



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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CHE
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MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Ken Wingate, Chair, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Annual Report on Advanced Placement Course Acceptance Policies, FY 2010 – 2011

The Education Improvement Act of 1984 requires the Commission to monitor the awarding of Advanced Placement (AP) credit by the State's public higher education institutions. The Act specified that:

Students successfully completing the Advanced Placement requirements shall receive Advanced Placement credit in postsecondary public colleges in South Carolina in the manner specified by the Commission on Higher Education in conjunction with the State Board of Education.

As a result of this Act, in July 1985, the Commission adopted the following policy:

Effective not later than Fall 1986, each public institution shall give credit in appropriate courses for scores of three or better on pertinent Advanced Placement examinations, except that specific exemptions for not awarding credit for scores of three or better on particular tests at any institution may be approved by the Committee on Academic Affairs. (As used above, the phrase "appropriate courses" means those courses offered by the institutions which parallel the content covered by the AP exam. The phrase "pertinent examination" means those examinations whose content parallels that of the institutional course.)

In addition, the 1996-97 Appropriations Bill included a proviso (section 18A.21) that mandated that all postsecondary institutions in South Carolina award AP credit to students receiving a score of three or above on an AP examination. In compliance with the legislation and policies in effect, each public two- and four-year institution is to award credit for each AP course if a student scores three or higher on the AP examination. To ensure compliance, the Commission has requested that public institutions review annually the list of AP examinations for which credit is given and to report any revisions (e.g., additions or deletions). The resulting list of AP examinations for which credit is awarded for scores of three or higher has in the past been provided in the Commission's annual report. However, the process previously used and the

resulting report are no longer needed since AP courses were recently added to the South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center (SC TRAC) system which displays accurate and up-to-date equivalencies for all AP courses (available at www.SCTRAC.org). These equivalencies can be accessed at any time through SC TRAC's "Search for Equivalencies" function. (Course descriptions for all AP courses offered along with other information regarding AP courses and exams can be found online at www.collegeboard.com/ap.)

It is worth noting that the previous year's report (2009-2010) identified a few instances of courses where credit was not granted or that were listed as under review for awarding credit. When AP courses were added to SC TRAC, the Commission asked all institutions to address these courses and to create equivalencies for them as well as review the credit awarded for all AP courses. Institutions could grant credit for either a comparable course or an elective for all courses in which a student scored a three or higher on the AP examination. As a result, institutions now award credit for all AP courses currently administered when a student scores a three or higher on the examination. Because institutions award credit for all AP courses currently offered and the SC TRAC system displays the credit awarded for and ensures accurate and up-to-date equivalencies for those courses, Commission staff recommend that the annual report on AP course acceptance policies be discontinued as long as the SC TRAC system is in operation.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the annual report on AP course acceptance policies be discontinued as long as the SC TRAC system is in operation, provided that staff review annually the credit awarded for AP courses and report to the Committee if any changes negatively affect the awarding of credit.