



# **Davis Division Academic Senate**

## **Request for Consultation Responses**

### **Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed**

**June 2, 2017**

ASUCD submitted a proposal to grant General Education (GE) credit for Advanced Placement exams passed. This initial Spring 2017 consultation is intended to be exploratory; if needed, the Senate office will work to gather appropriate data during the summer for further analysis and review in Fall 2017. This is a complex consultation that may require extensive articulation data and research into policies at other UCs.

# **Courses of Instruction**

**May 10, 2017 10:46 AM**

*Response continued on next page.*

May 9, 2017

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

The Committee on Courses of Instruction has reviewed the ASUCD proposal to give GE credit to students who have taken “equivalent” AP-level courses. The motivation behind this proposal is to help improve the time-to-degree of undergraduate students. COCI fully supports the development of policies that can positively impact time-to-degree while still ensuring academic rigor. Regarding the specific ASUCD proposal, COCI concludes that there is merit in further investigating the possibility of using AP courses to fulfill GE requirements. However, we have concerns that the current proposal oversimplifies many issues associated with articulation of AP courses to the UC in terms of their fulfillment of a particular or multiple GE requirements.

First, the proposal, while ostensibly focused on articulation of AP units for fulfillment of GE requirements, also includes discussion of how AP units are not counted towards priority registration. We believe that the issues of GE articulation and priority registration should be separated. While related through the link to AP exams, they are fundamentally distinct issues.

Second, the proposal seems to have as a base assumption that if an AP exam has a name that is reminiscent of some existing course or department on campus that the AP exam necessarily fulfills the GE topical breadth or core literacies associated with that course. Articulation of AP exams for GE credit will be non-trivial and would require extensive effort to understand specifically what is covered, and at what depth, in each AP exam and course. UC Davis does currently allow for credit towards the degree for some AP exams with an indication of UC Davis course equivalencies ([link](#)). While this might imply that the AP course would satisfy the GE topical breadth or core literacy associated with the UC Davis course, this is certainly not guaranteed, especially for the writing experience. It seems reasonable to think that GE topical breadth requirements could potentially be fulfilled by AP courses more easily than GE core literacies. For context, it should be noted that our current policy does not assign GE credit when a UC Davis course is passed by examination.

Third, we believe that the past practice of using AP credits to give priority registration to students, as suggested in the proposal, remains ill advised, even if AP credits are eventually allowed to fulfill GE requirements. There remain too many inequities at the lower level (i.e. in high school) to allow such a practice.

Fourth, there are concerns regarding whether AP courses can or should be truly considered equivalent to college-level courses. While these concerns go beyond assigning GE credit-issues alone, they must be considered in the context of GE requirements.

Fifth, under few cases would it likely be appropriate for a single AP course to be used to fulfill more than one GE core literacy or topical breadth.

To reiterate, we conclude that there is merit in further investigating the possibility of using AP courses to fulfill GE requirements. To further consider this proposal COCI would hope to see more information on:

- the use of AP examination credit for General Education at other UC campuses
- the content of AP examinations for comparison to UC Davis GE topical breadth and core literacy interpretations
- the extent to which GE credit might be appropriate for International Baccalaureate and A-Level exams

# **FEC: College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences**

**May 16, 2017 9:20 AM**

*Response continued on next page.*

The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Faculty Executive Committee discussed the Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed submitted by ASUCD.

Since this proposal deals largely with existing policy and contains statements on policy that appear to be incorrect or wrongly interpreted, CAES-FEC would like to reserve its comments until after these matters have been clarified by undergraduate council, COCI and General Education.

# **FEC: College of Biological Sciences**

**June 5, 2017 3:43 PM**

- 1) The issues of course credit vs. priority registration must be separated.
- 2) The current policy of not allowing for priority registration should stand. The document provided by ASUCD, in stating that priority registration should be one (of many) rewards for hard work clearly implies that student who do not take APs are lazy and should pay a price for this personality flaw. Although this may be true for some students, many others do not have an opportunity to take AP classes at their schools. These students are already at a disadvantage; let's not punish them for something they have no control over.
- 3) The Senate states that they cannot review the content of every high school AP course and therefore cannot evaluate their content. No one has asked them to do this. They can evaluate the content of the AP exams (practice exams are available), and, in the score for that exam, have an accurate evaluation of the students abilities.
- 4) Given the administration's inability to provide enough classroom seats while at the same time relentlessly increasing enrollment, it is clear that something has to give. Courses that focus on mastery of a measurable skill (such as calculus or foreign language) can and should be replaced by AP classes, provided the student can demonstrate a level of skill equivalent to that provided by UCD. AP should be the equivalent of "testing out" of a class, for many topics. Forcing a student to take the same topic a second time may help make the material stick, but it would be better to allow them to proceed to a more advanced level immediately- they'll get the material again, in a more personal and challenging format.

# **FEC: College of Engineering**

**April 27, 2017 1:10 PM**

*Response continued on next page.*



FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

ONE SHIELDS AVENUE  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616

April 18, 2017

TO: Dr. Rachael Goodhue  
Academic Senate Chair

FR: Anh-Vu Pham  
Chair, FEC Engineering

RE: Request for Consultation – AP Classes for GE Credits Proposal

The College of Engineering Faculty Executive Committee (COE FEC) has reviewed and discussed matters related to the AP Classes for GE Credits Proposal. The consensus is that the Undergraduate Council should be the first to review the original proposal, rather than the FECs, then present specific recommendations for FEC review.

# **FEC: College of Letters and Science**

**June 7, 2017 4:34 PM**

On June 5, 2017, the L & S FEC discussed the Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed.

Overall, the committee supported the general idea with some conditions. First, members did not want to undermine the campus commitment to GE goals for students to graduate with a well-rounded education that encompasses breadth across multiple disciplines. Moreover, exposure to GE courses can set students on paths to new majors, double majors, or interdisciplinary scholarship. Therefore, although members agreed in theory that AP courses could be used to provide GE credit, there would need to be a cap so that the majority of GE units would still be completed at UC Davis. The specifics of such a cap (e.g., potentially 3-4 courses) should be determined in consultation with the Academic Senate GE committee. L & S FEC members further articulated that more precise information about AP GE credit practices at other UC campuses would need to be gathered to ensure that any new proposed practices align with wider UC policy. Finally, concerns were raised about equity issues given that the number and type of AP courses available is not equal across high schools.

Best,

Kristin Lagattuta, Chair

## **FEC: School of Law**

**May 25, 2017 10:56 AM**

Although the School of Law has no undergraduate students, we support this in principle.

## **FEC: School of Medicine**

**April 10, 2017 2:16 PM**

*No response at this time.*

# **General Education**

**May 15, 2017 11:32 AM**

*Response continued on next page.*

May 15, 2017

Rachael Goodhue  
Chair, Academic Senate, UC Davis

Re: Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed

Dear Rachael:

Members of the General Education Committee have reviewed the ASUCD proposal to grant GE credit for AP exam scores. Individually and as a group, we have several distinct concerns about the idea and cannot support it either in rationale or in general intent.

1) The drafters of the proposal have misinterpreted or misrepresented the current policies of other UCs when they claim that “UC Davis is the only school in the UC system to not grant general education credit for AP exams.” A later inaccuracy—“these exams do not give any UC Davis course credit, except to nullify equivalent UCD courses to AP exam scores”—suggests that the drafters have confused graduation credit with general education credit. The fact of the matter is that most UC students on all campuses are governed by rules regarding AP exams that are similar to those in effect at UC Davis, namely that AP exams are factored into admission decisions, certain AP scores are granted graduation credit, and certain AP scores allow students to bypass introductory courses. In almost all cases throughout the UC system, AP scores are not used to grant credit specifically towards General Education requirements. There are rare local exceptions to this pattern, but Davis’s policies are clearly in the mainstream.

2) This established UC-wide practice of not granting GE credit for AP exam scores is well founded. The purpose of the General Education requirements is to ensure that graduates from UCD obtain a breadth of knowledge and perspective in addition to their specialized training as artists, scientists, scholars, researchers, etc. Exposure to high-level thinking in different disciplines, guided by professors or instructors and in conversation with college peers, is essential to this goal. Advanced Placement exams are not designed with these general goals in mind, much less to meet to 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.

3) Although not strictly relevant to the question of GE credit, it should be noted that there is growing skepticism nationally and within the UC Davis faculty community about the wisdom of granting credit of any kind for AP exam scores. A number of elite universities have already ceased granting such credit, using AP coursework only in admissions as a measure of student ambition. Members of the GE committee have supplied anecdotal evidence that overuse of AP credit often puts students at a

disadvantage in their pursuit of more advanced coursework, and many programs urge students to rely on departmental placement exams rather than on their AP scores.

4) Regarding the items listed in the “Benefits” section of the proposal, the GE Committee takes concerns about time-to-completion very seriously and monitors the availability and distribution of GE courses carefully. (While impact may affect a small number of GE courses, it is not currently a significant problem for the GE program as a whole.) We do not believe that time-to-completion should be minimized by doing away with the General Education requirements for a significant portion of the student body. There is also a question of fairness for students from schools that offer a limited number of AP courses; this very issue was the basis for a revision of the policy about enrollment preference cited in the proposal. Finally, the notion that allowing students to dispense with General Education courses would allow them to discover their preferred field more successfully seems perverse; more likely such an action would limit the disciplinary exploration that is a prerequisite to informed choice.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the General Education Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Cebra". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Daniel Cebra  
Chair, General Education Committee

# **Undergraduate Council**

**May 15, 2017 11:23 AM**

*Response continued on next page.*

May 15, 2017

Rachael Goodhue  
Chair, Academic Senate, UC Davis

Re: Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed

Dear Rachael:

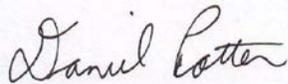
At its meetings on April 21 and May 12, the Undergraduate Council discussed the Proposal to Grant General Education Credit for AP Exams Passed. The UGC does not support the proposal and would like ASUCD to consider the following points supporting their decision.

1. The proposal for ASUCD is poorly organized and unclear, conflating multiple issues related to AP credits and failing to provide a list of specific proposed policy changes, making it difficult to respond to any such proposed changes; we therefore instead respond to the broader principles raised in the proposal.
2. UC Davis students who have successfully completed AP courses do in fact receive many benefits, among which the most important is probably the improved preparation for college-level courses.
3. It is not accurate that UC Davis is the only UC campus that does not grant GE credit based on AP exam scores. In fact, 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.
4. The philosophy of the UC Davis Academic Senate is that the purpose of General Education courses is to provide all of our students with breadth of knowledge and mastery of competencies at the level of university courses.
5. The Academic Senate has developed specific criteria that must be met in order for courses to be approved to grant GE credit in specific areas and, more recently, a thorough process for reviewing approved courses and assessing whether or not they are in fact delivering what is expected, including the possibility of de-certification if they are not. These processes could not realistically, effectively, or appropriately be applied to high school AP courses.

Despite not supporting this particular proposal, we greatly appreciate ASUCD's interest in participating in decisions about academic policies on our campus. We think that 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.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Undergraduate Council.

Sincerely,



Daniel Potter  
Chair, Undergraduate Council