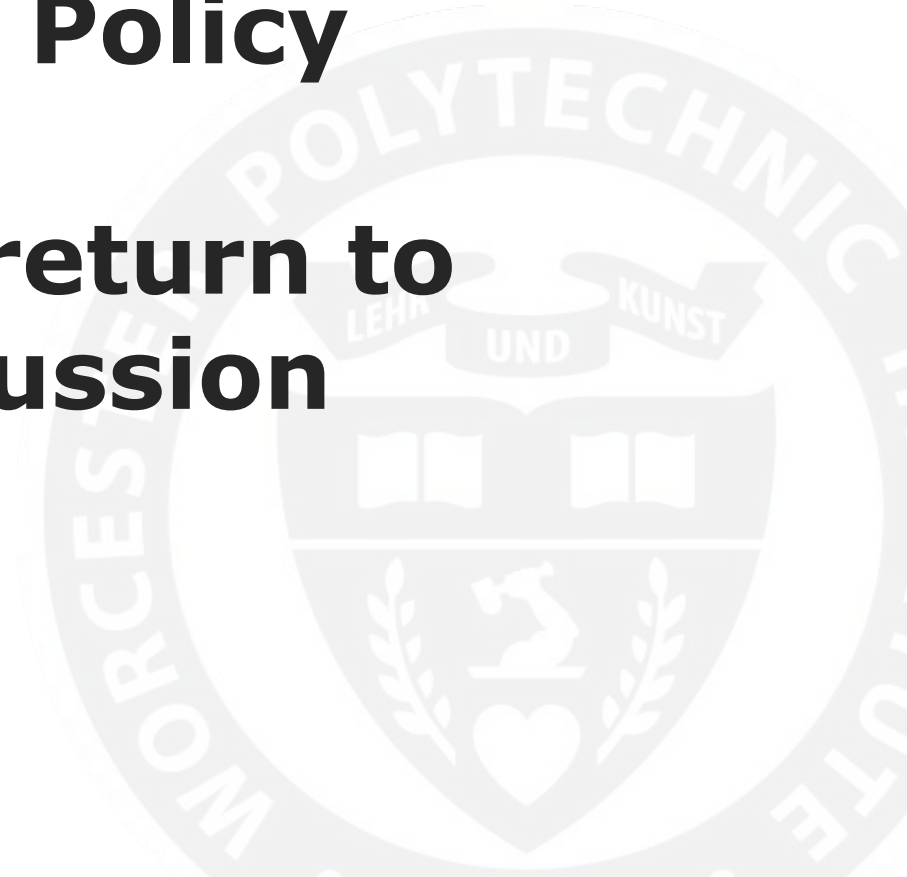


WPI

Test-Blind Admissions Policy

**Motion to end pilot and return to
test-optional: for discussion**

October 9, 2024



Today's Presentation

- Present motion from CAP for discussion
- Present graphical trends of diversity data given in the motion
- Reminder of timeline
 - If faculty vote to make a change to admissions policy, vote must be completed by December to impact class of 2030 (entering in Fall 2026)

Motion (for Discussion)

The Committee on Academic Policy and I move that:

- The test-blind admissions pilot policy that was adopted in March 2021 be terminated and WPI returns to a test-optional admissions policy indefinitely. Under the test-optional admissions policy, students may include standardized test scores with their application materials for undergraduate admissions review. This would take effect for the Class of 2030 (students starting Fall 2026).

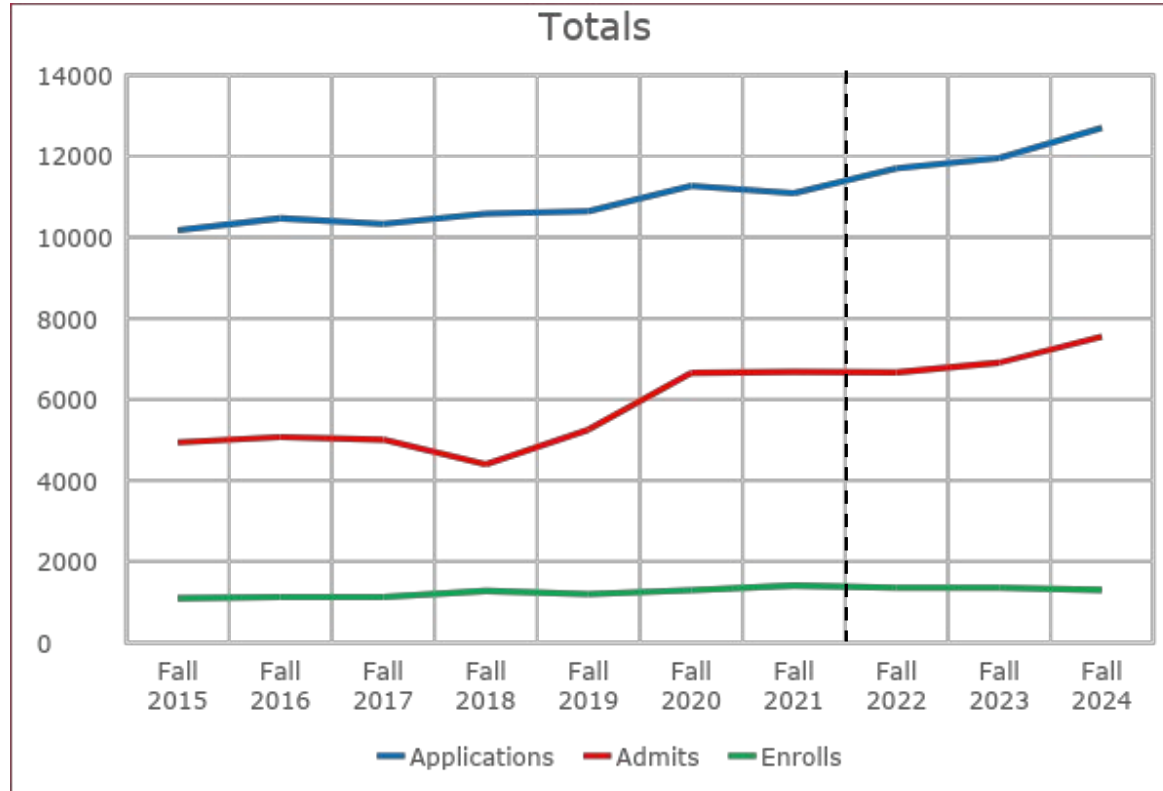
Goal of Test-Blind Admissions Policy Pilot

- **Increase the diversity of the applicant pool**
- Maintain the academic quality of incoming students
- Maintain the retention and graduation rates of incoming students

Evaluation of the Policy During the Pilot

- CAP to consult with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Office of Institutional Research on data collection
- Interim reports from these offices in 2023 and 2025; final report 2028
- CAP to monitor and evaluate the success of the pilot and make a recommendation regarding admissions policies by B term 2028, with the expectation of bringing a motion to the faculty within the 2028-2029 academic year

Total Applications, Admits, Enrolls



Year	% admitted	yield
Fall 2015	49	22
Fall 2016	48	22
Fall 2017	48	22
Fall 2018	42	29
Fall 2019	49	23
Fall 2020	59	19
Fall 2021	60	21
Fall 2022	57	20
Fall 2023	58	20
Fall 2024	59	17

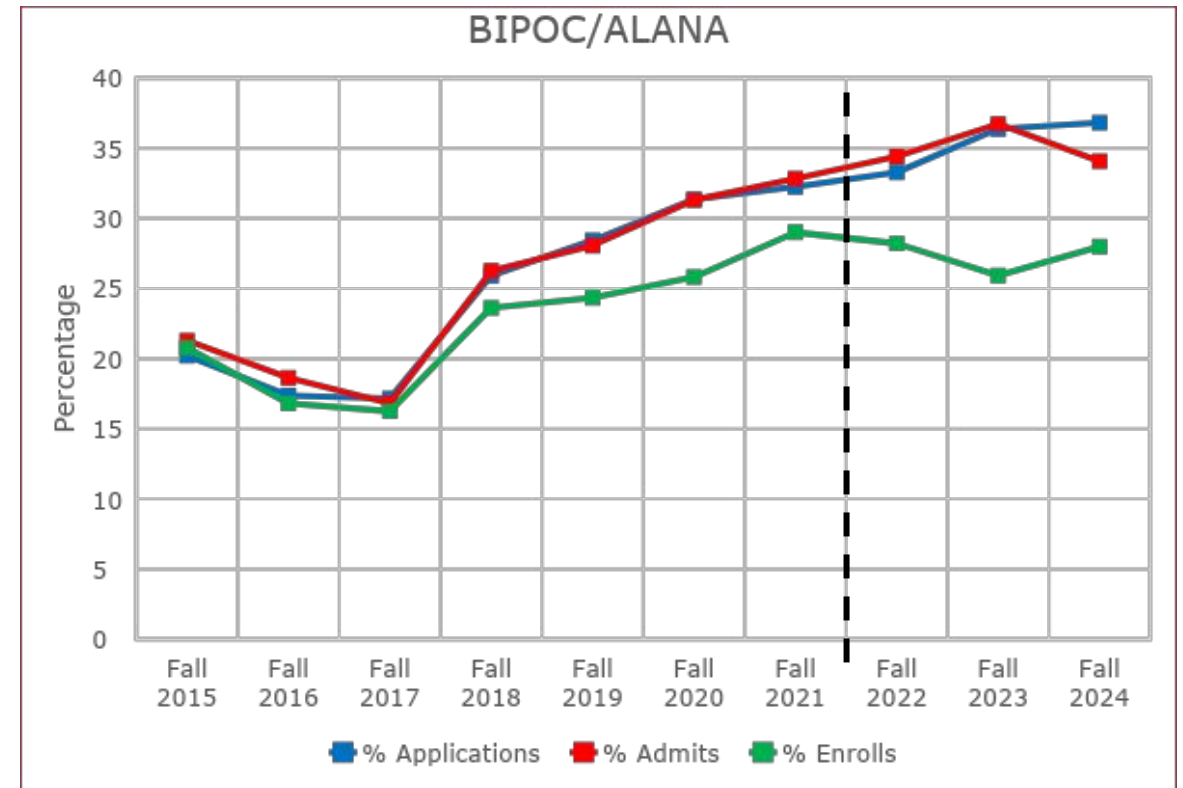
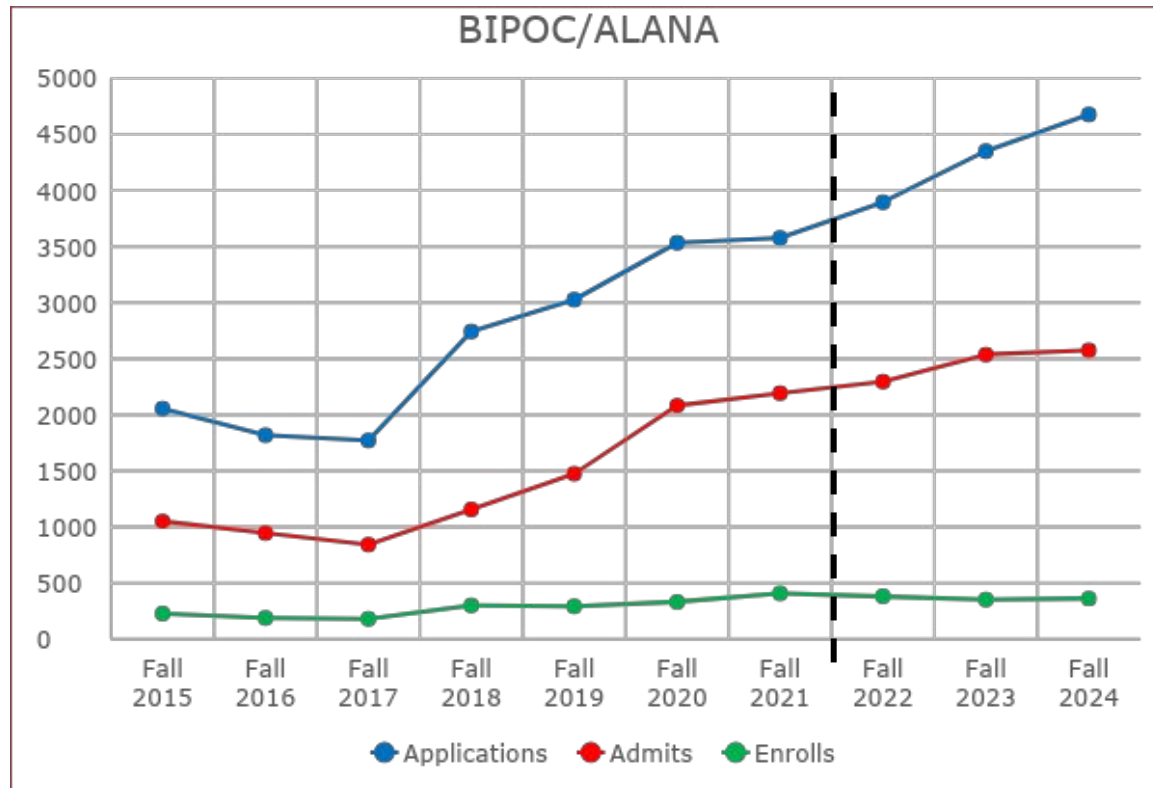
% admitted has increased to ~60%

Yield has declined – now at lowest in 10 years

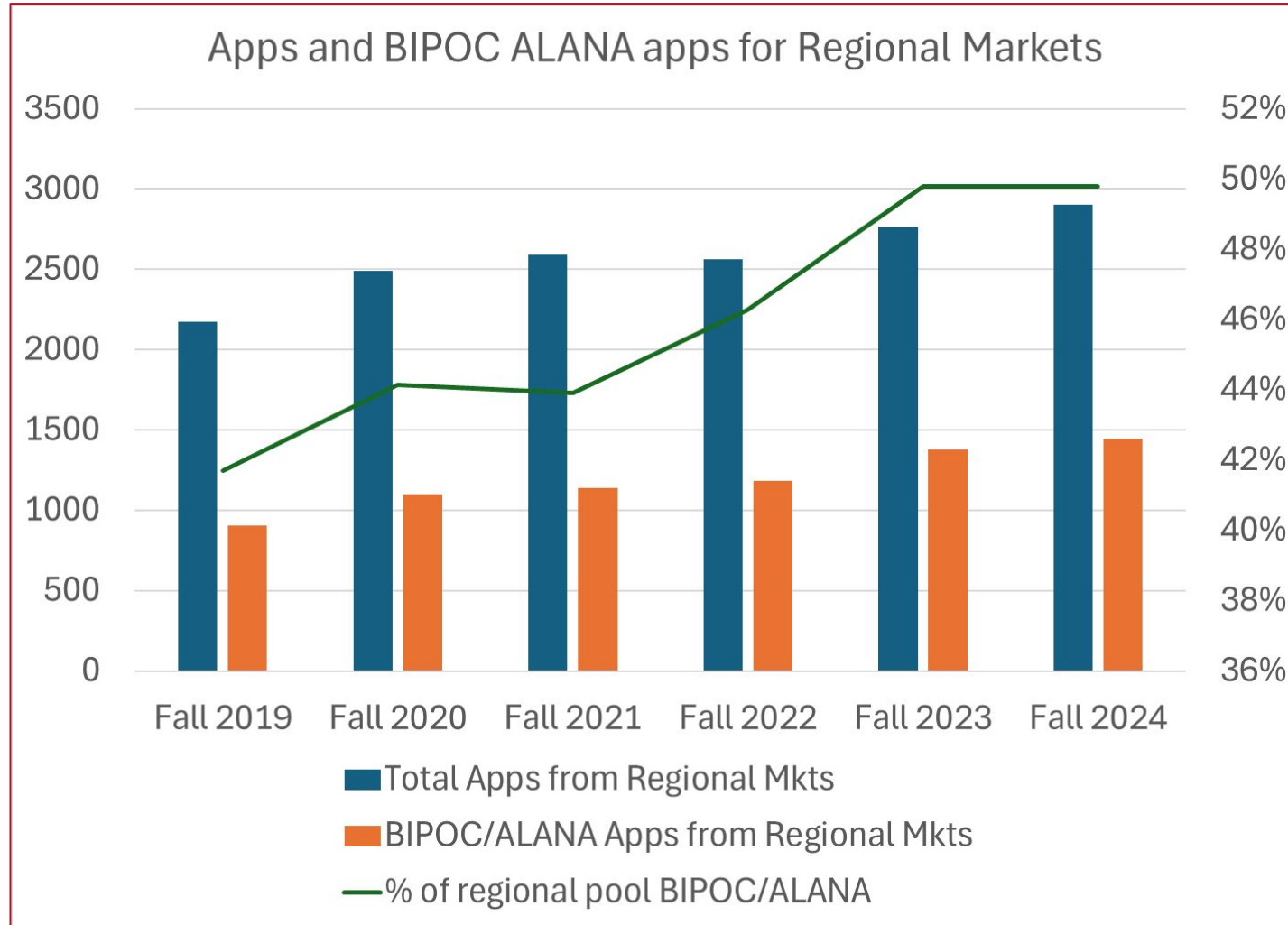
Trends in BIPOC/ALANA Applicants

Trend in applications consistent from 2017 – 2024 (little to no impact of test-blind in 2022).

However, # and % of BIPOC/ALANA enrolls NOT increasing.



BIPOC/ALANA Impacted by Regional Recruiting

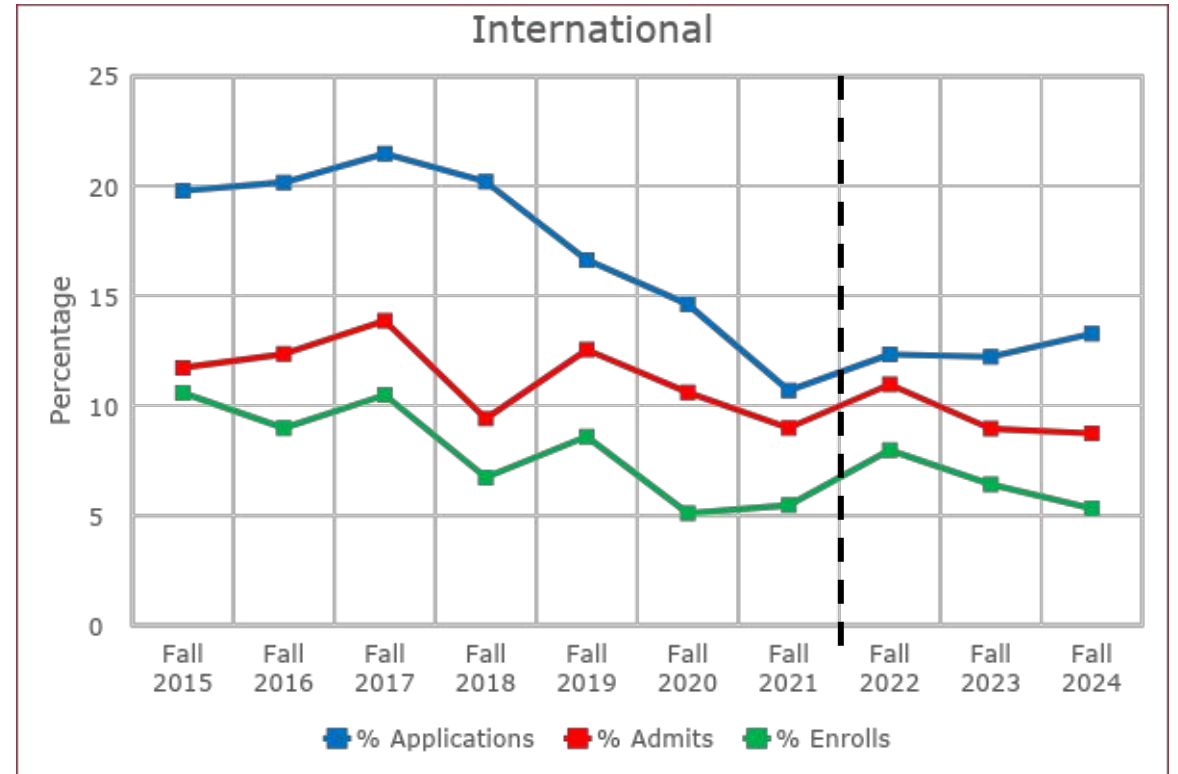
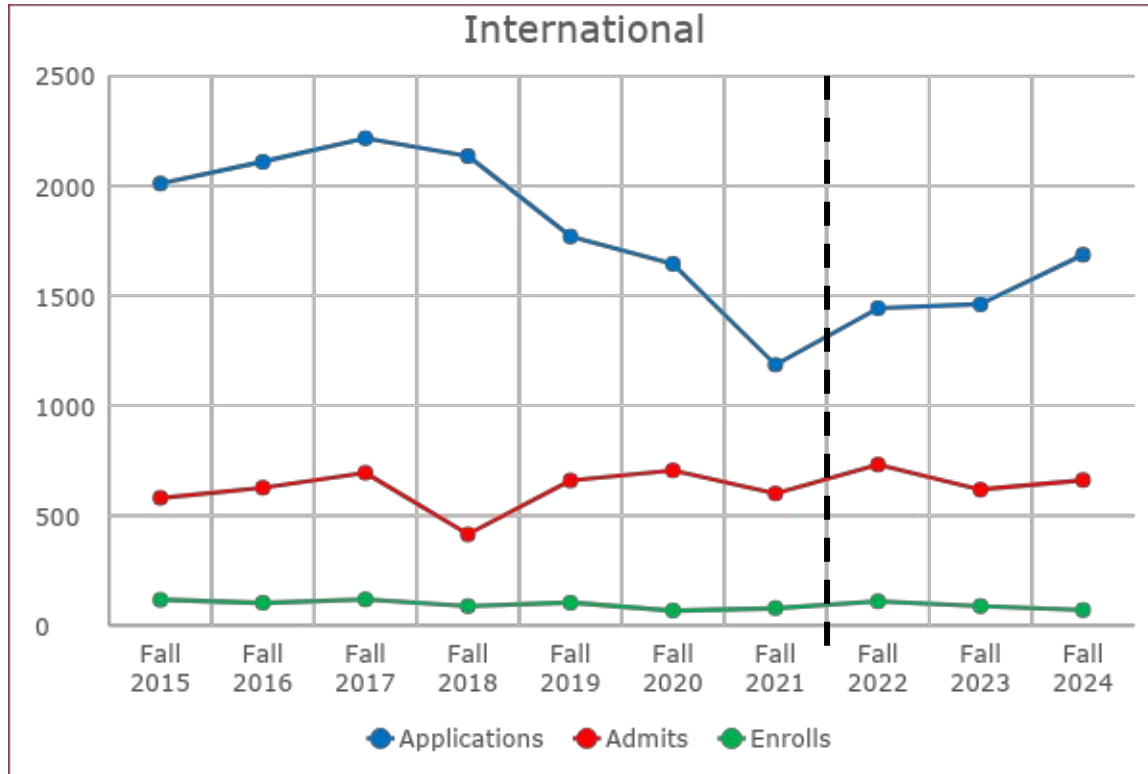


Recent regional recruitment efforts have strongly influenced our applicant pool

Trends in International Applicants

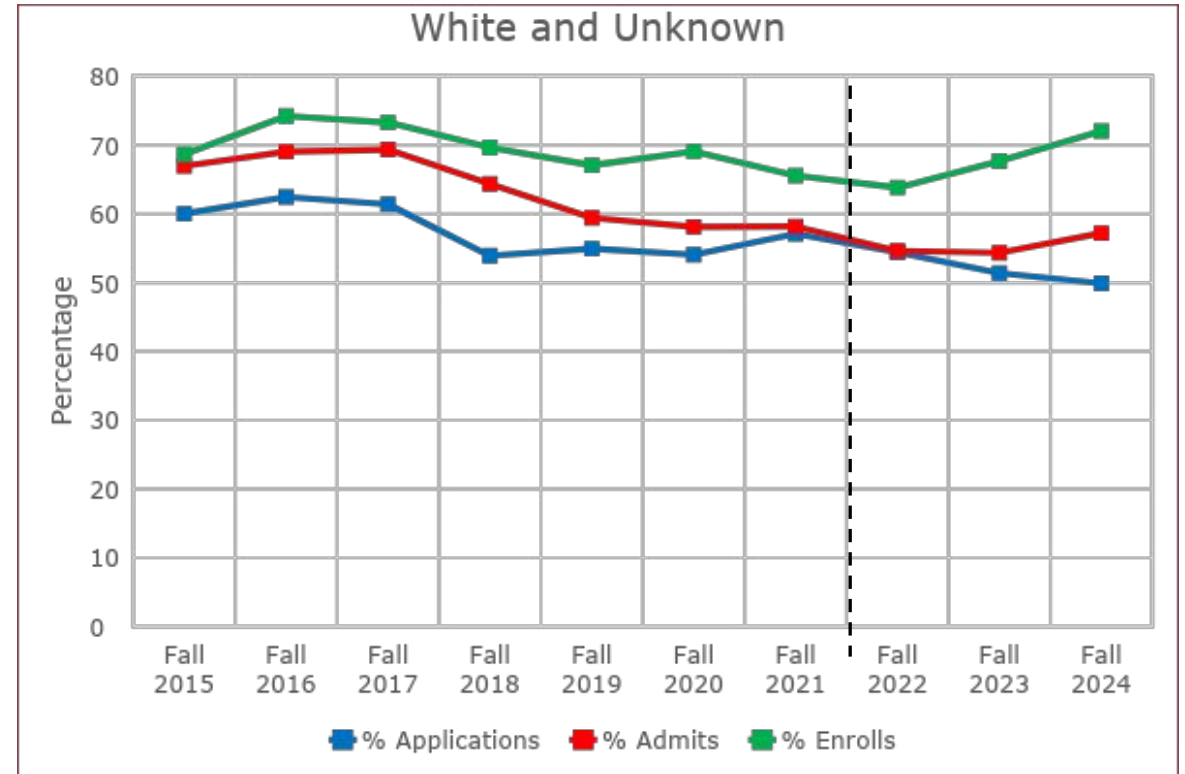
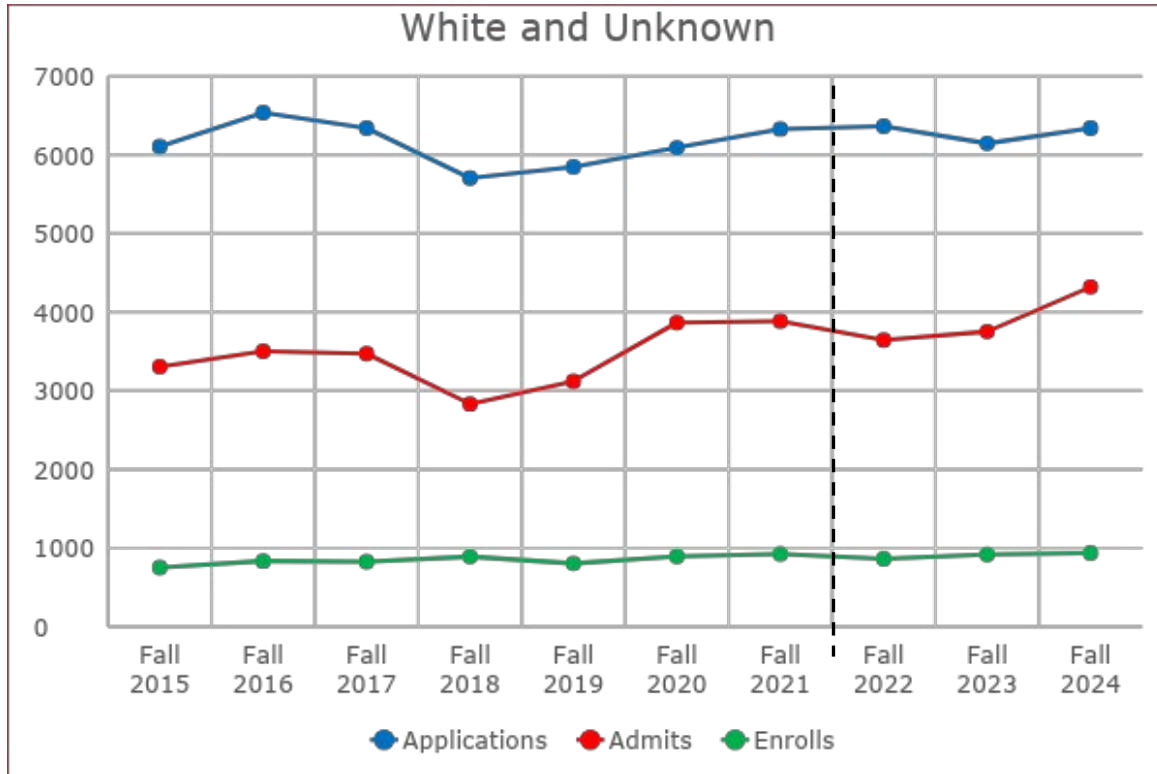
International applicants on downward trend since 2018.

Test-blind has not effectively reversed this trend.



Trends in White and Unknown Applicants

White & Unknown: % of applications has fallen since test-blind; % admits relatively flat; % enrolls increased.



Impact of Other Factors on Admissions

- Supreme Court ruling in 2023 eliminated consideration of race in admissions decisions
- International students consider national rankings as proxy for quality; test blind negatively impacts international student recruitment
- After Fall 2021, change to practice of considering race and gender when awarding merit scholarships, which has negatively impacted enrollment for women and BIPOC/ALANA students
- Hired regional recruitment team to support expansion of recruitment outside New England (NYC, DC, Chicago, TX, FL, SoCal, NorCal, etc.)

Test-admissions Policies of US colleges

For Fall 2025 admission, most U.S. colleges and universities are test-optional.

- 59 require test scores, including many elite universities (<https://www.sparkadmissions.com/blog/colleges-requiring-standardized-test-scores/>)
- 2,000 test-optional (<https://fairtest.org/school/>)
- 87 test-blind (<https://fairtest.org/school/>)
 - 15 have temporary policies
 - 16 have not announced if their policies are temporary or permanent
 - many are regional, liberal arts, or part of the University of California or California State system.
- WPI is an outlier as a national STEM school that is test-blind and the only university in our peer group that is test-blind.

Feedback from WPI's Admissions Office

- Students self-select out of applying: perception that test blind schools are not competitive.
- The admissions staff is asked **EVERY DAY** if students can submit testing.
- Some students are disappointed that they can't share something they are proud of.
- Admissions identifies best-fit students using a holistic view and provides bias training to reviewers.
- Admissions reviews any first-year student who ends up on academic probation - investigating their admissions application to see if any patterns emerge – extra data may help predict which students will struggle at WPI.
- Prior to 2021, testing was used as a complement to transcript, school profile, recommendations, resume, essay.
- **This appears to be a market issue, not a data issue.** College Board influence has not waned, contrary to WPI's expectations.
- **Being an outlier is preventing WPI from reaching highly talented students.**

The Motion

- Terminate the test-blind admissions policy that was adopted in Fall 2021 and return to a test-optional admissions policy indefinitely.
- Under the test-optional admissions policy, students may include standardized test scores with their application materials for undergraduate admissions review.
- Note: without action, WPI will return to a test-optional policy at the end of the 8-year pilot.

Benefits

- WPI's test-optional policy was as close as possible to a test-blind policy, with students having the option to submit test scores as an extra data point, with no expectation or incentive for test-score submission from applicants.
- Ending the test-blind pilot and returning to a test-optional policy provides three significant benefits:
 - 1) Most inclusive option;
 - 2) Appeals to international students who are used to relying on tests; and
 - 3) Aligns WPI with our peer institutions and other national engineering universities who have maintained or returned to test-optional admissions based on the usefulness of test scores as one of many tools in the admissions process.

Feedback & Next Step

- Discussion today
- Provide thoughts/feedback to CAP
 - Jeanine Dudle (chair)
 - **Fiona Zoutendyk (test-blind subcommittee chair, fclevvey@wpi.edu)**
 - Sarah Wodin-Schwartz
 - Destin Heilman
 - Natalie Farny
 - Lou Roberts
- **Motion for discussion and vote** at Nov. faculty meeting
 - Need decision by December to affect Fall 2026 incoming class (class of 2030)