

# The Formation of the College Board and the Context of Today

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Coordinated Session on Perspectives on the History of Testing in the US

Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the  
National Council on Measurement in Education  
New Orleans, LA  
April 10, 2011

## My Perspective

- The context that existed in the late 1800's is similar to what we face today in early 2000.
- The issues that we currently face that are making the Common Core State Standards a reality and the efforts to produce assessments are similar to the things that were happening at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- However, even though there are similarities, there are some very salient differences.

*Historia est vitae magistra*

# My Thesis

- Understanding the context and outcomes of the past can inform current efforts.
- Lesson Learned:
  - Start with ambitious goals, but take a pragmatic, reasonable approach and build from there.
  - If this is about college, make sure that college and university leaders are involved.
  - Make the enterprise self-sustaining economically.
  - Ensure that sound measurement principles are not compromised – strive for quality improvement.
  - Once there is a commitment to start, design and implement the assessment system as quickly as possible.

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"I think it's about time McFergle retired – he remembers the *Lusitania*."

# The College Board Today

- Not-for-profit membership organization founded in 1900:
  - 5,900 members representing schools, districts, colleges/universities, and other educational organizations
  - The College Board is governed by 31-member Board of Trustees with guidance from three national assemblies and six regional assemblies.
- Mission: Connect students to college success and opportunity
- Serves 7 million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,800 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning.
  - Assessments: ACCUPLACER, Advanced Placement Program (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), PSAT/NMSQT, ReadStep and SAT.
  - Educational Initiatives: AP Summer Institutes, CollegeEd, College Board Schools, College Board Standards for College Success, District Reform Initiatives, Florida Partnership, Exam Readiness Program, Professional Development, and Springboard.
  - Advocacy Efforts: Admissions in the 21st Century, College Affordability, College Completion Agenda, Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education, Diversity & Equity in Education, National Commission on Writing, National Office of School Counselor Advocacy, National Task Force on the Arts in Education
  - Services: College Guidance Services, College/University Enrollment Management Services, Student Search Service



# The Context of the Late 1800's

- 1867 → US Department of Education created
- In the 1870's → Shortage of college students creating a fierce competition among universities
- By 1880 → Number of high schools increased 200 times from 1869.
- College admissions strategies changed and became quite diverse
  - Mid-western universities admitted students from local high schools based on course of study with the ability of university officials to inspect the high school courses as needed
  - Eastern colleges/universities preferred their own entrance examinations.
    - Harvard had 10 exams including Geography, Algebra, Geometry, Physical Geometry, English Grammar, English Composition, Ancient History, US History, Greek and Latin.
    - However, universities would alter the number and quality of its admission requirements at will.
- By 1900 education in high school and college was necessary to improve citizenship, develop higher-order traits, and produce the managerial and professional leadership needed for rapid economic modernization.
- Outcry from high schools that the changing, sometimes unknown admissions requirements made it difficult to prepare students for examination.

# Significant Events in the Late 1800's

- 1892 → National Council of Education (NCE), which was a group of 60 prominent educators from the National Education Association (NEA) appointed a committee of 10 members
  - Charge: Develop a document indicating uniform high school programs and requirements for admission to college.
  - Came to be known as *The Committee of 10*.
  - Five university presidents, the US Commissioner of Education, a college professor, and three headmasters/principals with only one being from a public school.
- Three recommendations:
  1. All students no matter what their ultimate goal (i.e., college or not) should be taught in the same way,
  2. Schools and students can select their course of study but they should be rigorous, and
  3. If high schools offered the nine subject fields in the acceptable level of rigor, every college and university would accept these for admissions to at least one of their degree programs.

# Outcomes of *The Committee of Ten*

- Huge criticisms:
  - The practical education advocates complained that the curriculum focused too much on classical courses.
  - The emerging field of educational psychology led by G. Stanley Hall criticized the report for its lack of non-cognitive and more global types of ability.
  - Others criticized that the make-up of the committee was comprised too heavily with university members.
  - Secondary school teachers criticized the accuracy and reliability of the scoring of the examinations by college faculty.
- Regardless of the criticisms, the historically important outcomes of the report were:
  - Offered significant attention to a standardized secondary school curriculum that involved an increased number of subjects for high schools;
  - Highlighted the impact of universities on high school curricula.

## Significant Events in the Late 1800's – cont'd

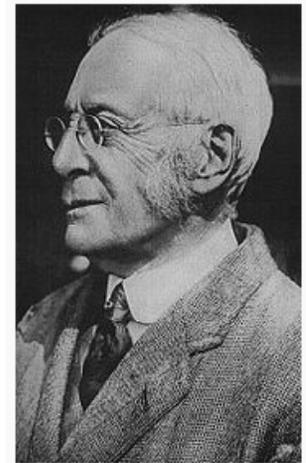
- 1895 → The National Education Association (NEA) appointed a committee of 12 members called the *Committee on College Entrance Requirements*
  - Charge: Study current practices and consider methods of making them more uniform.
  - Came to be known as *The Committee of 12*.
  - Four years of work collecting and analyzing the published requirements of sixty-seven leading colleges across the country.
- Results:
  - Confirmed huge variability in admissions requirements
  - Did not endorse uniform admissions requirements
  - Strongly indicated need for each college to state their requirements in terms of national norms so that high schools could construct their curriculum and course of study in response to these specifications

## Outcomes of *The Committee of 12*

- Growing consensus in support of a close articulation between high schools and colleges
- Discussions and articles emerged involving secondary school educators, college professors and university presidents.



- Two become the most influential in this time of significant discourse and debate:
  - Nicholas Murray Butler, professor of philosophy at Columbia University
  - Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University



# The Culminating Event

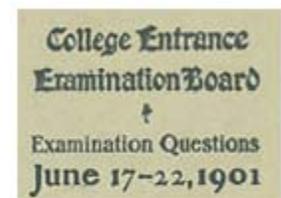
- December 2, 1899 → The Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Middle States and Maryland agreed that in five years a uniform set of college admission requirements AND an entity to coordinate the administration of these uniform requirements.
- November 17, 1900 → The College Entrance Examination Board officially announced.

# The College Board Entrance Examination

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- November 17, 1900 → The College Entrance Examination Board officially announced.
- Professor Butler was put in charge of developing a constitution for this organization and develop a system of examinations.

# The College Board Entrance Examination – First Year

- For each subject tested:
  - College faculty member was Chief Examiner and one additional college faculty member and one secondary school teacher were Associate Examiners.
  - A staff of Readers to read and score and the answer books were appointed.
- Answer books were scores on a scale of 100 with 60 being passing.
  - Any answer book below 60 needed to be read by two readers.
- The fee for a candidate was set at \$5.00.
- Chemistry, English, French, German, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, and Physics.
- All examinations were essay-based.
- The first set of examinations were administered the week of June 17, 1901 at 67 centers in the United States and 2 in Europe.
- 973 candidates submitted 7,889 papers.
- 39 men and women traveled to Columbia University Library to score these examinations.
- 40.7% of the papers scored were below 60 (passing).



# Recap of the Late 1800's

- Driving forces in the formation of the College Entrance Examination Board:
  - Growing competition for students
  - Concern over economic issues that needed educated workforce
  - Need for uniform, transparent admissions requirements to articulate and organize high school course of study
  - Persuasive, daring leaders in both high schools and higher education
- Outcome:
  - Standardized, objective assessments in 13 discipline-specific assessments were developed and administered.
  - Articulation of admissions requirements

# The Context of Today

- 2008 → WICHE projections indicated high school graduates would increase in the west and south, while declines in the northeast and mid-west.
- 2008 → College and high school completion ranking had dropped dramatically; the proportion of adults with postsecondary credentials was not keeping pace with growth in other industrialized nations; and significant disparities existed for low-income and minority students.
- 2010 → The popular press and public opinion polls indicated that the key to future economic growth in the US is anchored in education.
- 2010 → Educators cried out that state-by-state standards were inconsistent and a gap between graduating high school and college success existed.
- 2010 → Researchers suggesting that standards were not sufficiently rigorous.
- 2010 → The US DOE put significant funds under the *Race to the Top* legislation.

# Events & Outcomes

- 2003 → Conley developed the *Standards for Success* based on a three-year study of what students are expected to do in a sample of colleges across the US.
- 2004 – 2010 → Other efforts emerged to develop a specification of what defines college readiness from the perspective of expectations from colleges and universities.
  - The American Diploma Project (Achieve, 2004);
  - *College Board Standards for College Success* (College Board, 2006; 2009),
  - The ACT *College Readiness Standards* (ACT, 2010)
  - The *Texas College and Career Readiness Standards* (THECB & TEA, 2008).
- 2010 → The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers released the Common Core State Standards for grades K-12 in English/LA and mathematics.
- 2010 → 43 states and DC adopted the Common Core State Standards.
- 2010 → Two consortia, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), formed receiving more than \$175 million each from the US Department of Education to design, develop and pilot test the next generation of K-12 assessments over the next four years.

# Similarities & Differences between Late 1800's and Early 2000's

## Similarities

- Education was considered an economic issue.
- Competition existed among colleges for well prepared students.
- It was about a clear articulation of college-level standards.
- There were gaps in the articulation of standards and assessments.
- There was an outcry for better assessment systems.

## Differences

- Higher education was heavily involved in the late 1800's.
  - States (involving K-12 agencies) are the primary drivers today.
- In the 1800's, there was a regional focus that grew into a national effort.
  - Today, there is a national effort led by states and supported by USDOE.
- In the 1800's it took longer to reach agreement, but seemingly less time to develop the assessments.
- There's a push today for assessment innovation with significantly more psychometric know-how.
- Public money is fueling the effort today rather than test fees.

## Some Lessons

- Start with ambitious goals, but take a pragmatic, reasonable scope and build from there.
- If this is about college, make sure that college and university leaders are involved.
- Make the enterprise self-sustaining economically.
- Ensure that sound measurement principles are not compromised.
- Once there is a commitment to start, design and implement the assessment system as quickly as possible.

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# Questions, Comments, Suggestions

- Researchers are encouraged to freely express their professional judgment. Therefore, points of view or opinions stated in College Board presentations do not necessarily represent official College Board position or policy.
- Please forward any questions, comments, and suggestions to: Thanos Patelis  
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Thank you!!