

June 26, 2017

Josh Dalavai

President, Associated Students, University of California, Davis

RE: ASUCD Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed

Dear Josh:

The proposal to grant general education credit for AP exams passed was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. Eight committees responded: Undergraduate Council (UGC), General Education (GE), Courses of Instruction (COCI), and the Faculty Executive Committees (FEC) of each of the four colleges as well as the School of Law. Full committee responses are enclosed.

To begin, committees note that the policy to disallow AP credits toward priority registration is somewhat conflated with the ideas in the current proposal regarding AP credits and GE requirements. The priority registration policy was not reviewed in this consultation, though committees point out that an original concern that led to disallowing AP credits toward priority registration—namely, inequities in AP access across high schools—also, by extension, apply to the current proposal.

While some committees view aspects of the proposal favorably, UGC and GE—the two committees charged with overseeing general education and other curricular standards at UC Davis—do not support the proposal. In short, they do not believe that passing an AP exam is necessarily equivalent to the exposure to different breadths of knowledge, perspectives, high-level thinking, and masteries of competencies expected at the college level. “Advanced Placement exams are not designed with these general goals in mind,” writes GE, “much less to meet UCD’s specific curricular objectives, and success in passing them is no measure of a student’s ability to engage effectively across disciplines at the college level.” GE emphasizes that AP exams offer other benefits at UC Davis: “AP exams are factored into admission decisions, certain AP scores are granted graduation credit, and certain AP scores allow students to bypass introductory courses.” The latter two certainly help with time-to-degree.

COCI is the Senate committee that approves all new and revised courses at UC Davis, and it is responsible for verifying that courses meet the general education standards established by UGC and GE, including Topical Breadths and Core Literacies. While COCI believes there could be merit in further investigating the articulation of AP exams for GE credit, it notes that such a task would be “non-trivial and will require extensive effort to understand specifically what is covered, and at what depth, in each AP exam and course.” In other words, blanket implementation of AP exams for GE credit would not be acceptable academically, and full articulation would not be feasible either. Thus, due to both academic objections and practical limitations, deference in this case is given to the evaluations of UGC and GE.

Committees also note that UC Davis is not the only UC campus that does not grant general education credit for AP exams passed. As UGC states, “there is considerable variability among and within the campuses as to how this is handled, just as there is variability among the campuses in the structure of the GE requirements themselves.” Indeed, as UC campuses have different general education programs and philosophies, it is difficult in that sense to compare the use of AP exams for credit without comparing and reviewing general education programs as a whole. As you may know, UC Davis’s most recent general education standards were implemented in 2011, at which time a task force with broad, extensive academic

expertise set the standards that UC Davis faculty expect of our graduates. While a comparably intensive reconsideration of our general education standards is not anticipated for some time, the GE committee routinely reviews, and if necessary streamlines, our general education policies to ensure that UC Davis graduates “obtain a breadth of knowledge and perspective in addition to their specialized training as artists, scientists, scholars, researchers, etc.” while not adversely impacting students’ time to graduation.

In light of the opinions of Undergraduate Council and the Committee on General Education, the Davis Division does not support ASUCD’s proposal at this time. We very much appreciate ASUCD’s initiative in drafting this proposal, and our committees intend to keep ASUCD’s ideas in mind in coming years. UGC expressed its appreciation for “ASUCD’s interest in participating in decisions about academic policies on our campus,” and thinks “the best way to achieve that goal is through timely appointment of ASUCD representatives to Academic Senate committees and consistent attendance and engagement of those representatives at committee meetings.” The Davis Division supports this statement.

We look forward to future collaboration with ASUCD and student representatives.

Sincerely,



Rachael E. Goodhue
 Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
 Professor and Chair, Agricultural and Resource Economics

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

- c: Ken Burtis, Interim Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
 Adela de la Torre, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs and Campus Diversity
 Milton Lang, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Life, Campus Community and Retention Services, Student Affairs
 Emily Prieto-Tseregounis, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, Student Affairs
 Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate