

September 19 – 21, 2007

ITEM 136-106-R0907

Recommendation on the Five (5) Per Cent Exemption Pool in the College Preparatory Program, Board of Regents' Policy 301.7

THAT:

The Board of Regents of Higher Education eliminate the five (5) percent exemption pool set out in Procedures, Section 5, of Policy 301.7, College Preparatory Program; Montana University System, effective Fall Semester 2010.

EXPLANATION:

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has been reporting on the College Preparatory Program since its inception more than 20 years ago. Those reports have included information on students who completed the College Preparatory Program during their high school years, and students who were admitted to the Montana University System under an exemption because they did not complete that preparatory work.

At the request of the Board of Regents, OCHE has also been tracking the 2004 – 2005 first-time, full-time student cohort at each of the four-year institutions in the Montana University System. That information confirms what the Board has long suspected, based on past information:

- students who complete the College Preparatory Program earn higher grade point averages, especially 3.0 and better;
- students who complete the College Preparatory Program stay in the Montana University System longer.

Following last year's College Preparatory report, the Board of Regents asked the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to make a recommendation on the five (5) percent exemption pool. OCHE staff recommend its elimination in three years for the following reasons:

1) information collected for the Board has repeatedly demonstrated that a college preparatory curriculum in high school translates to success in higher education.

2) several states have made a college preparatory curriculum the default curriculum for all students; and several states have also adopted an even

more rigorous high school curriculum for college-bound students.

3) at the time the policy was adopted in 1984, the five percent exemption pool was only intended as a transitional device, based on the plain meaning of the language in Procedures, Section 5. That transition period expired years ago.

4) elimination of the exemption will have the most impact on the two largest campuses, who have admitted between 60 – 100 students under the five percent rule during the last three years. The impact on the smaller campuses is modest. A table summarizing the number of exemptions on each of the four-year campuses, over the last three years, is attached to this item.

5) campuses may still use the 15% exemption pool, set out in Board of Regents' Policy 301.I.E., if applicants have not completed the College Preparatory Program.

6) students who do not complete the College Preparatory Program can still be admitted to two-year institutions and two-year programs in the Montana University System. They will no longer be able to rely on the myth that the College Preparatory Program isn't really necessary for admission to four-year institutions in the Montana University System, however. That myth is apparently alive and healthy in some circles, according to anecdotal evidence from high school counselors.

7) the recommended implementation date will give current high school students two (2) **full** years to comply with the new admissions' expectation in the Montana University System.

The following information is also attached to this memorandum:

--the 2006 – 2007 College Preparatory Program report; and

--line graphs, for each of the four-year campuses, that compare the performance of the 2004 – 2005 freshman cohort with students in that cohort who were admitted by exemption.