

ACAP
Agenda Item 6
3/19/2009

March 19, 2009

MEMORANDUM

To: Members, Advisory Committee on Academic Programs

From: Dr. Gail M. Morrison, Director of Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Statement about Fine Arts Unit in College Course Prerequisites

Background

After several e-mail exchanges, I have received endorsement from all but Lander University, which has been closed the week of March 2 for Spring Break, of the statement listed below about accommodating the fine arts unit in light of the financial exigencies confronting the state and making it difficult for high schools to hire additional fine arts teachers. I received many strong endorsements for maintaining the fine arts unit for any number of excellent reasons, including the opportunity to engage students in performance opportunities as a different way of learning and exercising the mind; exposing students to cultural ties that bind us as a society together and yet at the same time celebrate diversities among cultures across time and space; exposure to fields that enrich quality of life; and exposure to potential majors that provide important economic development and employment opportunities, among others. One point of view that I had not considered before came from Dr. Dori Helms, Clemson's Provost, which was so compelling that I share it here with all of you. Dr. Helms wrote:

While science, mathematics and engineering are being touted as necessary to 'save our nation,' some of the creativity that is necessary in these disciplines comes from students' discovering their inner selves through art and music and drama....Often this occurs in the school because it is not available at home.... [W]e should, in the interest of being educated individuals, stick to our guns. Some of our greatest scientists were also musicians and artists.

There was no articulated support and some opposition expressed for allowing philosophy courses to count as the fine arts unit.

After I adopted a number of helpful editorial suggestions submitted by various ACAP members, the final version of the statement on the fine arts unit reads as follows:

Institutions strongly encourage students to complete the fine arts requirement, which becomes effective with students who will enter college as freshmen in Fall 2011. However, given the financial exigencies currently facing the state, the colleges and universities recognize at this time that implementation of this requirement may be difficult for school districts currently confronting budget cuts that may limit the hiring of new faculty, much less the retention of existing faculty. Thus, we recommend that students make every effort to utilize the S.C. Virtual High School which includes a new set of online courses in music, theatre, and art history. In the event that students have not completed the fine arts unit, the colleges and universities may invoke the exceptions clause under current policy which allows them to make exceptions in admitting students who do not meet all of the prerequisites if the failure to meet one or more prerequisites is due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.

(March 5, 2009)

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs formally adopt the bolded statement above at its meeting on March 19 and revisit it annually until such time as the financial exigency confronting the State has run its course.