
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**ACTION ITEM: Revision of Criteria for Regents High Honors Endorsement
Tuition Scholarships**

ISSUE: The Board is asked to modify the eligibility criteria for tuition scholarships awarded to recipients of the Regents High Honors Endorsement Program. In addition, a report on the Fall 2006 initial awards for this scholarship will be presented.

BACKGROUND

- The Arizona Board of Regents is mandated by A.R.S.15-1626.13 (General Administrative Powers of the Board), to develop and implement an Honors Endorsement Program for the purpose of recognizing high school students for outstanding academic achievement, as demonstrated through test scores.
- At the August 2003 Board meeting, Superintendent Horne proposed changes in the criteria for the program that would emphasize high academic achievement as demonstrated by performance on curricular requirements and exceeding standards on the AIMS tests. He also proposed that tuition scholarships be offered to students who receive a "High Honors" endorsement as an incentive for the brightest high school students to do their very best on the AIMS test.
- Regents directed the universities to determine the fiscal impact of this proposal by analyzing the difference, if any, between scholarships awarded by the universities to the current (Fall 2003) freshman class and to those who would be awarded a high honors scholarship under the newly proposed criteria.
- The study analyzed AIMS scores for 2003-04 university freshmen who had taken the tests as high school sophomores, the most recent and complete information available at that time.
- As reported in April 2004, the results showed that 98.6% of the 389 students who would be eligible for the scholarship had been awarded university financial aid covering at least the cost of tuition. The remaining 6 (1.4%) either received other aid or would have, had they applied.
- Based on these findings, it was concluded that the revised criteria for high honors would have little or no fiscal impact upon the universities for the foreseeable future, in terms of requiring additional full tuition scholarships.

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- On the recommendation of the university presidents, the high honors endorsement with the provisions for a scholarship were put into policy and specific criteria approved at the August 2004 Board meeting.

DISCUSSION

This section is divided into four parts:

- A. An overview of the first year of the Regents High Honors Endorsement (RHHE) Scholarship
- B. Recommendations for three changes to the criteria for the RHHE
- C. Proposal to revise the procedures for awarding the RHHE
- D. Description of data to be collected for monitoring the program

A. Fall 2006 Scholarship Awards

- The Class of 2006 was the first group of high school students who were required to pass the AIMS test as a graduation requirement and the first eligible for the high honors endorsement scholarship. Therefore, these first scholarships were awarded to the qualified students who entered the Arizona universities as freshmen in the Fall of 2006.
- The **criteria for the scholarship** requires the following:
 - Minimum B grade on each of the 16 core course requirements required for admission to the universities
 - 3.5 GPA or graduate in top 5% of the class
 - Scores which “exceed standards” on all three AIMS tests (Math, Reading, Writing) or exceed standards on two AIMS tests plus scores of 3 on two Advanced Placement Exams or 4 on two International Baccalaureate Exams.
- **Summary of the Fall 2006 awards.**
 - 2,508 students exceeded the standards on all three AIMS tests, 5% of the students who graduated from an Arizona high school in 2006.
 - 2,489 students also satisfied the other criteria to qualify for the scholarship, as determined by ADE.
 - 1,561 students (63% of the total eligible pool) enrolled in the Arizona University System.
 - 704 students (45.1% of the enrollees) needed additional merit dollars to cover the awards.
 - \$1.7 million is the approximate cost of the additional merit dollars to the universities, over the pilot estimate, for this first year only.

Part I, pages 6-9, provides additional detail, including the total cost to the universities, performance measures (GPA, ACT, SAT scores), and the distribution of awards by gender/ethnicity.

B. Request to Revise the Eligibility Criteria

Over the past few months, several issues have been raised regarding the criteria for the scholarship. University, ABOR and ADE staff have been reviewing these issues and are recommending three revisions to the criteria. These changes, described below, if approved, would go into effect for the high school graduating class of 2008.

Part II, pp 11-14, lists the criteria with the proposed changes along with Board Policy 4-317 for this scholarship.

1. Alternate Method for Meeting Course Competencies

Issue

Parents and counselors have expressed concern that the criterion requiring a grade of "B" or better in all courses may discourage students from enrolling in advanced courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses or the International Baccalaureate (IB) program for fear of receiving a "C" grade, and therefore, becoming ineligible for the scholarship.

- In response to these concerns, the universities, central office staff, and the Arizona Department of Education have considered alternatives to course grades for acknowledging high levels of subject competency.
- Both the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs administer end-of-course tests. These tests are scored nationally against established norms and provide an objective, high level measure of student proficiency.
- Therefore, the universities and central office staff, with the concurrence of the Arizona Department of Education, recommend that satisfactory scores on AP and IB tests be added to the criteria as an option to meet course requirements in those subjects for which tests are available.
- The AP tests are open to any student, whether they have enrolled in an AP course or not; the IB tests are limited to students enrolled in the IB program.
- This change is intended to reduce the likelihood that students will avoid taking the IB or AP courses for fear of receiving "C" grades, and to encourage students to take advanced-level courses.

Recommendation 1

Expand the criteria in Part 1 for meeting course requirements to include a minimum score on the AP (see page 12, Table 2) or a score of 4 on the I.B. test in that subject to meet the course competency.

2. Computation of GPA for Eligibility: A Technical Correction.

Issue

High schools may be interpreting the requirements for computing the GPA for scholarship eligibility in different ways.

- The universities based the GPA for admission on the 16 high school core competency courses required for admission.
- It was intended that the GPA for this scholarship would be figured based on this same set of courses. However, the language of the criteria does not make this requirement clear.
- It has been reported that some schools are including all courses the student has completed in the GPA, rather than the 16 core competency courses.
- The language in the criteria needs to be revised to ensure a consistent methodology for calculating the GPA.

Recommendation 2

That the criteria state that the GPA will be calculated on the 16 core competency courses exclusively.

3. Conversion Table for GPA Based on 5.0 Scale: Expanded Information

Issue

Some high schools use a 5.0 scale (A = 5) for honors/AP/IB courses, rather than the 4.0 scale (A = 4).

- The 5.0 scale is used for courses considered more rigorous than other courses and is referred to as the “weighted” scale since it provides additional value to the grades in those courses.
- The GPA for the scholarship is based on the regular “un-weighted” GPA.
- A ‘conversion’ table has been developed to help students who take courses on a 5.0 scale to monitor their eligibility. This is not a change in the requirements of the scholarship, but rather a clarification on the equivalent GPA for the 5.0 scale.

Recommendation 3

That a conversion table be provided for school districts which use the 5.0 scale for IB/AP/Honors courses, showing the equivalent GPA calculation using the 5.0 scale, based on the number of courses completed with the higher scale.

C. Revision of Procedures: Early Notification of Scholarship Recipients

Students were notified in the summer of 2006 regarding the award of the scholarship for Fall 2006, following the late spring administration of the AIMS test. Notification this late in the year makes it difficult for students to plan and is out of the regular scholarship award cycle for the universities.

- The universities propose to notify students who have met the criteria earlier in the year, on a schedule similar to other merit scholarships announcements.
- The recommended change is as follows:
 - High schools, who are charged with identifying eligible students, will submit their initial award list **by Nov 1** of the student's senior year.
 - The analysis of the transcript will be based on completed courses through the junior year and enrolled courses for the senior year.
 - For the **Class of 2009** and forward, the last AIMS test acceptable for the High Honors Scholarship will be the **junior year, spring semester** administration.
 - Students have five chances to pass the test: spring of the sophomore year, fall and spring of the junior year, and fall and spring of the senior year. However, for this scholarship, students will need to have passed this test by the third attempt. Based on data provided by ADE, 99% or more of students who were eligible for the scholarship in 2006 had passed the test by this third testing.
 - If the final GPA falls below the appropriate level or the student does not complete the required courses, the scholarship offer will be withdrawn.
 - Students who subsequently meet the course and GPA requirements through the senior year course work or AP/IB tests will still be eligible for the scholarship.
 - The high schools will be responsible for notifying ADE regarding students who are no longer eligible. ADE will notify students regarding their loss of eligibility for the RHHE and the universities will notify students regarding any change in scholarship award.

Recommendation 4

That the universities will be notified by November 1 of each year with the names of those seniors eligible for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship, as described above.

D. Future Monitoring/Data Collection

Information should be provided to the Regents on an annual basis reporting on the status of this scholarship, including:

- i. Number of students who exceed standards on the AIMS/percentage of graduating class.
- ii. Number of students eligible for the scholarship.
- iii. Number of students who enroll.
- iv. Number of students who received only this scholarship or need additional merit money to cover the cost of the award.
- v. Year-to-year retention of students who received this scholarship, including a comparison of those who received other merit aid and those who only received this scholarship.
- vi. Annual costs of administering the RHHE scholarship program.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve four recommendations related to the Regents High Honors Endorsement Scholarship criteria and procedures:

1. Expand the criteria in Part 1 for meeting course requirements to include a minimum score on the AP (see page 12, Table 2) or a score of 4 on the I.B. test in that subject to meet the course competency.
2. That the criteria state that the GPA will be based on the 16 core competency courses.
3. That a conversion table be provided, showing the equivalent GPA using the 5.0 scale, based on the number of courses completed with the higher scale (The use of the conversion table is limited to those high school districts which use a 5.0 scale for advanced courses).
4. That the universities will be notified by November 1 of each year with the names off those seniors eligible for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship, as described above.

PART I
ARIZONA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Regents High Honors Endorsement (RHHE) Award Awards

Fall 2006 Total Cost, Performance Measures, and Distribution by Gender/Ethnicity

Total Qualified		2489			
			Students Who Needed Additional Merit Dollars to Cover the RHHE Award		
	# Students Enrolled	Total Value of RHHE Award	# of Students	% of Enrolled	Total Net Cost in Excess of AUS Awards
Totals	1561	\$7,117,795	704	45.1%	\$1,743,480

STUDENT PROFILE	Avg HS GPA	AVG SAT	AVG ACT
		3.79	1210

Gender	# Students	Percent
Female	973	62.3%
Male	588	37.7%
Total	1561	100.0%

Ethnicity	# Students	Percent
African American	16	1.0%
American Indian	13	0.8%
Asian American	129	8.3%
Hispanic	135	8.6%
Unknown / Other	47	3.0%
White	1221	78.2%
Total	1561	100.0%
Total Minority	293	18.8%
Total Under-Represented Minority*	164	10.5%

* African American, American Indian, Hispanic

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
 Regents High Honors Endorsement Award**

Fall 2006 Total Cost, HS Performance Measures, and Distribution by Gender/Ethnicity					
	Total		Students Who Needed Additional Merit Dollars to Cover the RHHE Award		
	# Enrolled ¹	Total Value of RHHE Award²	# of Students	% of Total HC	Total Net Cost in Excess of ASU Awards
Total	877	\$4,026,307	277	31.6%	\$871,707
Student Profile		Avg HS GPA	AVG SAT	AVG ACT	
		3.79	1216	26.6	

Gender	HC	Percent
Female	512	58.4%
Male	365	41.6%
Total	877	100.0%
Ethnicity	HC	Percent
African American	11	1.3%
American Indian	8	0.9%
Asian American	74	8.4%
Hispanic	81	9.2%
Unknown / Other	32	3.6%
White	671	76.5%
Total	877	100.0%
Total Minority	174	19.8%
Total Under-Represented Minority*	100	11.4%

* African American, American Indian, Hispanic

Note1: Total headcount of students who are eligible for RHHE award and have ever been enrolled Fall 2006 as of Oct 16, 2006.

All scholars did not receive the RHHE because of a higher ASU scholarship already offered.

Note2: Based on annual tuition figure \$4591. Many scholars forfeited the RHHE because of a higher scholarship already offered.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
Regents High Honors Endorsement Award

Fall 2006: Total Cost to NAU, HS Performance Measures, and Distribution by Gender/Ethnicity

	Total		Students Who Needed Additional Merit Dollars to Cover the RHHE Award		
	# Enrolled	Total Value of RHHE Award	# OF Students	% of Enrolled	Total Net Cost in Excess of NAU Awards
Total	232	\$1,015,000	223	96.1%	\$428,597

Student Profile	Avg HS GPA	AVG SAT	AVG ACT
232	3.77	1174	25.1

Gender	HC	Percent
Female	181	78.0%
Male	51	22.0%
Total	232	100.0%

Ethnicity	HC	Percent
African American	2	0.9%
American Indian	2	0.9%
Asian American	4	1.7%
Hispanic	15	6.5%
Unknown / Other	8	3.4%
White	201	86.6%
Total	232	100.0%
Total Minority	23	9.9%
Total Under-Represented Minority*	19	8.2%

* African American, American Indian, Hispanic

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Regents High Honors Endorsement Award

Fall 2006: Total Cost to UA, HS Performance Measures, and Distribution by Gender/Ethnicity

	Total		Students Who Needed Additional Merit Dollars to Cover the RHHE Award		
	# Enrolled	Total Value of RHHE Award	# of Students	% of Students	Total Net Cost in Excess of UA Awards
Total	452	\$2,076,488	204	45.1%	\$443,176

Student Profile	Avg HS GPA	AVG SAT	AVG ACT
	3.80	1239	26.6

Gender	HC	Percent
Female	280	61.9%
Male	172	38.1%
Total	452	100.0%

Ethnicity	HC	Percent
African American	3	0.7%
American Indian	3	0.7%
Asian American	51	11.3%
Hispanic	39	8.6%
Unknown / Other	7	1.5%
White	349	77.2%
Total	452	100.0%
Total Minority	96	21.2%
Total Under-Represented Minority*	45	10.0%

* African American, American Indian, Hispanic

PART II

High Honors Scholarship Criteria with Proposed Changes

(Proposed changes are bolded in all caps)

In order to qualify for tuition waiver, students must meet the following criteria:

Part 1:

Students must complete all 16 Core Competency Courses by graduation with a B or better in each course **OR AN ACCEPTABLE SCORE ON THE AP TEST OR 4 ON THE IB TEST FOR THAT SUBJECT AREA.**

(16 Core Competency Courses: 4 units English; 4 units Math; 3 units Lab Science; 2 units Social Science; 2 units Foreign Language; and 1 unit Fine Arts, as defined by the Arizona Board of Regents Tri-University Admission requirements.)

AND

Part 2:

Students must meet at least one of the following academic requirements:

- Option 1 – **ELIGIBLE GPA:** Cumulative GPA of 3.50 **IN THE 16 CORE COMPETENCY COURSES** on an un-weighted 4.0 scale **OR FOR THOSE DISTRICTS WHICH USE A 5.0 SCALE FOR IB/AP/HONORS COURSES, AN EQUIVALENT GPA ON A WEIGHTED SCALE THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE VALUE IN TABLE 1.**
- Option 2 - Class Rank: Student is in the top 5% of high school graduating class upon graduation.

AND

Part 3:

Students must meet at least one of the following assessment options:

- Option 1: EXCEED Standards on all 3 of the AIMS Tests
- Option 2: EXCEED Standards on 2 of the AIMS Tests and MEET Standards on 1 of the AIMS Tests. Additionally, they would either need to receive at least a score of 3 on two Advanced Placement tests or a score of at least 4 on two International Baccalaureate exams.

Table 1

WEIGHTED GPA CONVERSION TABLE

Use this table to figure the equivalent to the un-weighted 3.5 GPA in the 16 core competencies, based on the numbers of **semester** courses, using the 5.0 grading scale.

AP/IB/Honors Semester Courses (5.0 Scale)	Regular Semester Courses (4.0 Scale)	Weighted GP
0	32	3.50
1	31	3.53
2	30	3.56
3	29	3.59
4	28	3.63
5	27	3.66
6	26	3.69
7	25	3.72
8	24	3.75
9	23	3.78
10	22	3.81
11	21	3.84
12	20	3.88
13	19	3.91
14	18	3.94
15	17	3.97
16	16	4.00
17	15	4.03
18	14	4.06
19	13	4.09
20	12	4.13
21	11	4.16
22	10	4.19
23	9	4.22
24	8	4.25
25	7	4.28
26	6	4.31
27	5	4.34
28	4	4.38
29	3	4.41
30	2	4.44
31	1	4.47
32	0	4.50

Table 2

AP EXAM SCORES REQUIRED TO MEET COURSE COMPETENCIES

AP Examination	Score
Art—History	3
Art—Studio: Drawing	4
Art—Studio: 2-D	4
Art—Studio: 3-D	4
Biology	3
Chemistry	3
Economics—Introductory Macroeconomics	4
Economics—Introductory Microeconomics	4
English—Language and Composition	4
English—Literature and Composition	4
Environmental Science	4
French—Language	3
French—Literature	3
Geography—Human	3
German—Language	3
History—American	4
History—European	4
History—World	4
Latin—Language	3
Latin—Literature	3
Mathematics—Calculus AB	3
Mathematics—Calculus BC	3
Music	4
Political Science—American Government and Politics	4
Political Science—Comparative Government and Politics	4
Physics	3
Psychology	4
Spanish—Language	3
Spanish—Literature	3
Statistics	3

4-317 Resident Tuition Scholarships for Recipients of a Regents High Honors Endorsement

The universities are authorized to award full resident tuition scholarships to Arizona High School graduates who meet the Board-approved qualifications for an endorsement of high honors. Awarding of these scholarships is subject to the following conditions:

- A. The Arizona Board of Regents Honors Endorsement program is established by the Board for the purpose of recognizing high school students for outstanding academic achievement, as demonstrated through performance in high school courses and test scores.
- B. The Board is responsible for implementing the program, for approving program criteria and for determining how the program shall be administered.
- C. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to administer the program for the Board of Regents and to recommend to the universities students who qualify for the high honors endorsement. The recommendation shall be in the form of a list provided to the Arizona Board of Regents and including student names, mailing addresses and phone numbers, high school attended, and other information as shall be required by the universities.
- D. The universities may choose not to award a scholarship to any student who receives other scholarship assistance intended to cover the cost of tuition.
- E. The universities may choose not to award a scholarship to any student who does not apply for financial aid, or whose application is incomplete, incorrect, not submitted in a timely fashion, or for any other reason fails to meet university guidelines for applying for financial aid.
- F. The Board-approved criteria for high honors endorsement shall be designed to minimize the likelihood that qualifying students will not also qualify for tuition scholarships for academic merit as determined by the universities.
- G. Any change, or anticipated change, in conditions affecting the number of students who might qualify for a high honors endorsement, conditions affecting the number of resident students who might be awarded tuition scholarships for academic merit using university-determined criteria, and any instance where a student qualified for high honors but not for a university-determined tuition scholarship shall be reported to the Board along with a recommendation for appropriate modifications in the criteria for awarding high honors.
- H. A systematic review of the Regents Honors Endorsement Program will be conducted every five years, with the results and any recommendations reported to the board.
- I. Tuition scholarships must be claimed by the student enrolling at one of the universities within one year of graduation from an Arizona high school. Special consideration of unique situations may be exercised by each university.