Academic Policy Committee

New AP Courses/Exams: “Research” and “Seminar”

The Committee was asked to review two new AP courses and make a recommendation about whether or not UH Hilo should offer credit for these new courses.

These two new AP courses are described by the publisher of AP exams (The College Board) as forming part of the “Capstone Program” (https://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/ap-capstone?excmpid=MTG237-PR-1-capbr). The AP website describes this program as follows:

AP Capstone™ is a College Board program that equips students with the independent research, collaborative teamwork, and communication skills that are increasingly valued by colleges. It cultivates curious, independent, and collaborative scholars and prepares them to make logical, evidence-based decisions.

Details on the courses can be found here https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse/ap-seminar and here https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse/ap-research

In order to offer these exams and courses, participating high schools must be approved as “AP Capstone” schools and those who teach the courses must attend mandatory trainings. In Hawaii, currently the only “Capstone” schools are:

'İolani School – Honolulu, HI; Kalani High School – Honolulu, HI; Mililani High School – Mililani, HI; President Theodore Roosevelt High School – Honolulu, HI; and our own Waiakea High School – Hilo, HI

These two year-long courses are quite impressive, and provide students with opportunities to engage in supervised research projects. The assessments appear to be quite rigorous and include reviews of written research papers, written exams, and oral defenses College Board examiners, and other assessments that are scored by the local teachers.

A significant number of universities, including Harvard and many others, have endorsed the AP Capstone program. A much smaller subset of these universities (e.g., Bucknell University https://www.bucknell.edu/Documents/Admissions/FactSheets/AdvancedPlacement.pdf) have already decided to provide college credit for these courses, provided students achieve a minimum score, which varies from university to university. Please see https://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/ap-capstone/higher-education-support for information about universities that have endorsed the Capstone program and (in some cases) decided to offer credit for one or both courses.

In summary, these two AP courses appear to be high quality products that include rigorous assessments. UH Hilo Admissions informed us that some potential high quality applicants decided not to apply to UH Hilo because we do not offer credit for these two courses.

Therefore the Academic Policy Committee recommends that UH Hilo offer 3 “elective low” credits for each of these two courses when applicants obtain AP exam scores of 3 or higher (the general UH Hilo minimum required score for other AP courses).