

SUCCESSFUL INTELLIGENCE AND GRADUATE ADMISSIONS

WHEN

April 11, 2018

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

April 12, 2018

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

WHERE

Strickler 101

Chao Auditorium

**FEATURING • Psychology Grawemeyer Award Winner,
Robert Sternberg from Cornell University**

PUBLIC LECTURE, APRIL 11, 2018

Successful Intelligence

Many of us know people who seem very smart on standardized tests, but clueless in their everyday lives, at the same time that we know people who are effective in their daily lives but performed modestly on standardized tests. I argue that such observations have a scientific basis. We usually think of intelligence as a thing—as an IQ or some other single entity. In my work, I have shown that this conception is, at best, incomplete, and at worst, erroneous. Yet, many of the standardized tests we use in this country (e.g., SAT, ACT, GRE) are largely proxies for IQ, and have been shown to correlate highly with it. Instead, intelligence comprises not only the memory and analytical skills needed for success on standardized tests, but also creative, practical (common-sense), and wisdom-based skills that are not measured at all by these tests. We need creative skills to generate innovative ideas, analytical skills to ensure they are good ideas, practical skills to implement the ideas and persuade others of their value, and wisdom-based skills to ensure the ideas help to achieve a common good. If there is anything the world needs today, it is people who are creative, practical, and wise. Yet we continue to select people for leadership positions based on skills that tell us little about who will be the active concerned citizens and ethical leaders whom we need to make the world a better place in which to live.

SPECIALTY TALK (TO DEPARTMENT) APRIL 12, 2018

“Whom Should We Admit to Our Graduate Programs in Psychological Science? Theory and Data Regarding a New Approach to Graduate Admissions via the Assessment of Reasoning about Scientific Research and Teaching”

Graduate admissions in the behavioral and brain sciences, and STEM disciplines in general, rely heavily on college grades and standardized test (GRE) scores. Yet, success in STEM disciplines depends far more on scientific-reasoning skills than it does on the odd assortment of verbal and math skills assessed by standardized tests. We constructed tests to measure the skills we believed to matter most for success in STEM disciplines: generating hypotheses, generating experiments, drawing conclusions, serving as a reviewer of a scientific article, serving as an evaluator of teaching, and serving as an editor of a scientific journal. The tests had generally good convergent-discriminant validity. That is, they measured what they were supposed to measure. But they showed only weak and sometimes negative correlations with standardized tests used in admissions. We concluded that, in graduate admissions, we are failing to measure the skills that matter most for success in STEM disciplines, including but not limited to the behavioral and brain sciences. We may therefore, in some cases, reject students who should be admitted to our graduate programs and accept students who, although good students, are not necessarily those who will be good or even great scientists.