

**Resolved that: Four year, baccalaureate colleges
should raise admissions standards**

Affirmative Position

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Course:
CATA 335: Argumentation

Instructor:
Dr. Lee McGaan, Ph.D.

Section 1:

Affirmative

Resolved that: Four year, baccalaureate colleges should raise admissions standards.

Definitions:

- “four-year, baccalaureate colleges” – institutions of higher education, both private and public, that award bachelor’s degrees at the completion of four-year programs.
 - *Includes:* colleges, universities
 - *Does not include:* community colleges, trade schools, or graduate schools
- “admissions standards” – combination of academic criteria used to accept or deny students acceptance into baccalaureate programs.
 - *Includes:* SAT/ACT scores, cumulative high school GPA or GED
 - *Does not include:* race, economic standing, religion, sex, etc.

All definitions created by the affirmative team for inclusion/exclusion purposes. Since they were created in this manner, references were not utilized, explaining the lack of citations in *Section I*.

Section 2:

Claim: Four year, baccalaureate colleges should raise admissions standards

Grounds 1: A high percentage of students failing to finish a four-year college degree is a goal failure.

Grounds 2: Dropouts have debt but no degree, producing a significant harm.

Grounds 3: Presence of remedial education in postsecondary education is a significant harm.

Grounds 4: Potential for a greater good lies in better allocating resources.

Grounds 5: When there are a significant number of students in a class who aren't up to standard, it brings down the *entire* class, resulting in significant harm.

Grounds 6: The raising of academic standards will motivate individuals to strive to meet those standards in admissions at baccalaureate institutions.

Grounds 7. Our plan will decrease the high percentage of students failing to finish a four-year college degree, thus eliminating the goal failure.

Grounds 8: To decrease the significant harm our plan will cut down on the dropouts thus significantly reducing debt with no degree.

Grounds 9: The presence of remedial education in postsecondary education will be removed by our plan, thereby removing the significant harm.

Grounds 10: Our plan will better allocate resources thus providing a greater good.

Grounds 11: Our plan will remove the significant number of students that are below par in classes, thereby reducing the significant harm.

Grounds 12: Our plan provides for additional benefits.

Warrant: (Policy) If there are significant, inherent problems which can be solved by a workable plan with advantages outweighing disadvantages, it should be implemented.

Backing: Communication textbooks and Dr. Lee McGaan, professor of communication studies, attest to this truth.

Qualifier: Probably

Section 3:

Presentation of Problems:

Goal Failure 1:

Claim: A high percentage of students failing to finish a four-year college degree is a goal failure.

Grounds 1: According to the U.S. Department of Education website, “The goal of Upward Bound,” one of the Department’s initiatives, “is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education,” yet currently the national five-year rate of baccalaureate degree completion is less than 50%, and persistence is shown in that this rate has declined over the past 10 years (Barefoot 9).

Warrant 1: (Definition) In order to have a goal failure, a goal must be presented and shown to be not currently met.

Backing 1: According to the definitions of prima facie case components set forth in Lee McGaan’s *Argumentation* class.

Grounds 2: The national aggregate first-to-second year retention rate for all four-year institutions is only 73% (Barefoot 10).

Warrant 2: (Sign) The first-to-second year retention rate is a good indicator of degree completion as a whole.

Backing 2: According to Dr. Betsy O. Barefoot of the Policy Center on the First Year of College in a 2004 article, the student drop out rate is at its highest level between the first and second year (9).

Grounds 3: According to an extensive educational study published in *The Journal of Higher Education*, “taking many remedial courses clearly lowers graduation chances for students in bachelor’s degree programs” (Attewell et. al 908).

Warrant 3: (Cause) The taking of many remedial courses is sufficient to bring about low completion rates that cause the goal failure.

Significant Harm 2

Claim: Dropouts have debt but no degree, producing a significant harm.

Grounds 1: According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (NCPPE), “Half of all freshmen entering college borrow, and more than 20 percent of all borrowers drop out” (*College Dropouts* 16).

Warrant 1: (Definition) By definition, 10% of all freshmen is a number sufficiently large to prove the significance of this harm on a national level.

Grounds 2: College dropouts have “no degree, a debt to repay and a high risk of defaulting on their loan,” according to Patrick Callan, president of the NCPPHE, and “in some cases, these students are worse off than before” (*College Dropouts* 16).

Warrant 2: (Definition) A statistically significant amount of students in this state is considered a harm.

Grounds 3: Only one in three students who took many remedial courses completed their degree within eight years (Attewell et al. 908).

Warrant 3: (Sign) Taking many remedial courses is a good indicator that a student will not successfully complete a bachelor’s degree and is likely to drop out with debt.

Significant Harm 3

Claim: Presence of remedial education in postsecondary education is a significant harm.

Grounds 1: According to a 2006 article in *The Journal of Higher Education*, 40% of traditional undergraduates take at least one remedial course, and remediation is even more common among older, nontraditional students (Attewell et al. 886).

Warrant 1: (Definition) Statistically, 40% of students is a number sufficiently large to prove the significance of this harm on a national level.

Grounds 2: Dr. Ansley Abraham, director of the Southern Regional Education Board’s Doctoral Scholars Program affirms, “Nationally, about a third of the students entering college need remediation. Educationally, that’s probably higher than it should be” (Hamilton 31).

Warrant 2: (Authority) Dr. Abraham is an expert in his field, and his observations should be trusted.

Grounds 3: The presence of remedial education in postsecondary education takes money away from higher-level courses and overburdens the institution.

Warrant 3: (Definition) An institution that is overburdened is in a state of harm.

Grounds 4: The presence of remedial education in postsecondary education keeps the student in school longer, thereby accumulating more debt.

Warrant 4: (Definition) The accumulation of debt is considered a significant harm when it affects a sufficient amount of students.

Greater Good 4

Claim: Potential for a greater good lies in better allocating resources.

Grounds 1: According to Abraham, many professors feel that “being relegated to remedial courses is used as a form of punishment” among faculty. “It’s a clear signal that you’ve lost favor” (Hamilton 33).

Warrant 1: (Cause) Professors who feel punished are less likely to teach in a quality manner and could be better used elsewhere.

Grounds 2: Institutions of higher education have to spend a significant portion of their budgets to offer remedial courses.

Warrant 2: (Definition) A large amount of institutions spending sizable amounts of their budgets can be classified as a significant issue.

Grounds 3: According to a 2002 article in *Time* by John Cloud, taxpayers spend approximately \$1 billion a year on remedial classes (60).

Warrant 3: (Definition) Statistically, \$1 billion per year is a large enough amount to prove significance for a greater good.

Significant Harm 5

Claim: When there are a significant number of students in a class who aren’t up to standard, it brings down the *entire* class, resulting in significant harm.

Grounds 1: According to noted educator, Dr. Lee McGaan, such an occurrence degrades the quality of the education received by both those who require remedial education and those who don’t (in-class conversation).

Warrant 1: (Authority) Dr. McGaan is a communication expert, and his observations should be trusted.

Grounds 2: According to Dr. Hunter Boylan, professor and director of the National Center for Developmental Education, “Only 43 percent of America’s high school students complete a college preparatory curriculum, while 65 percent go on to college. So there’s a substantial percentage of students—22 percent—who enter college without having taken the curriculum that would properly prepare them” (Hamilton 32).

Warrant 2: (Cause) 22% of students in a class is a significant enough number of students to lower the curriculum.

Presentation of the Plan:

1. Mandate – Our plan provides for 4-year, baccalaureate institutions to raise their admission standards.
2. Mechanism – Regional accreditation organizations (rao’s) will only accredit institutions that have raised their admission standards.

3. Function

- a. Intent – To direct students to institutions that can best meet their educational needs.
- b. Procedure:
 - i. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) will mandate that, when accrediting a 4-year baccalaureate institution, all member rao's may only grant accreditation if the institution has raised its admission standards in the following ways:
 1. Raise the SAT/ACT/GPA/GED minimum allowance by 20% of its current standard
 2. Unless the institution is already in the top 10% of academic admission standards in the nation.
 - ii. During an institution's accreditation process, the rao will notify the institution of its standing in relation to the new admission standards.
 - iii. The institution will be given one accreditation cycle to comply with the standards.
 - iv. If the institution is successful in meeting the standards by the next accreditation process, accreditation will be granted and no lapse will have taken place.
 - v. If the institution is not successful in meeting the standards, accreditation will not be granted.
- c. Enforcement – The rao's will enforce the policy on institutions using the power of accreditation, while CHEA will enforce the policy on rao's with the power of CHEA membership.

Presentation of Workability Arguments:

Claim: The raising of academic standards will motivate individuals to strive to meet those standards in admissions at baccalaureate institutions.

Grounds 1: The raising of standards has already seen marked success in the realm of post-secondary athletics in the case of Proposition 48 (Heck 603).

Warrant 1: (Analogy) Four-year baccalaureate institutions and the NCAA are similar in terms of their standards' effects on students at the postsecondary level of education.

Presentation of Solvency Arguments:

Goal Failure 1:

Claim: Our plan will decrease the high percentage of students failing to finish a four-year college degree, thus eliminating the goal failure.

Grounds 1: By raising the admission standards for four-year institutions, students will be directed to shore up their competencies before entering these institutions, resulting in better academic performance.

Warrant 1: (Cause) Better academic performance leads to increased retention rates.

Grounds 2: These results would allow the U.S. Department of Education's goal (to increase the rate at which students complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education) to be restored.

Warrant 2: (Definition) When a goal set forth is being met, a goal failure no longer exists.

Significant Harm 2

Claim: To decrease the significant harm our plan will cut down on the dropouts, thus significantly reducing debt with no degree.

Grounds 1: Increased student competency will reduce the number of dropouts.

Warrant 1: (Definition) Fewer dropouts due to inability to perform means fewer members of society caught in college debt.

Grounds 2: According to Silla Brush of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, borrowers who graduate from college are twice as likely to be employed as borrowers who drop out and 10 times less likely to default on their loans (Brush A20).

Warrant 2: (Definition) Fewer dropouts mean fewer members of society significantly harmed.

Significant Harm 3

Claim: The presence of remedial education in postsecondary education will be removed by our plan, thereby removing the significant harm.

Grounds 1: By raising the admission standards for four-year institutions, inevitably the percentage of enrolled students who need remediation classes will decrease significantly.

Warrant 1: (Deduction) A lack of need for a program leads to its elimination.

Grounds 2: Institutions will be able to reallocate resources previously spent on remediation.

Warrant 2: (Definition) By definition, the reallocation of resources toward more effective endeavors eliminates the significant harm.

Grounds 3: Students are not in school longer, accruing more debt.

Warrant 3: (Definition) By definition, the reduction of debt eliminates the significant harm.

Greater Good 4

Claim: Our plan will better allocate resources thus providing a greater good.

Grounds 1: Professors who had taught remediation courses will be able to teach higher course levels, removing the “stigma” of teaching remedial courses.

Warrant 1: (Definition) Professors who feel valued teach in a quality manner.

Grounds 2: Institutional dollars that were put toward remedial courses will be rerouted to needs that will benefit the entire campus and the educational needs of the institution as a whole.

Warrant 2: (Definition) By definition, funds allocated to help all have a greater potential for good than funds allocated to help only some.

Grounds 3: Taxpayers will no longer have to pay twice (once when paying for primary education and once when paying for state-funded higher education) for society’s students to learn the same information.

Warrant 3: (Common Sense) Taxpayers should only have to pay once for material to be taught.

Significant Harm 5

Claim: Our plan will remove the significant number of students that are below par in classes, thereby reducing the significant harm.

Grounds 1: Raised admission standards will inevitably decrease the number of students in need of remediation.

Warrant 1: (Definition) Less students needing remedial education means less frequent occurrence of curriculum being diluted to meet needs of remedial students.

Grounds 2: Because the quality of education will no longer be at a diluted level, the value of college education will increase for all students.

Warrant 2: (Definition) By definition, the increase of the value of a college education is synonymous with the removal of a significant harm.

Presentation of Additional Benefits:

Claim: Our plan provides for additional benefits.

Grounds 1: Our plan will decrease the current trend of rapid depreciation of the Bachelor’s Degree.

Warrant 1: (Definition) According to basic economic principles, decreasing the supply of a product or qualification increases its demand.

Grounds 2: Our plan will also increase workforce competency, which is a required element for the bettering of America's standing in the global labor force according to Dr. Robert McCabe (Hamilton 33).

Warrant 2: (Authority) Dr. McCabe is an expert in his field, and his observations should be trusted.

Section 4:

Works Cited

- Attewell, Paul, et al. "New Evidence on College Remediation." *The Journal of Higher Education* 77 (2006): 886-924.
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