

R F2019.03

A Resolution Calling on The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts to Amend Their Test Credit Policy Regarding Credit for AP and IB Tests

A bill for the consideration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government

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Whereas, the mission of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (hereafter LSA SG) is to “actively seek the voices of LSA students and advocate their interests to improve academic and non-academic life”¹; and,

Whereas, currently, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (hereafter LSA), each individual academic department decides allocation of credits for specific scores on Advanced Placement (hereafter AP) or International Baccalaureate (hereafter IB) tests, either for general departmental credit or credit for a specific class²; and,

Whereas, there are multiple test scores for both AP and IB exams that departments decided earn sufficient credit for a specific University of Michigan class. For example, a score of 4 on either the IB HL Computer Science exam *or* on the AP Computer Science Principles exam earns credit for EECS 101³; and,

Whereas, despite this, the LSA Curriculum Committee decided that after each department decides which tests grant credit for their own classes, they elected that only IB exam scores could count towards general distribution credits as part of the LSA Area Distribution Requirement⁴, while AP exam scores in equivalent subjects do not count towards filling any specific distribution, such as Social Science or Quantitative Reasoning, and only count towards the general 120 credits needed to graduate⁵; and,

¹ The Constitution of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government. Article II

² <https://admissions.umich.edu/apply/freshmen-applicants/ap-ib-credit#LSA>

³ *id.*

⁴ <https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/lsa-requirements/area-distribution-requirement.html>

⁵ *id.*

Whereas, it was argued that the IB Program requires students to complete a larger diploma program with multiple classes across different subjects, while students taking AP classes could elect to only take one AP exam⁶. However, students who take IB tests can now choose to take only one IB class without doing the diploma program.⁷ Additionally, the College Board has created the AP Capstone Program, where students have the option to take AP Seminar and AP Research, and compose three short research projects in the former and a forty page research thesis in the latter, on top of taking four other AP classes, which is similar to the IB Program and designed specifically to compete with it⁸; and,

Whereas, classes that transfer from other institutions count for distribution, while AP classes do not, although both are deemed sufficient to cover the relevant material if a department accepts them as equivalent⁹; and,

Whereas, if an academic department has decided that a test score should be treated as credit for a specific class in their department, it is overstepping boundaries for LSA Administration to go beyond the decisions made by those most familiar with the topic, the academic departments, and to treat that credit differently depending on if the test is an AP or IB test; and,

Whereas, The University of California at Berkeley has a policy where either AP or IB credit, when decided by departments to count towards a specific class, is able to be used for “UC graduation requirements for specific subjects and/or for general education/breadth requirements”¹⁰; and,

Whereas, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a policy where either AP or IB credit, when decided by departments to count towards a specific class, is able to be used for distribution requirements¹¹; and,

Whereas, Columbia University allows individual academic departments to decide which tests count for specific classes within the department, but does not treat the credit differently based on if it was AP/IB once it has been decided by the departments¹²; and,

⁶ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hw71VmzCTmLo6QVw5YIUbolpuHt2r0bD/view?usp=sharing>

⁷ <https://blog.prepscholar.com/what-are-ib-classes>

⁸ <https://blog.prepscholar.com/what-is-ap-capstone-should-you-do-it>

⁹ <https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/lsa-requirements/area-distribution-requirement.html>

¹⁰ <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/exam-credit/ap-credits/berkeley/>

¹¹ <https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/general-education-curriculum-degree-requirements/> ;
<https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/credit-evaluation/>

¹² <http://bulletin.columbia.edu/columbia-college/regulations/#placementadvancedstandingtext>

Whereas, the University of Pennsylvania allows individual academic departments to decide which tests count for which class within the department, but does not treat that credit differently once it has been decided by the departments¹³; and,

Whereas, none of the other colleges or schools at Michigan have an AP/IB policy like LSA's, except for the School of Nursing, School of Art & Design, and School of Kinesiology, where "hours awarded according to LSA Guideline,"¹⁴ but even for students here, it's unclear if the distribution aspect of the policy affects them; and,

Whereas, while there are issues with the equity of access for non-white, socio-economically disadvantaged students to Advanced Placement tests and classes, a recent report from the Department of Education found that "the IB program serves an even smaller proportion of (these) students... than do AP programs: 1 in 19 or so, compared with 1 in 9 in AP,"¹⁵ and therefore it makes little sense to allow IB credit to apply to distribution requirements but not AP credit for reasons of equity; and,

Whereas, it is a relatively easy endeavor for a school to offer an AP class, but it is very difficult for a school to become a school offering the IB program¹⁶, which disadvantages schools with low or sporadic funding, and the students who attend such schools; and,

Whereas, the failure to provide distribution credit for AP classes to students from underfunded schools can make a Michigan degree less accessible, as the ability to count those credits and graduate earlier can reduce the financial burden of a college education; and,

Whereas, in a survey of 762 LSA students, over 80% indicated that they would prefer both AP and IB credits counting toward distribution requirements to the status quo or neither counting (see Appendix A)¹⁷;

Be it therefore resolved, LSA Student Government supports academic departments deciding which scores on which tests count for what departmental credit or class, and it calls on the LSA Curriculum Committee to defer wholly to their decisions and not go beyond what the academic departments have decided; and,

¹³

<https://admissions.upenn.edu/admissions-and-financial-aid/preparing-for-admission/freshman-admission/external-exam-credit>

¹⁴ <https://admissions.umich.edu/apply/freshmen-applicants/ap-ib-credit#LSA>

¹⁵

<https://sites.ed.gov/underservedyouth/files/2017/01/MS3-Lead-Higher-Initiative-Finding-Americas-Missing-AP-and-IB-Students.pdf>, pg. 5

¹⁶ <https://www.ibo.org/become-an-ib-school/fees-and-services/fees-for-candidate-schools/>

¹⁷ Appendix A

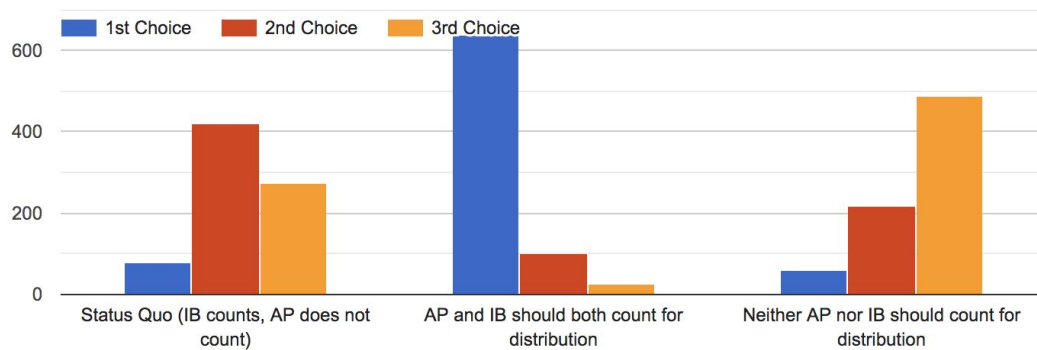
Be it further resolved, A student who receives any credit for an AP or IB exam should not be treated differently by LSA administration whether they have the credit from an AP test or from an IB test, particularly as it applies to distribution requirements; and,

Be it further resolved, We also call on the University - regardless of whatever decision is made by the University - to make it much clearer what the policy is to both new students and accepted students; and,

Be it finally resolved, that this resolution will be sent to the LSA Curriculum Committee, the Dean of LSA, Anne Curzan, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Tim McKay, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Academic Affairs, RaShonda Flint, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, Kelly Maxwell, the Director of Academic Standards Board & Academic Opportunities, Cathy Conway-Perrin, President Mark Schlissel, SACUA, the Senate Assembly.

Appendix A

Currently, for the College of LSA, if a student receives credit for a specific class because they passed an IB exam, that course credit will count towards the distribution requirement for the student. However, if they receive the credit via the passage of an AP test, that credit will not count towards distribution requirements. Should LSA amend this policy? Please rank the choices below.



Total Responses: 762