



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502
TELEPHONE: (530) 752-2231

June 28, 2010

HENRY POWELL, CHAIR

University of California
Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Proposal to Expand the Area (d) Laboratory Science Admission Requirement to Include Earth, Environmental, and Space Sciences: BOARS Recommendation for Materials to Include in Packet of Information Sent to Campuses

The referenced proposal was forwarded to all Davis Division standing committees in addition to the Faculty Executive Committee in each school and college at UC Davis. Comments were received from the Undergraduate Council, Committee on Admissions and Enrollment, and the College of Letters and Sciences Faculty Executive Committee.

Some believe the earth science proposal should be supported as it is already in the "d" area category. In fact, the Davis Division Committee on Admissions and Enrollment agrees that the current policy language already appears to embrace certification of courses in other science subjects (including EESS subjects), provided that they engage basic science content at a sufficiently rigorous level. The Division concurs that earth science study includes timely and interesting topics; such as climate change and earthquakes, and may draw students into the sciences who might otherwise not be attracted. There is strong support for the notion that there is value in delivering college-preparatory basic science curricula in ways that students find interesting and engaging, e.g. by framing the material in the context of earth, environmental and space sciences (EESS) subject areas.

However, overall, the proposal was not supported. The primary concern echoed BOARS in that most earth science courses are not as rigorous as those in the traditional areas. There is concern that students would elect earth sciences simply as a way to avoid chemistry and physics while minimally satisfying the a-g requirements. One suggested compromise was offered by the Davis Division Undergraduate Council: "One novel suggestion was to craft the "d" requirement statement in such a way as to not specifically exclude appropriate Earth Science and integrative science courses. Perhaps the wording in the proposal could be simplified to "two years of laboratory science, one in a physical science and one in a life or biological science.""

Finally, there is a strong belief that the rationale for changing UC admissions policy should not be confined to simply encouraging high schools to innovate science curricula. This message could, and should be transmitted by UC in ways that do not require formal revision of admissions requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R.L. Powell".

Robert L. Powell III, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate and
Professor and Chair, Department of
Chemical Engineering and Materials Science
Professor, Food Science and Technology