

S. 87-4

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

To: Senate

From: N. Heath
Secretary, S.U.A.B.

Subject: SUAB 162

Date: 87/02/16

Action undertaken by the Senate Undergraduate Admissions Board at its meeting of 29 January 1987 gives rise to the following motion:

MOTION:

That Senate approve the granting of transfer credit and/or advanced standing for examinations passed with a grade of 4 or higher in the specified disciplines of the Advanced Placement Program as given in S. 87-4 and that this policy be effective immediately on a 3-year trial basis, subject to a review by S.U.A.B. in 1988.

NH:sf

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Subject: APP

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Proposed Policy:

For an interim 3-year period, from the present until December, 1989, Simon Fraser University will grant transfer credit and/or advanced standing for certain specified examinations in the College Entrance Examination Board's Advanced Placement Program as follows;

The candidate must have achieved a minimum grade of 4 (where 5 is the highest grade).

APP Examination

S.F.U. Department Recommendation

European History
Biology

Advanced standing in History 106
Transfer credit for Biological Sciences
101, 102(8)

Physics B
Calculus BC

Transfer credit for Physics 101, 102 (6)
Advanced standing in Mathematics 151,
152, subject to an individual assessment

Physics C

Advanced standing in Physics 120, 121

Chemistry

Advanced standing in Chemistry 104, 105

English (Lang. & Composition)

No advanced standing

English (Lit. & Composition)

No advanced standing

Further APP examinations may be added to this list following a review by S.U.A.B. of the recommendation of the respective academic department.

Background:

The Advanced Placement Program consists of a series of examinations in various disciplines, given annually in May to senior high school students. The examinations are set by committees of instructors at both the high school level and at the college and first-year university level. The examinations are marked centrally, and the administration of the examinations is handled by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey.

A.P.P. started in 1955, and since then, the numbers of students writing the examinations, and numbers of post-secondary institutions giving recognition to the examination results, have grown substantially. Approximately 150,000 candidates from about 5,800 high schools will write the examinations this year. About 1,800 colleges and universities in the United States will grant recognition in some form to these examinations.

The program encourages college level coursework in the secondary school. Typically, the Advanced Placement examinations are taken only by selected students who are in enriched high school programs, and who would otherwise find the high school curriculum lacking in intellectual challenge. However, APP does not replace the local high school curriculum, but is a supplement to it. Students who are successful in the APP examinations appear to be highly motivated and are likely to pursue their educations at the university level with a high probability of success.

Until recently, there appears to have been little interest in the APP in Canadian secondary schools. The only university in Canada which gives recognition to APP examinations is McGill. In the past two years, a number of B.C. secondary schools have begun to implement enrichment programs for selected students, leading to APP examinations in some subjects, in addition to regular secondary school graduation.

The program was started in B.C. public schools by Science teachers in the Central Okanagan School District and has since been adopted by a number of other schools in the greater Vancouver area. Interest now appears to be province-wide. At the present time, it appears that about 30 B.C. secondary schools will be presenting candidates for APP examinations in 1987 or 1988.

Grading

Each examination is graded on a 5-point scale as follows:

- 5 - extremely well qualified**
- 4- well qualified**
- 3- qualified**
- 2- possibly qualified**
- 1- no recommendation**

Many of the 1,800 universities and colleges in the United States accepting APP results will give recognition to courses passed with a grade of 3 or higher. However, a number of the more prestigious schools require a 4 or higher for advanced standing or credit, since it is not in the student's best interest to proceed to higher level courses without a thorough mastery of the first-year courses in most disciplines.

The Senate Undergraduate Admissions Board considered that placement and credit should only be considered for grades of 4 or higher.

Experience

We are aware of only a handful of students who have entered the University having taken APP examinations. Of these, only one student has been given transfer credit on an individual basis, for first-year Physics. Consequently, inadequate data are available for making any statistical inferences about the relative performance of students with and without APP. However, a number of research reports based on APP students in U.S. institutions show that these students tend to perform better than average in university programs.

Conclusion

Simon Fraser University needs to remain responsive to initiatives taken in the B.C. school system to improve the quality of education. The decision taken in 1984 to give credit for certain partially completed International Baccalaureate programs, has helped substantially in raising the profile of Simon Fraser as a university which is interested in attracting the Province's best academic students. Similarly, it will be in the interests of the University and of its future students, to take the initiative on this issue, and to recognize the Advanced Placement Program. This is especially important in view of the widespread distribution of results of these examinations. Universities across the continent will be focussing part of their recruitment activity on British Columbia students who have performed well in APP examinations.

NH:sf