NCAA® Research

Impact of Modifying Early Academic Certification Standards in Division I

Division I Academic Cabinet

June 2012

NCAA Research

Issue

- A previous study of NCAA early academic certifications for initial eligibility (Bylaw 14.3.1.1.1 in Division I; Bylaw 14.3.1.1.2 in Division II), which was presented to the Div. I Academic Cabinet in June 2011, found that the current IE early certification benchmarks can be better optimized.

- Due to the discussions about changes to the Division I initial eligibility rules, the Division I Academic Cabinet decided at their June 2011 meeting to revisit early academic certification at a later time.

- The 2011 research showed that the current Division I standards are probably too conservative. That is, we can increase coverage without substantially increasing the number of false positives (cases of declaring a PSA eligible after six-semesters only to have that PSA not meet the full eight-semester rule).

Questions

- Given the impending changes to the Division I initial eligibility standards, what early certification standard will be most appropriate in 2016?

- Would new early certification benchmarks devised for the 2016 IE changes improve optimization in relation to the current IE standard? If so, should the early certification rules be changed now?

- How should the early certification core course requirements align with the 2016 six-semester minimums for earning competition? For example, the current early certification rule requires no more completed courses in English, math and science (seven) than will be required just to earn competition in 2016.

Current Standards for a PSA to Receive Early Academic Certification in Division I

- **SAT = 1000 or ACT = 85**
- **Core GPA of 3.00 (based on courses below)**
- **13 core courses, including 3 in English, 2 math, 2 science (with 1 being a lab course), and 6 additional core courses in any area.**
- These six-term standards were initially developed as rather conservative predictors of who would eventually obtain eight-term qualifier status. Research at that time indicated that most, if not all, of the PSAs earning early certification but missing full certification would likely have been granted IE waivers.
- The current eight-term standards are 16 core courses (4 English, 3 math, 2 science, 1 additional EMS, 2 social science and 4 others) with a minimum 2.0 core GPA and an SAT/ACT score determined by the core GPA.
- The 2016 eight-term core course standards will be the same (GPA-TEST sliding scale raised; core GPA floor raised to 2.30). A six-term course minimum will be implemented (10 core courses; 7 in EMS; grades locked in).

A Digression

- The Division II early certification standard is much too stringent:
  - Note that in Division II, the early certification requirements are 3.0, 1000/85, 12 core (3 E, 2 M, 2 S, 5 other). Their 8-term standards are 2.0, 820/68, 14 core (3 E, 2 M, 2 S, 2 additional EMS, 2 SS, 3 other). In 2013, they move to a 8-term standard with 16 core (+1 EMS, +1 other).
  - So, PSAs required to have SAT=1000 / ACT=85 to meet the six-semester standard but only an SAT=820 / ACT=68 for the eight-semester mark. Since a best score on the SAT/ACT cannot decrease over time, why not give credit once 820/68 reached?
  - A high school GPA of 3.00 is required in 12 core courses for six-semester certification, while a 2.00 GPA in 14 core courses is required at eight semesters. Even when Division II core requirements increase to 16 in 2013, the 3.00 is too conservative (for example, a PSA with a 3.00 in 12 classes would only fall to 2.50 if earning D-grades in their four additional core courses).

Methods

- Using Eligibility Center (EC) data on all prospective student-athletes completing high school in spring 2011, nearly 10,000 alternative six-term early academic certification standards were modeled.

- One set of models simultaneously varied minimums in core GPA, test score and core units within each academic area to create alternative conjunctive early certification standards. Another set of models created alternative GPA-TEST sliding scales crossed with various core course benchmarks.

- For each model, we gauged the coverage (number of PSAs whose six-semester transcripts met the standard) and the number of potential false positives (PSAs meeting the 6-term rule but not the current or future 8-term IE standard). <u>These values should be used for comparative purposes; they may not match actual processing</u>.

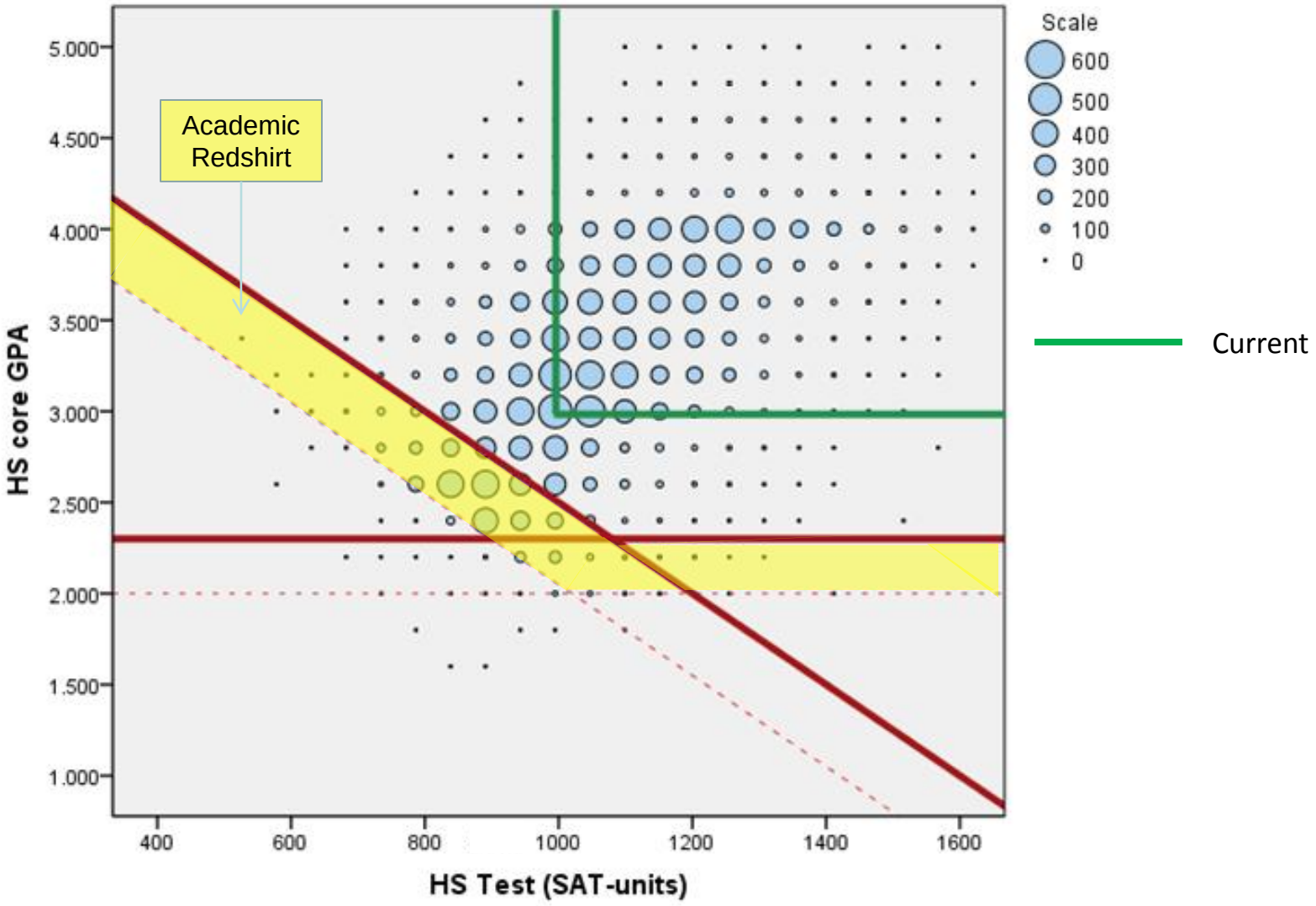
- Rules were evaluated in these initial analyses by comparing coverage to potential FPs. Are there rules or classes of rules that stand out as providing superior coverage for a particular FP tolerance?

- Generally, all PSAs were included in these analyses since the Eligibility Center typically examines all six-semester profiles.

Assumptions

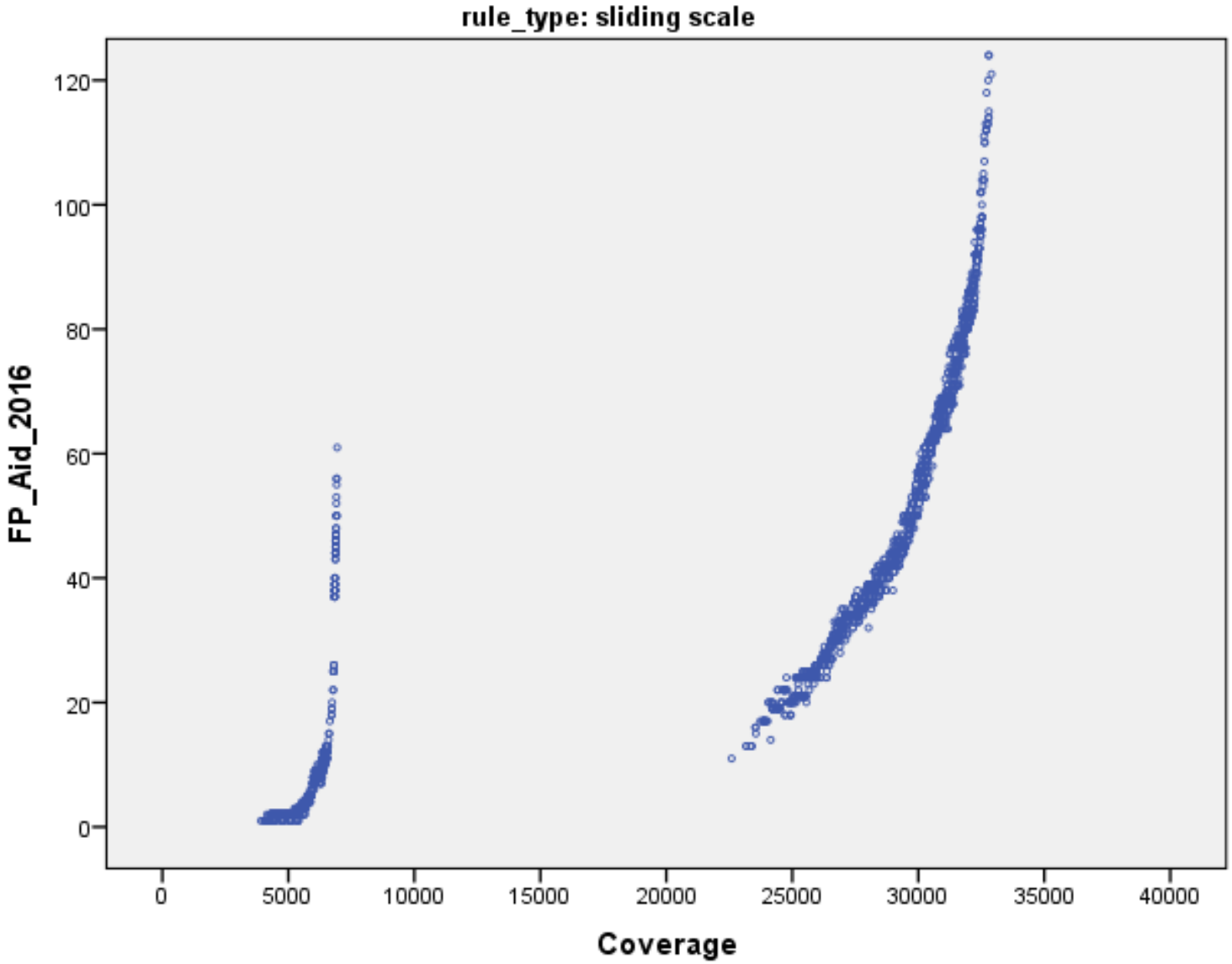
- <u>We want to keep early certification false positives very low</u>
  - The goal is not necessarily to maximize coverage but to maximize early certification decisions for those PSAs who are nearly certain to meet the eight-semester standard. In other words, it is assumed there is little incremental value in certifying borderline cases early given that they have another certification opportunity at eight semesters.
- <u>We do not want to undercut the new 2016 IE standard</u>
  - Related to the above bullet. By keeping false positives low, we reduce the likelihood of producing a six-semester early certification standard that allows PSAs to systematically avoid (either inadvertently or intentionally) any component of the eight-semester benchmarks.
- <u>A simple early certification standard is preferred</u>
  - A sliding scale version of the early certification standard would necessitate including a fourth sliding scale in the Division I manual (current IE scale, 2016 aid scale and 2016 competition scale already included). We assume that a simple conjunctive rule (minimum core GPA and minimum TEST) would be preferred unless the benefits of the sliding scale are substantial.

Current Early Certification Standard in Division I



PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Aid FP

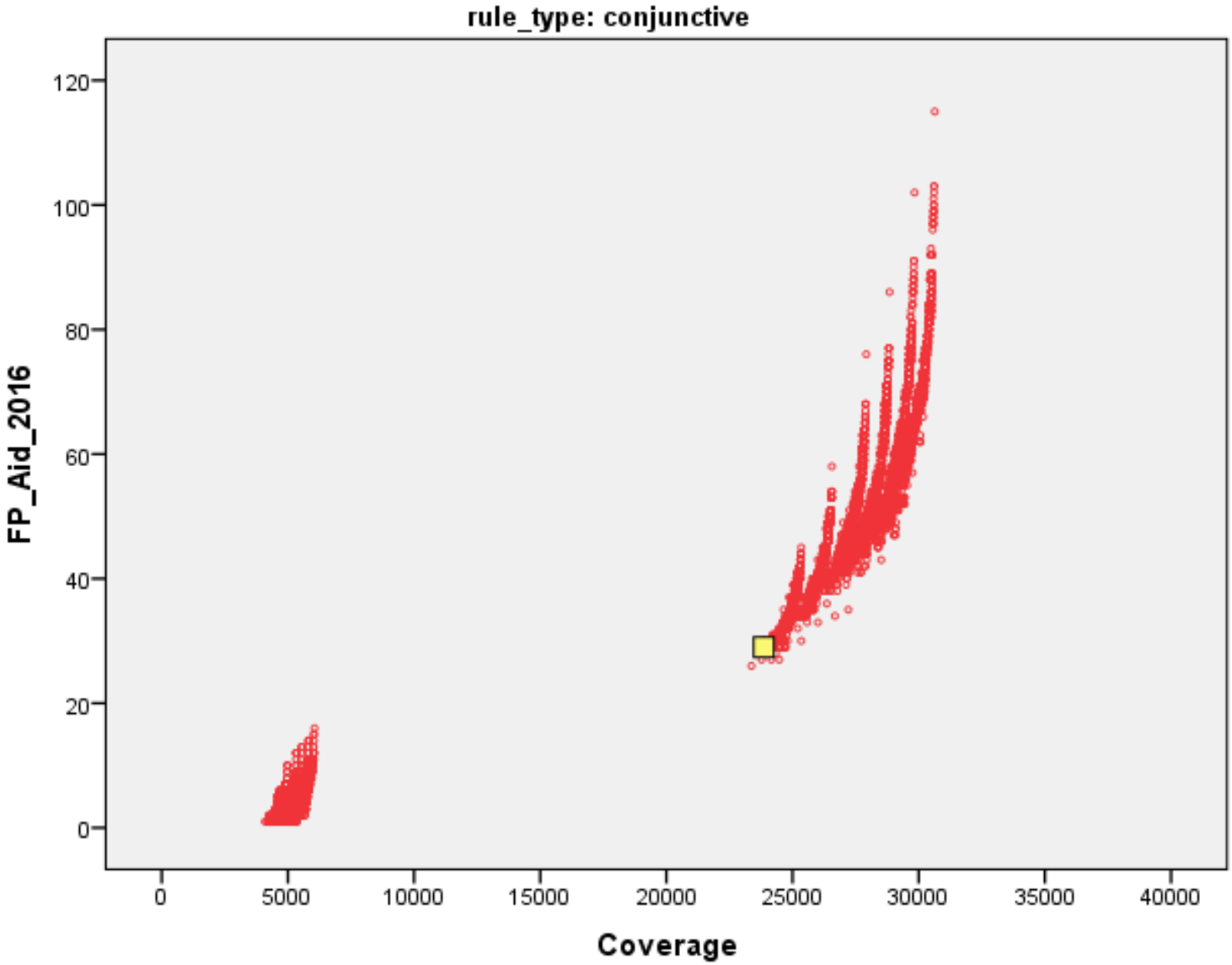
(Each dot represents an alternative sliding scale rule)



NCAA Research

PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Aid FP

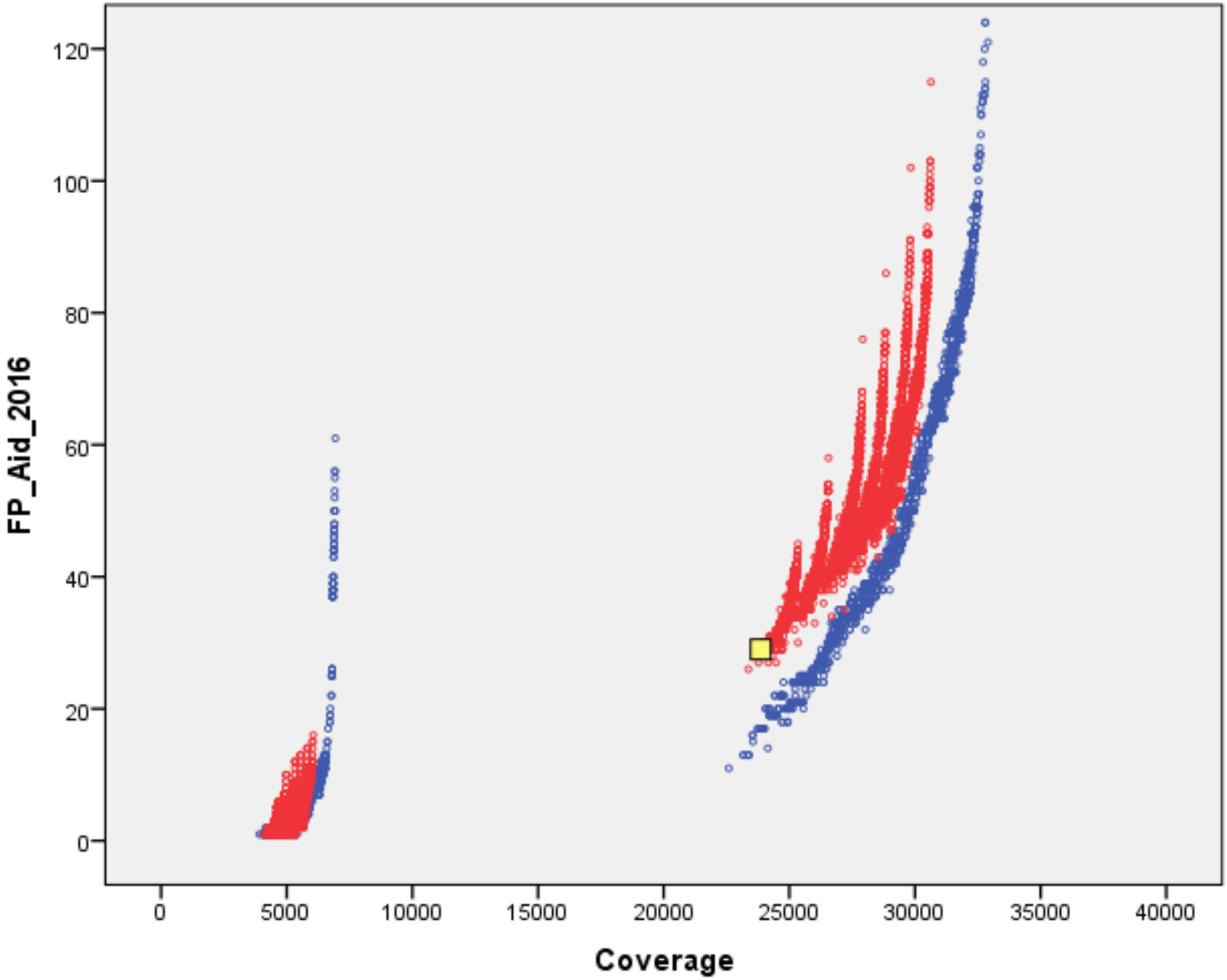
(Each dot represents an alternative conjunctive rule)



NCAA Research

PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Aid FP

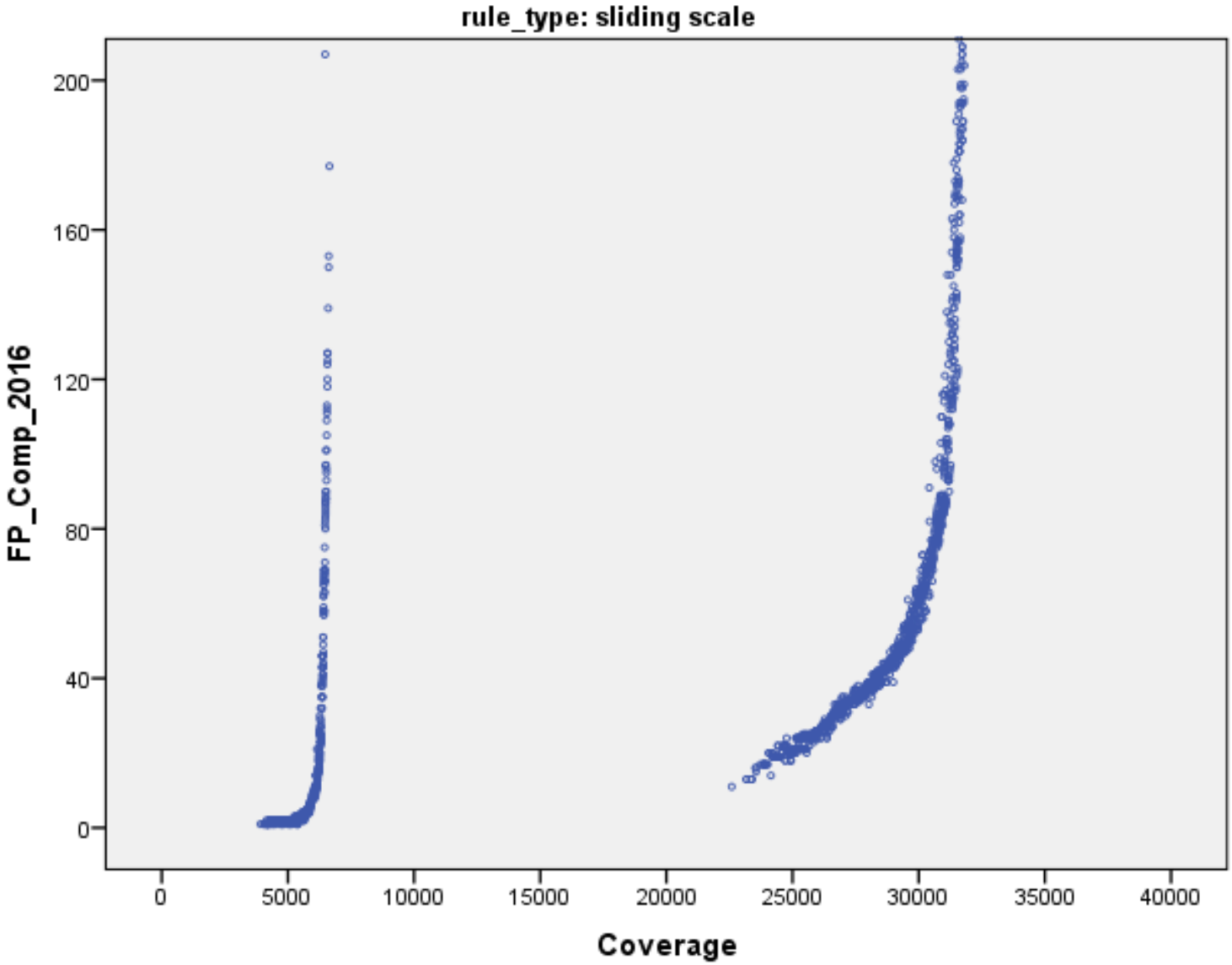
(Red=conjunctive, Blue=Sliding Scale, Yellow=Current Rule)



NCAA Research

PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Competition FP

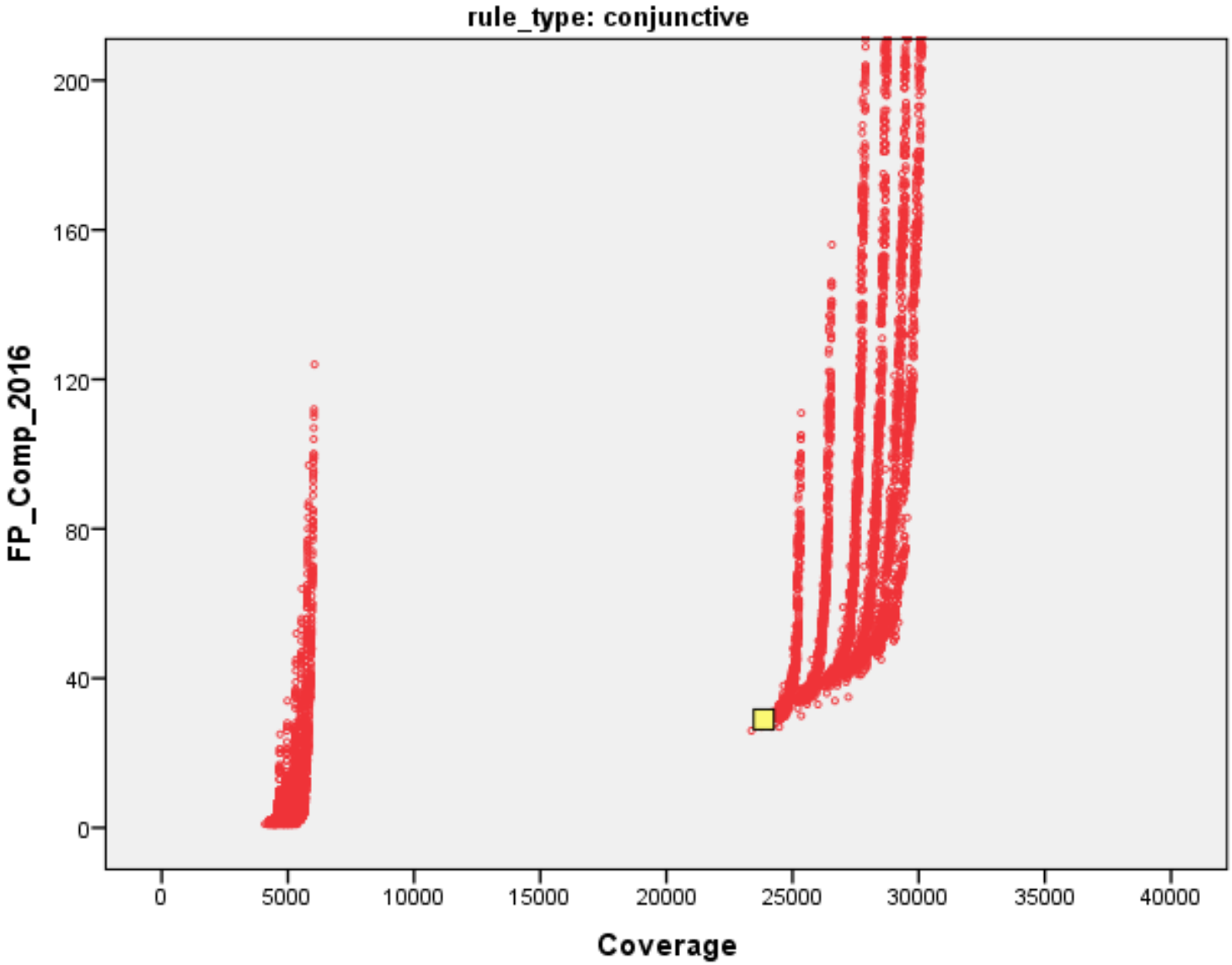
(Each dot represents an alternative sliding scale rule)



NCAA Research

PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Competition FP

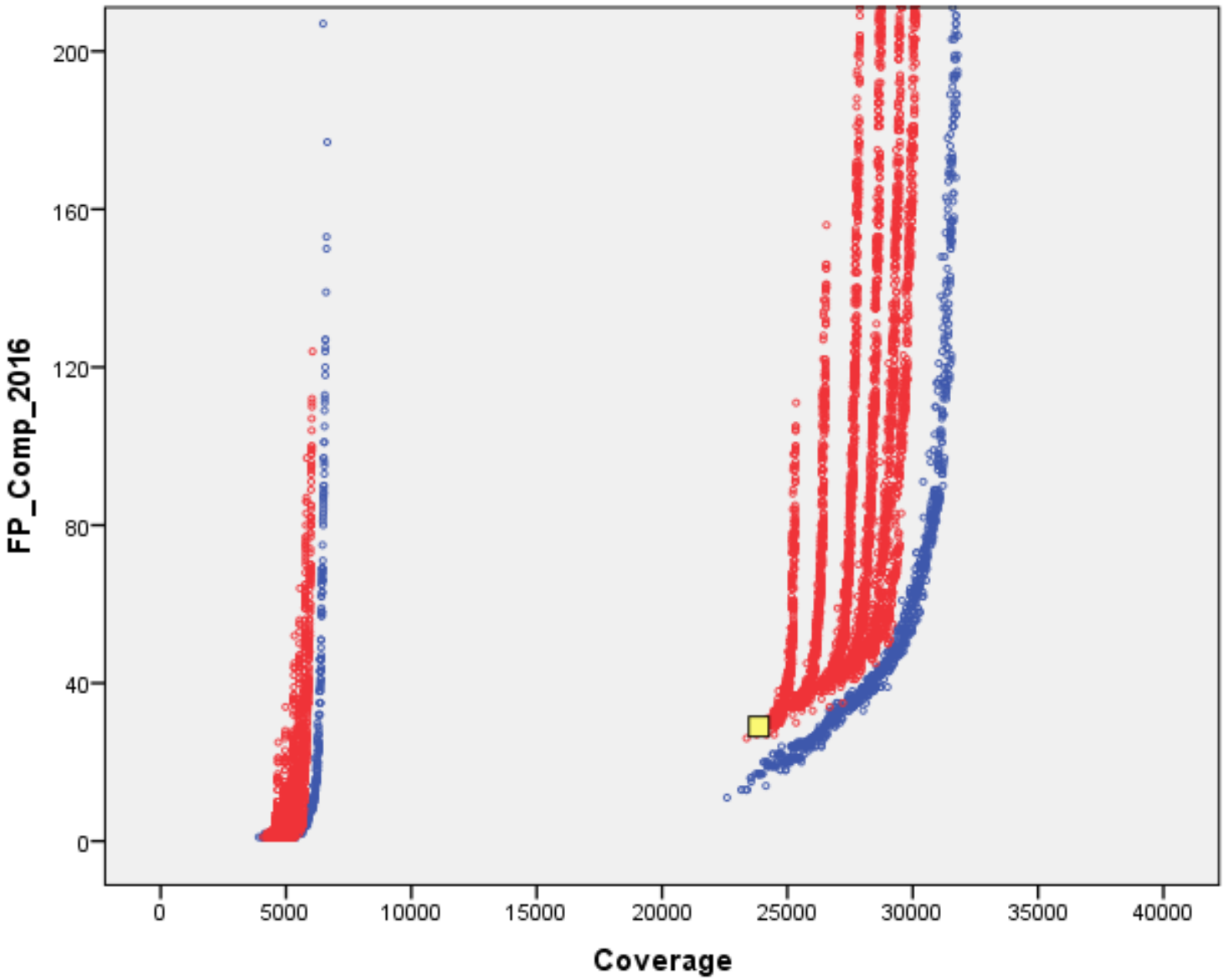
(Each dot represents an alternative conjunctive rule)



NCAA Research

PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Competition FP

(Red=conjunctive, Blue=Sliding Scale, Yellow=Current Rule)



NCAA Research

Findings

1. The sliding scales examined generally perform better for early certification determination than the conjunctive rules studied. However, given the desire to keep false positives very low (near their current level), we can create a conjunctive six-semester standard that provides almost as much coverage as the optimal sliding scale standard for that level of error.

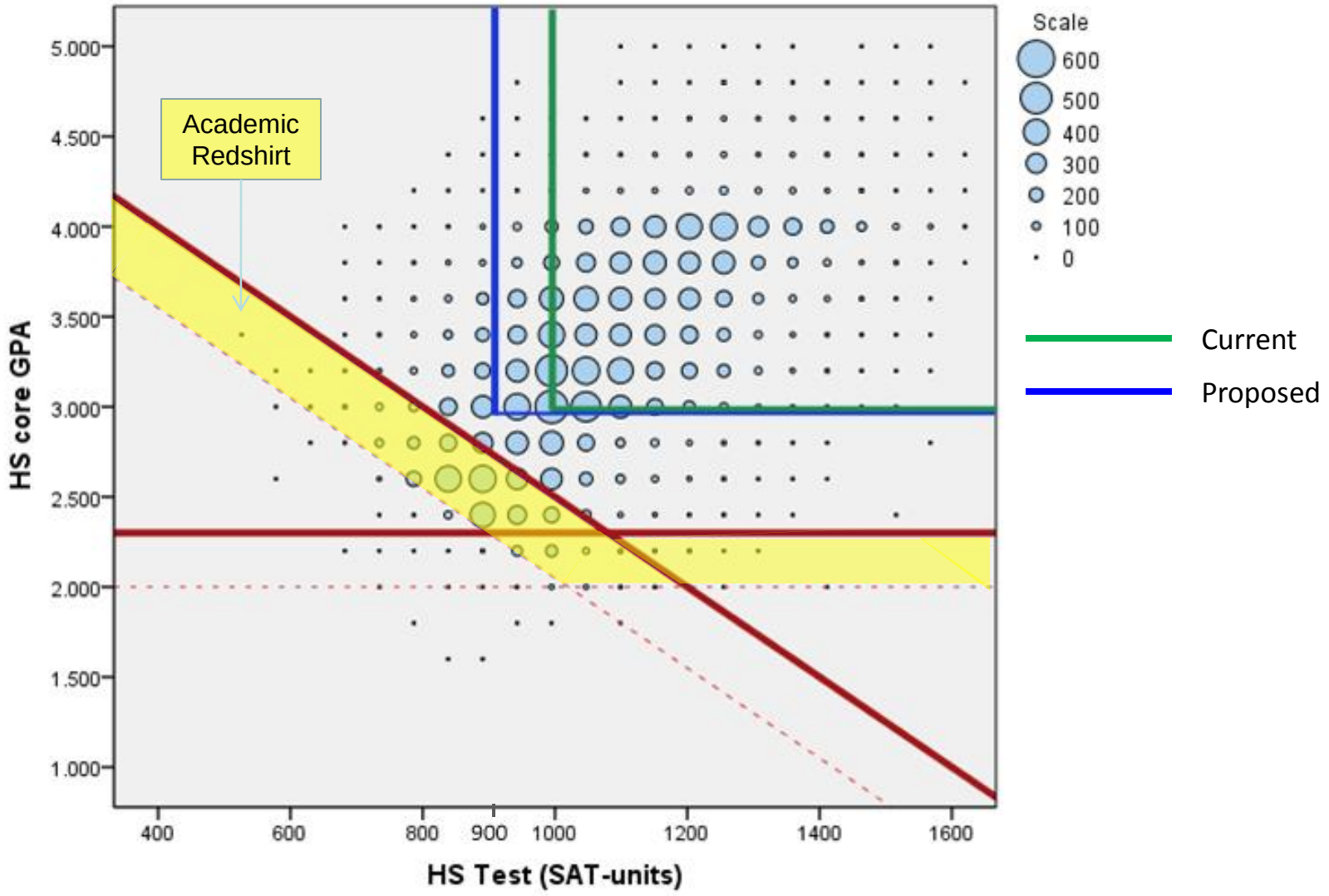
2. The conjunctive rule that performed similar to sliding scale alternatives (assuming we want very low FP) would involve setting standards of:
   - 14 total core courses taken (increased from 13)
   - 9 in EMS (increased from 7). Optimal pattern seems to be 3 English, 2 math, 2 science and 2 other.
   - 3.00 core GPA (same as current)
   - 900 SAT / 75 ACT (down from 1000 / 85)

Findings

3. If put in place today, we expect that this set of benchmarks would provide more coverage than the current early certification rule with a very minimal change in FPs.

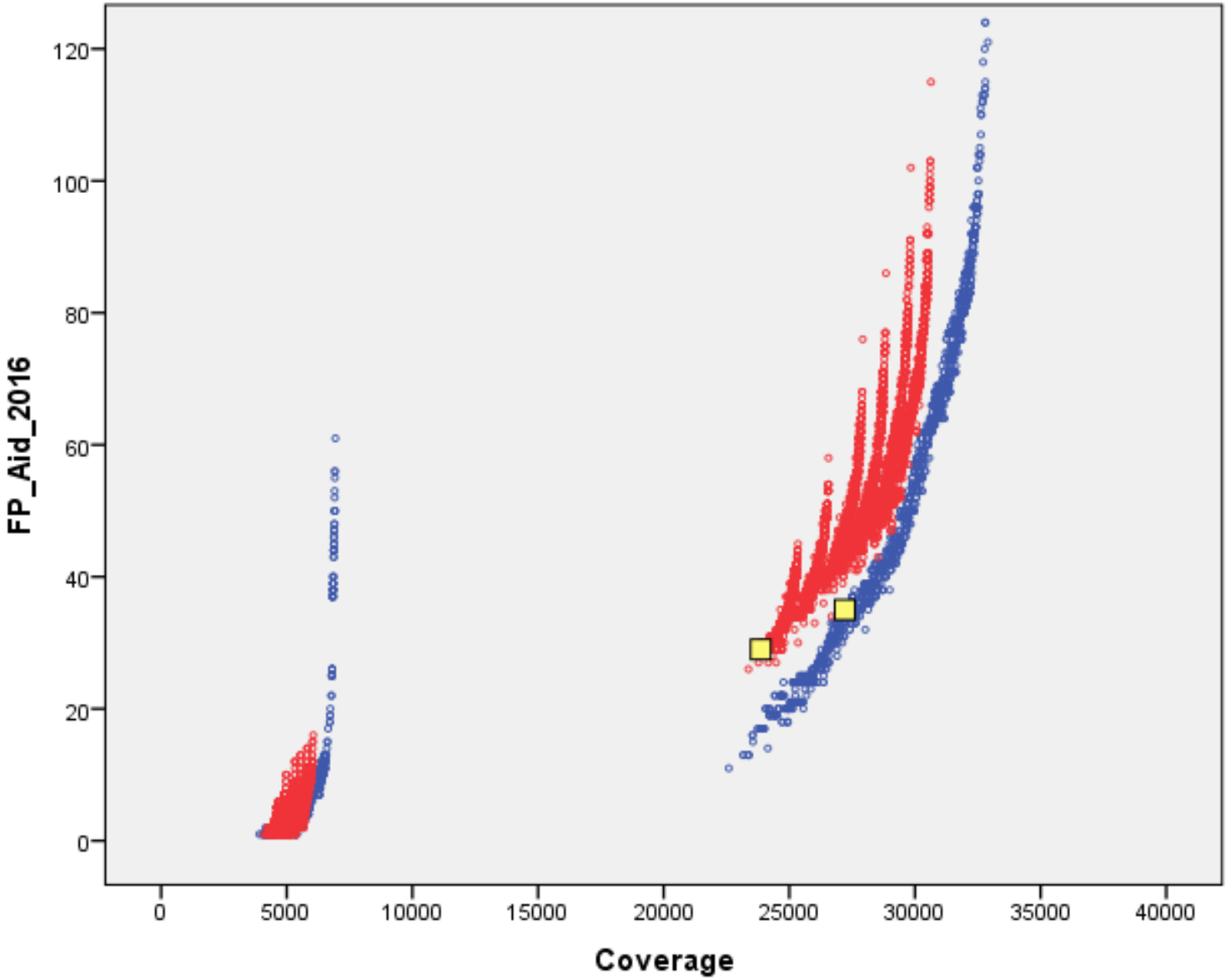
4. Such a revised early certification standard would appear to be appropriate to carry over to 2016 to make early certifications for competition eligibility:
   - Creates core course and EMS standards that are higher than those that will be required at six-semesters just to earn competition eligibility. But, as we see from the data, they are not overly stringent (~82% of current PSAs earn 14 core in first six semesters; ~81% earn 9 EMS).
   - This early certification standard is nearest the 2016 competition sliding scale at the 3.00/900 point. A 2.75 core GPA will be needed to meet the 2016 competition standard if the PSA has that 900/75 test score. With a 3.00 needed in 14 core courses at six semesters, a PSA would precisely hit the 2.75 for eight semesters even if core courses #15 and #16 were Ds.

Proposed Early Certification Standard in Division I



PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Aid FP

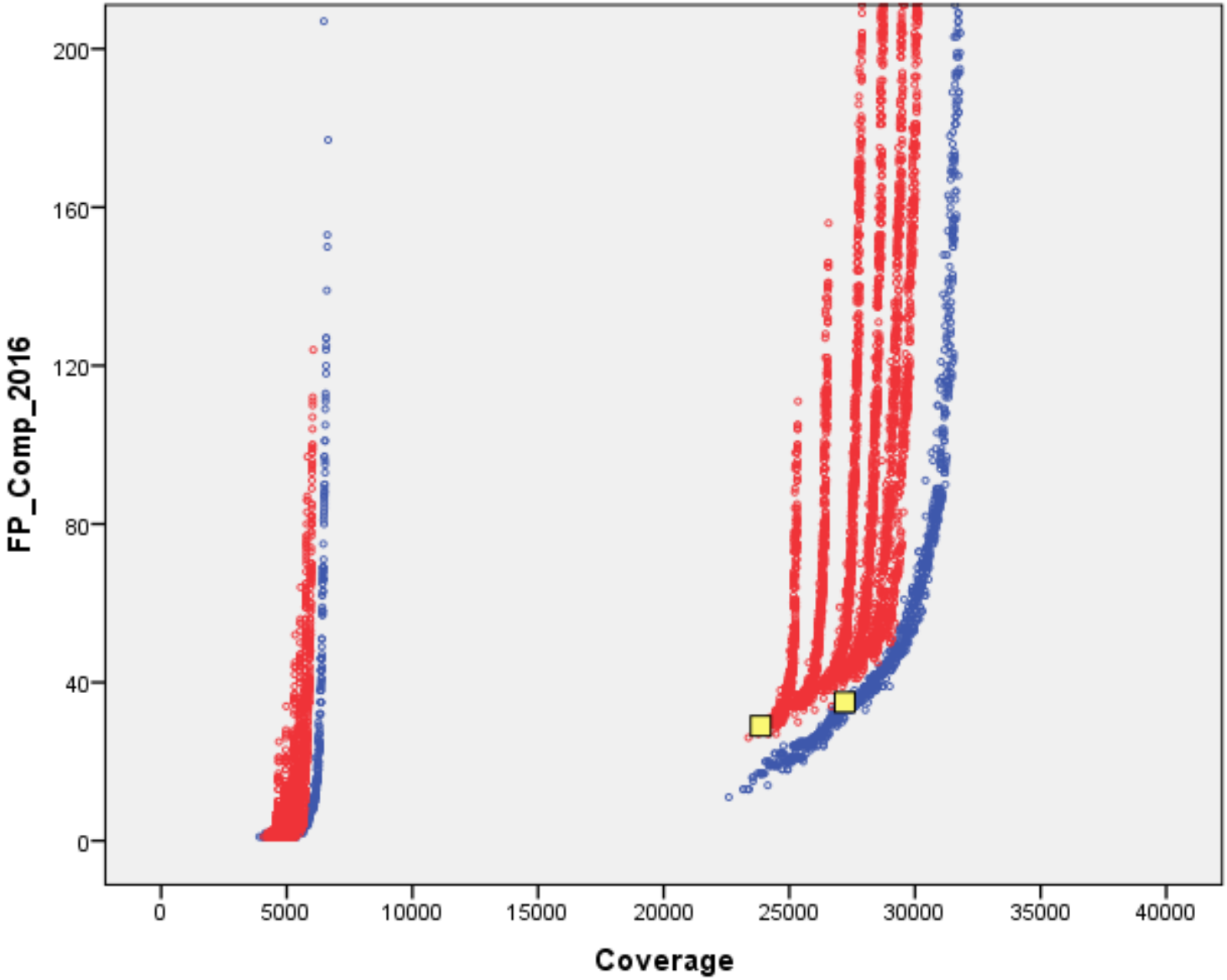
(Red=conjunctive, Blue=Sliding Scale, Yellow=Current + Proposed Rules)



NCAA Research

PSAs meeting EAQ standard vs. 2016 Competition FP

(Red=conjunctive, Blue=Sliding Scale, Yellow=Current + Proposed Rule)



NCAA Research

Recommendation

1. For prospective student-athletes whose initial full-time collegiate enrollment is fall 2013 or later amend the current EAQ standard as follows:
   - 14 total core courses taken (increased from 13)
   - 9 in EMS (increased from 7). Optimal pattern seems to be 3 English, 2 math, 2 science and 2 other.
   - 3.00 core GPA (same as current)
   - 900 SAT / 75 ACT (down from 1000 / 85)

(Note: Any prospective student-athletes that satisfy the current EAQ standard and delay enrollment can use either standard)

NCAA® Research