

April 16, 2020

ITEM 187-101-C0420

Request for Approval to Suspend College Entrance Exam Requirements in BOR Policies 301 and 301.1

THAT

The Board of Regents authorizes the suspension of BOR policy 301, section 1, part B, which requires first-time undergraduate students to submit ACT or SAT scores for admission to 4-year institutions within the MUS. Further, the Board of Regents authorizes additional methods for students to demonstrate proficiency in mathematics and writing as set forth in BOR Policy 303.1. This action is effective through September 1, 2021.

EXPLANATION

Although the Montana University System will continue its partnership with the Office of Public Instruction to offer the ACT exam for free to all current Montana High School juniors in October 2020, the Montana Board of Regents recognizes the extraordinary challenges presented by COVID-19 to students, including admissions barriers that may arise from the later ACT exam date (it is usually offered in April) and/or other changes to the normal college preparatory timeline. Currently, BOR Policy 301.1, section 1, part B, requires students seeking admission to 4-year institutions within the MUS to submit exam scores from either the ACT or SAT. Suspending this requirement for first-time students will encourage students to continue seeking enrollment to a 4-year campus within the MUS even if they do not submit college entrance exam scores. New avenues for students to demonstrate proficiency in mathematics and writing are also provided. The suspension of testing requirements and the additional avenues for demonstrating college readiness are temporary and only effective through September 1, 2021.

With this action, first-time undergraduate students will need to demonstrate their general preparation and ability to complete college-level work by meeting one of the four criteria outlined in policy 301.1, section 1, part D to be admissible to a four-year campus. Students can continue to demonstrate preparation and ability by meeting either of the first two criteria, which are related to ACT and SAT test performance. However, without an ACT or SAT score, students can temporarily demonstrate preparation and ability by meeting the third or fourth criteria outlined in policy 301.1, section 1, part D, which is either a high school grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 or ranking in the upper half of the school's graduating class.

Similarly, first-time undergraduate students will need to demonstrate mathematics and writing proficiency as outlined in policy 301.1, section 1, parts B and C, respectively. However, until September 1, 2021, mathematics and writing proficiency criteria in policy 301.1 are amended to include the following additional options for students to demonstrate mathematics and English proficiency. For mathematics, students can demonstrate proficiency by achieving a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher or a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher AND an Algebra II course grade of C or better. For writing proficiency, students can demonstrate proficiency by achieving a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher or a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher AND a course grade of C or better in an 11th grade English course.

As mentioned above, the ACT exam will continue to be provided at no cost to all Montana High School juniors. The test will be administered in Fall 2020. Students can continue to submit ACT scores to generate general proficiency, math proficiency, and writing proficiency if they choose. In addition, the MUS will continue to require ACT scores for MUS Honors Scholarship applications.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1: Board of Regents Policy 301

Attachment #2: Board of Regents Policy 301.1