

## Arkansas State University

### Academic Affairs and Research

#### Proposal on Undergraduate Admissions Standards for Fall Semester 2010<sup>1</sup>

##### ***Recommendation:***

Require prospective freshman students at ASU to achieve a cumulative high school Grade Point Average (GPA)  $\geq 2.5$  on a 4.0 scale and a combined composite ACT score  $\geq 17$  to qualify for admission to ASU.

Grant an exception to this requirement for students who have achieved a high school GPA  $\geq 2.2$ , ~~but < 2.5~~ and a combined composite ACT score  $\geq 14$ , ~~but < 17~~ allowing them to be eligible for participation in an intensive Academic Success Institute (ASI), under the auspices of University College at ASU. Successful completion of ASI will allow for continued enrollment at, and if they achieve a passing grade will be granted conditional admission to ASU.

##### **Special Conditions:**

- This policy applies to U.S. citizens and permanent residents only. An appropriate and comparable option will be made available to international students (e.g., substituting a TOEFL or IELTS score for the ACT).
- Students participating in the Academic Success Institute will be admitted on academic probation. Failure to complete successfully the Institute or comply with its requirements during the first semester of enrollment will result in dismissal.
- Students may reapply for admission to ASU after completing successfully xx credit hours of non-remedial course work with a 2.00 GPA from an accredited institution of higher education. (Note added by LJMmoore ... in consultation with Lynita Cooksey the XX above was supposed to read 18 hours which is consistent with Bulletin revisions distributed at SGOC.)

##### ***Rationale:***

Increasing the entry level admissions requirements for prospective freshman students at ASU (as presented above and including the exception) will enable the University to be more selective in the students who enroll in the University, while remaining faithful to its obligation of providing access to educational opportunity for prospective students in the Delta Region and other locations (both within and outside of the State). It is expected that the higher admissions standards will improve student retention and graduation rates and will allow faculty members to "raise the bar" in association with the level of academic rigor in the classroom and other campus learning environments.

Improving retention and graduation rates are tied directly to the educational goals of the State as expressed by Governor Mike Beebe and by others and are correlated positively with proposals in the State to provide a portion of Legislative appropriations to institutions of higher education (including ASU) through performance based funding. Additionally, the expected improvement in retention and graduation rates for undergraduate

<sup>1</sup> N.B.: Prepared by G. Daniel Howard, Ph.D., CGFM, CFRE in consultation with Dr. Glen Jones, Dr. Lynita Cooksey, and Dr. Kathryn Jones, February 12, 2009.

students will contribute positively to the improvement of ASU's rankings in *America's Best Colleges* (produced by the editors of *US News & World Report*), which is frequently used by prospective students and their parents to inform decisions as to college selection. This source is also used by prospective faculty members in identifying institutions of higher education at which they will apply for professional positions. Accordingly, this proposal, if passed should contribute positively to increased enrollment by more highly qualified students in the future and should have a positive influence on hiring and retaining the "best and brightest" faculty.

The above proposed recommendation for a limited exception, provides a special opportunity for students who have demonstrated academic potential that is just slightly lower than the proposed admission standards for freshmen students, and enables them to participate in a complete immersion program during the summer immediately before the fall semester to help them develop competencies that (if achieved) will enable them to be considered for conditional admission at ASU. It will enable a defined group of students who do not perform well on standardized tests (such as the ACT) and those students who have the intellectual capacity to survive and thrive at ASU, but who may be "late bloomers" or otherwise did not apply themselves well in high school, to overcome these challenges in the intensive Academic Success Institute. Many of the students who would be included in this group (if based upon data of currently enrolled students) will be persons of color and allowing this special exception is clearly resonant with the commitment of the University to promote actively diversity among students, faculty, and staff.

#### ***Alternative College Opportunities:***

ASU will provide guidance and counseling to prospective undergraduate students who do not meet the proposed entry level requirements or who do not perform adequately in the Academic Success Institute. Among other things, admissions representatives of ASU-Beebe, ASU-Newport, and ASU-Mountain Home will be invited to ASU-Jonesboro to engage in conversations with these students as to potential enrollment at the institutions they represent. Those students who enroll in these or other community colleges and perform well will be given the opportunity to apply for transfer admission to ASU-Jonesboro in the future.

#### ***Financial Impact:***

If the proposed admission standards of ACT Composite 17 or higher and a high school gpa of 2.50 or higher had been applied to the 1,902 fall 2008 entering freshmen class at ASU, potentially 364 students (excluding international students) would have been conditionally admitted and another 173 students would not have been admitted to ASU. The 364 conditionally admitted students would qualify for the Academic Success Institute, but not be immediately eligible for admission. Presuming that none of the 364 prospective students would enroll and graduate from the ASI, then the total reduction of freshman would potentially be 537 students. Based on 2008-2009 tuition and fees and the potential loss of 537 entering freshmen, it is estimated that ASU would potentially experience a reduction of approximately \$5.3 million in tuition, required fees, housing revenue, and state appropriations. It is also anticipated that a similar reduction in tuition, fees, and housing revenue would continue for 3 to 4 more years until ASU regained undergraduate students enrolled full-time. It is intended that continued growth in international enrollment, along with American students who meet the new admissions requirements, will offset some of this reduction.

Moreover, at least some of the students qualifying for the ASI will enroll, and a number will complete successfully its requirements and will subsequently enroll as freshmen at ASU.

~~Increasing the academic standards for undergraduate admissions as presented above is expected to reduce the number of students who will meet eligibility requirements by at least 173 and will place 374 students into the status of qualifying for the Academic Success Institute, but not immediately eligible for admission. Presuming that none of the 374 prospective students enroll and graduate from the ASI, the total reduction of freshman (under this worst case scenario) is 547 with a projected reduction in tuition of \$1,023,966 and associated reduction in fees of \$309,912, and housing and meals of \$743,232 for a total of \$2,077,110 of lost revenue. It is intended that a parallel growth in international enrollment, along with an increase of American students (who meet the new admissions requirements, will offset this reduction. Moreover, at, at least some of the students qualifying for the ASI will enroll, and a number will complete successfully its requirements and will subsequently enroll as freshmen at ASU.~~

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