

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Resolution I.1.c.:

That, upon recommendation of the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents adopts the policy on Advanced-Standing Credit for Project Lead the Way Courses.

BACKGROUND

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is an engineering- and technology-focused curriculum for middle and high schools that is now being offered in nearly 3,500 schools throughout the United States. Currently in Wisconsin, it is being offered in 132 high schools and 74 middle schools with a reported enrollment in those schools of over 27,000 students during the 2009-2010 school year. Several years ago, as students, parents, and legislators learned of this program, the UW System began receiving questions about how UW institutions would consider the work done as part of the program. Two main questions arose: 1) would UW institutions consider PLTW courses as any of the 3 high school science units required for admission; and 2) would UW institutions offer advanced-standing credit for these courses (as do some colleges and universities around the country).

In 2007-08, UW System Administration set up a small workgroup of institutional representatives to look into the question of accepting PLTW courses as among the high school science credits required for admission. As a result of that workgroup, it was decided that all UW institutions would accept at least one PLTW course for high school science credit as long as the other two were from biology, chemistry, or physics.

In January 2009, another workgroup was formed to address the second question regarding whether UW institutions would offer advanced-standing credit for PLTW courses. This workgroup was asked to consider whether a Regent policy was called for that would be applicable system wide, and if so, to draft recommended language. The workgroup was co-chaired by a staff person from UW System Administration and the UW-Platteville Dean of the College of Engineering, and composed of faculty from all of the UW institutions with Engineering programs, staff with expertise in admissions and transfer issues, and a staff person from the Kern Family Foundation. The Kern Family Foundation of Waukesha is one of the key sponsors of PLTW, and has dedicated its resources to supporting K-12 education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, in Wisconsin and neighboring states.

The workgroup recommended that a Regent policy be adopted and the group's draft policy was shared with Provosts to solicit input and comments from all of the institutions. That process resulted in support for the workgroup's recommended policy. The recommended policy follows and is presented to the Education Committee for approval at its December 2009 meeting.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approval of Resolution I.1.c., adopting the policy on UW System Advanced-standing credit for Project Lead the Way Courses.

POLICY

Policy on Advanced Standing Credit for Project Lead the Way Courses The Board of Regents encourages students' intellectual opportunities at all educational levels. Through courses and national examinations offered by Project Lead the Way (PLTW), high school students can master advanced subject matter and document their achievement. High School Students who complete PLTW courses from an approved list* and achieve a 70% or higher on the national

PLTW college credit end-of-course exam will receive up to a maximum of six elective credits at all University of Wisconsin System Institutions. Each UW-Institution will further determine whether course equivalent credit or credit in the major should be granted and the appropriate score required to grant credit for those purposes. University of Wisconsin System and University of Wisconsin System Institutions will publish this information in appropriate publications.

*The list of approved PLTW courses is determined and reviewed by representatives appointed by the Deans of each UW Engineering program. The list is posted on the University of Wisconsin System Office of Academic & Student Services website.

DISCUSSION

Based upon its investigation, the workgroup agreed it would be beneficial to have a UW System policy on advanced standing credit for Project Lead the Way coursework. The workgroup learned that currently all of the UW institutions with engineering programs were already accepting one or more PLTW courses for advanced standing credit. Most accepted courses for elective credit, and some also offered course-to-course equivalent credit that applied toward a major program. The work group agreed that a Regent policy for advanced placement credit would ensure that all students who complete certain PLTW courses and receive a score of 70% or greater on the associated national test would then receive advanced standing credit for their accomplishment. The group recommended that the policy guarantee a maximum of six credits, and allow individual institutions to decide to award more in specific situations.

Because the PLTW program is still young, the work group decided to limit the policy only to five of the eight PLTW courses, namely: Principles of Engineering; Introduction to Engineering Design; Digital Electronics; Computer Integrated Manufacturing; and Civil Engineering and Architecture. These five courses have a proven record and have had an associated national test for several years. The workgroup also recommended that, in another year or two, UWSA reconvene the workgroup to review whether this approved list should be expanded or revised.

In addition to developing the above policy recommendation, the workgroup also considered the implementation details for how the national test scores would be reported to the institutions and recorded at the institutions. Mark Schroll, of the Kern Family Foundation, worked closely with National PLTW to request that they establish a national reporting system.

As a result of the Kern Foundation and the UW System's involvement, PLTW has now contracted with the Educational Testing Service to develop a reporting system that will be similar to that used by the College Board for reporting student scores on Advanced Placement tests to the institutions identified by a student. UW-Platteville has agreed to be a pilot campus to work with National PLTW to refine the fields and file formats and establish the process used to transmit PLTW data to the institutions in a manner that can be easily imported into institutional student information systems.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

UW System recommends approval of Resolution I.1.c., adopting the UW System policy on Advanced-Standing Credit for Project Lead the Way Courses.