

Minutes of the University Council on Teaching
Friday, March 27, 2009
Waul House

Committee members present: Chris Hepburn (chair); Sue Barrett; Rita Olivieri; Virginia Reinburg; Akua Sarr; Lad Tobin; Peter Wilson

Also attending: Don Hafner (Vice Provost); Mary French (Associate Director, Admissions)

Recorder: Lad Tobin

Chris Hepburn announced that minutes from February 16 meeting would soon be distributed for the committee's approval,

The committee focused this meeting on two issues: (1) grade inflation and (2) advanced placement units.

Mary explained the AP classes and exams are the most common but not the only way for students to receive APUs. Many students, for example, request APUs for college courses they took through and while at their high school; for “dual enrollment” courses; or for international courses, such as British A-levels or International Baccalaureate courses. She also explained that BC students could use APUs to place out of a requirement but not to receive BC credit nor to reduce the total number of classes they need to graduate. The only exception is made for students who earn 24+ APUs and who may be eligible for advanced studies and early graduation. Students who wish to pursue that option, however, must wait till after their first semester at BC to petition their Dean for advanced standing.

Mary pointed out that vast majority of BC students apply to the university with at least one APU. The class of 2012, for example, entered BC with 4681 total APUs earned through AP courses and the Admissions Office received additional requests for APUs from students who had taken a dual enrollment, college, or international course.

There are many factors that make it difficult for the university to know how and how many students will make use of APUs. Honors students, for example, 1.15 Td0.xcept APUDean aege u(n)1

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would affect our recruitment abilities; that, while BC students do seem eager to get out of core courses they believe repeat courses they have already taken, most took AP courses primarily to get into a good college and do not seem overly focused on the details of our policy; that, on the other hand, BC's standards are already stricter than almost all of our competitors, particularly because many of them (including Harvard and Penn) offer credits and not just placement for APUs; that faculty over the years have been consulted about their department's policy on AP scores but that some departments, such as Math, Biology, and Chemistry, have been much more actively involved than other departments in studying, weighing in with Admissions, and advising students on this issue; that the Admissions Office would welcome more faculty involvement and discussion on this issue; and that she also doesn't know who ultimately makes the decision on what AP score earns APUs in each department but that she would be happy to try to find out where and how that decision is made.

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