in his 2003 book “The Tyranny of Testing”. Some standardize test have been found to be culturally bias, and have not necessarily been an accurate predictor of student success in undergraduate or graduate school.

Due to these concerns, testing companies, colleges/universities, and test-takers are seeking ways to level the playing field. As a result, several questions have been raised: 1) Is standardized testing really necessary and can these tests truly predict ones success in their academic career and/or profession? 2) What are the characteristics of people who do well or poorly on these tests? 3) Is there a magical formula to passing a standardized test? 4) Has research proved that certain test-taking strategies are more effective than others? 5) Are there campus/institution practices/interventions that can be used to successfully address problem areas and/or to close achievement gaps?

This group of researchers examined various test-taking techniques and tips, as a means to identify, select, and/or reject “common” test-prep endorsements that will aid to the enhancement of one’s success rate on test day. There has been a number of studies conducted that have been very effective in improving the test scores of individuals who are taking standardized testing (such as the SAT, ACT, PRAXIS, GMAT, and GRE).

METHODOLOGY

In addition to conducting a fairly extensive literature review, this research team analyzed four HBCU Peer Institutions to see if these (Standardized Testing) facts and fictions were applicable to the aforementioned HBCUs student population. This data consists of the following variables: (1) Total Student Enrollment, (2) the Number and/or Percentage of Pell Recipients, (3) the Average Combined SAT Scores for Incoming Freshmen, (4) the Average GPA of Incoming Freshmen, (5) the Total # of Incoming First Time, Full-time Freshmen, and (6) 1st Year Retention Rates- First Time.

Data on each of the four HBCU institutions from 2010 -2014 was secured from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPED). It was recorded in an EXCEL spreadsheet. From this spreadsheet, three tables was created depicting the percentages of Pell grant recipients, average SAT scores, and 1st year retention rates. Table I was created to illustrate the percentage of students who received PELL grants from 2010-2013. Table II demonstrated their average combined SAT scores and Table III revealed the 1st year retention rates of these institutions.

CONCLUSION

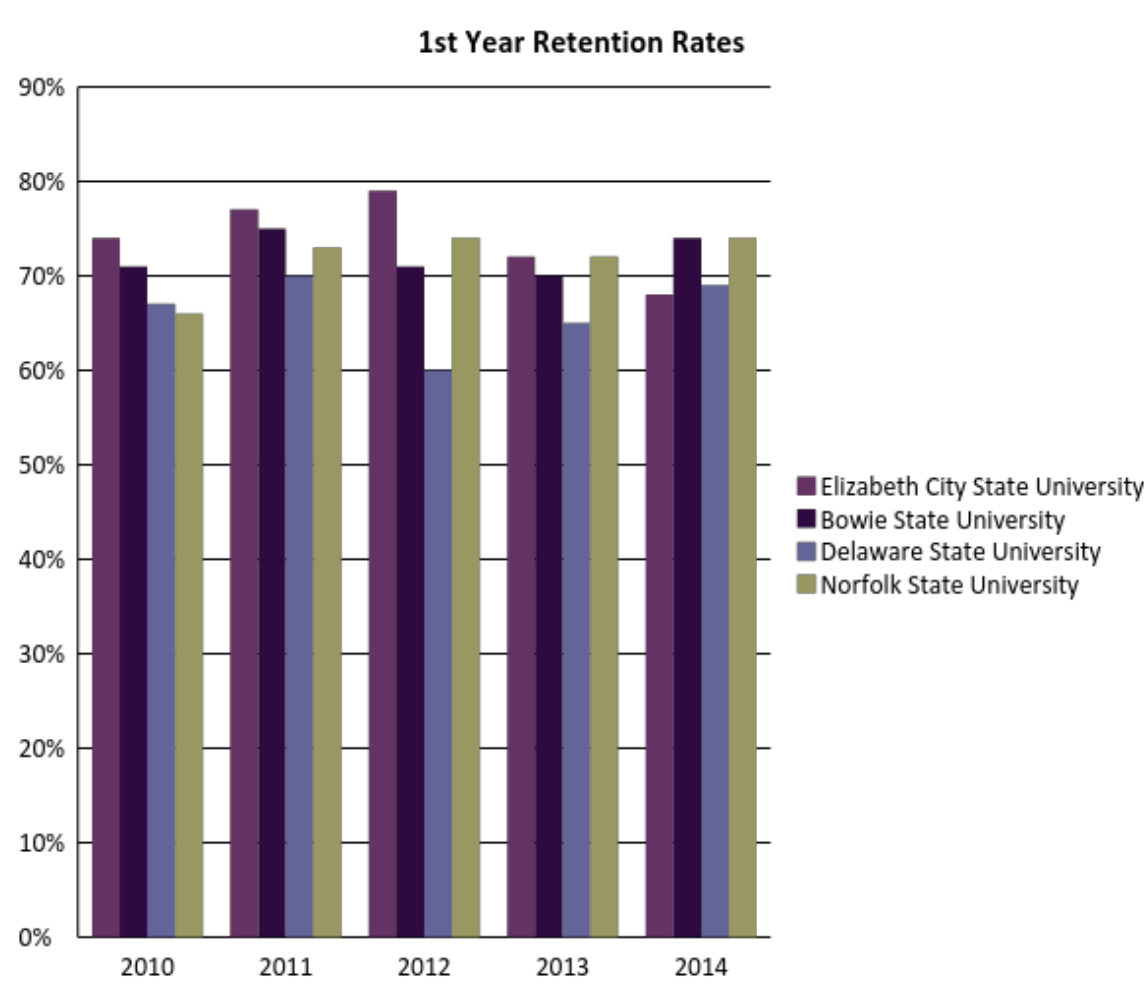
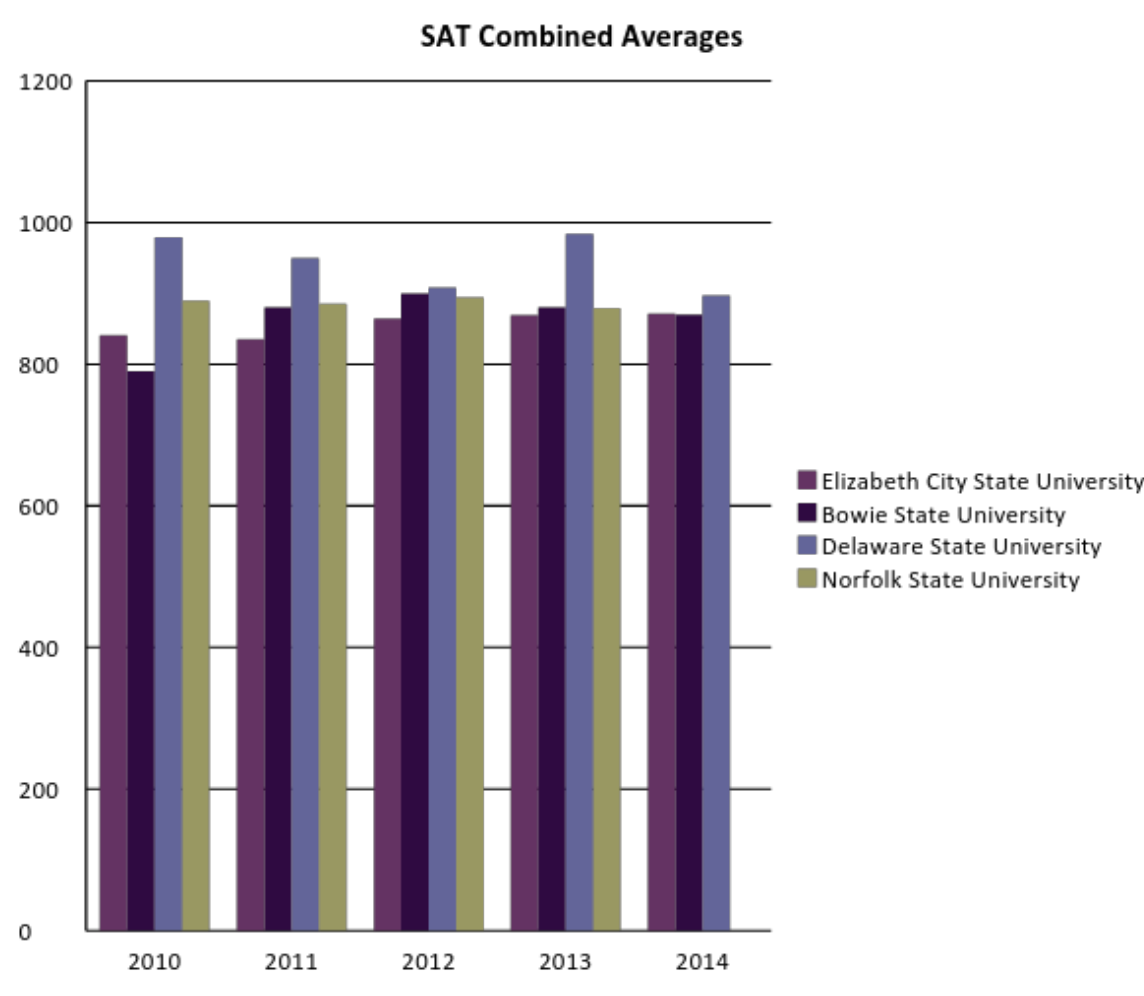
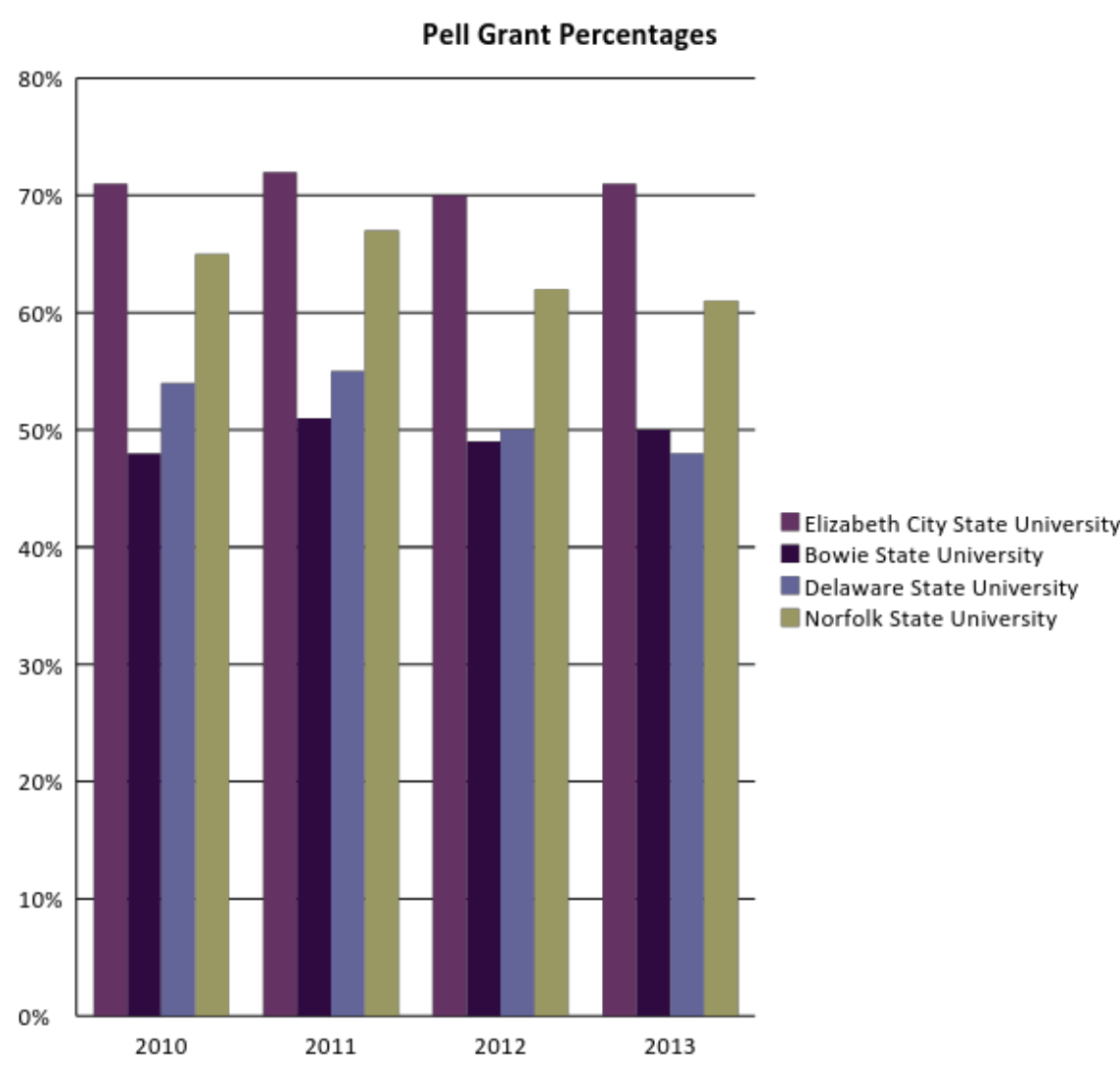
Table I displays the percentage of Pell Grant recipients for the four HBCU’s researched over a four-year period. ECSU has a 72% average for Pell Grant recipients; BSU’s Pell Grant recipient average was 50%. While DSU’s Pell Grant recipient’s average is 52%, NSU’s average is 64%. It was observed that ECSU’s percentage was the highest of the four HBCU’s and BSU’s percentage was the lowest.

Table II shows the results of SAT scores for the researched HBCU’s over a four-year period. ECSU’s average SAT score was 852 out of 2400 while BSU’s average was 862. DSU’s average was 955 and NSU’s average was 886.

Table III displays the results of first year retention rates from the four HBCU’s researched. ECSU has the highest retention rate, which was 76%. BSU and NSU have a common average of 71% and DSU has the lowest average of 65%.

As a result, researchers have concluded that Education Testing Services’ (ETS’s) notion that students from families with lower incomes have a tendency to score lower on standardized tests. ETS also accepts as true that there are lower retentions rates amongst students who come from low income backgrounds have lower SAT scores and are expected to have lower retention rates. This team of researchers believes that one’s economic background or standardized test scores has no impact upon retention rates. They credited the University’s “high” retention rates (higher than 56% for a Southern Regional College) to the various institutional practices/ intervention at the institution.

A Chi square was performed to see if SAT test scores have any impact on retention rates, because ETS finds that to be true. That statement is a myth because students with low SAT scores still have the potential to be successful.



CHI-SQUARE TEST

A Chi square was performed to see if SAT test scores have any impact on retention rates, because ETS finds that to be true. That statement is a myth because students with low SAT scores still have the potential to be successful.

Retention Rate Statistics			
Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	12	2.2006	0.999

SAT Scores			
Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	9	11.6252	0.2353

FUTURE WORK

In the future, our team plans to examine exemplary programs that have been proven to enhance standardized testing scores beginning with K-12 through graduate and professional school, investigate the success rates (test scores, promotion rates, retention rates, graduation rates) of students enrolled in these exemplary programs, determine whether there is any significant difference in the success rates of participants based on their gender, race, and socio-economic status, and consider hispanic and majority institutions in our research.

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