

**Attachment 1**

**Excellence, Equity, and Access: A Big 10 Collaboration**

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**A Plan for Increasing Minority Teacher and Students in AP**

## **Excellence, Equity, and Access: A Big 10 Collaboration**

### **A Plan for Increasing Minority Teacher and Students in AP**

The purpose of the Big 10 Collaboration Grant is to prepare a significant number of teachers to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses. These teachers are ethnic minorities, or teach in schools with high proportions of students from poverty backgrounds, or teach in rural/small schools. Through the training of these teachers, opportunities for access and success in AP courses will be available to increased numbers of minority students, students from poverty backgrounds, and students living in rural/small towns. The proposal has six main points:

- 1) The grant proposal will focus on identifying and supporting minority teachers in their preparation to effectively teach AP courses. The College Board has indicated that in the eight home states of the Big 10 institutions, **21,972** assignments to teach AP courses were made in 2001-2002. Of these, only **272** were filled by minority teachers.
- 2) The College Board has indicated that the numbers of minority students who take AP courses and exams is well below the expected percentages, given the numbers of minority students in schools. The underlying assumption of this grant is that an effective way to increase the numbers of minority students willing to take AP courses is by having more minority teachers serving as models in those courses. Their presence as an AP teacher also serves as a statement of welcome and belonging for these students.
- 3) The College Board data indicate that AP courses and exams are less available in schools with high percentages of students on free and reduced meals and in schools defined as rural/small. Approximately **60%** of all U.S. schools currently participate in AP. In the Big 10 home states, only **28%** of rural/small schools participate in AP. Increasing the number of teachers qualified and committed to effectively teaching AP courses in these schools is the single most effective way to increase the student participation and success in AP.
- 4) The grant also works on the assumption that it is critical to include the administrators of participating schools in the spirit and particulars of the grant; these individuals will play a key role in supporting and assigning the teachers who take on the new challenges and training. The collaboration proposal included College Board incentives for schools to develop AP coursework.
- 5) Minority students in undergraduate and graduate progress in Big 10 Colleges of Education will be provided stipends to receive training for teaching AP courses.
- 6) The target numbers for this grant are as follows:
  - a) The number of minority teachers who teach AP in the Big 10 states will increase by 200%.
  - b) An annual total of 880 teachers will be trained to teach AP. These teachers will come from minority backgrounds, high-poverty schools, and/or rural schools.
  - c) At the end of the 5-year period, a total of 4400 of the teachers from the Big 10 states will be trained to teach AP.
  - d) Each year, 75 minority students who are undergraduate or graduate education majors in the Big 10 schools will be trained to teach an AP class. This would total 375 over the 5-year period.

The Big 10 Collaboration is proposed for a 5-year period at a funding level averaging \$2,000,000 per year for a total of \$10,000,000 to meet the target goals. Ten of the eleven Big 10 universities have agreed to participate in the Collaboration. The University of Iowa will serve as the lead institution in the Collaboration. Each Big 10 institution receives funding to meet its target goals.

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The following definitions frame the proposal:

***Excellence***

Excellence (academic) as a standard can only be met by commitment, effort, and the effective use of complex cognitive skills. A standard of excellence means that its attainment is respected; it indicates accomplishment of the task at hand; and it is a predictor of success at the next level of that task (e.g., from high school to college level). The standard of excellence that we are using is the AP exam in a given area. A high score on the AP exam is a proven indicator of the mastery of depth and complexity in the subject area. AP exams have both a long history and national respect as markers of academic excellence. Also, there is considerable research that success on AP exams is a strong, if not the strongest, predictor of academic success at the college level. The grant proposal is using a widely proven standard as a criterion for excellence.

***Equity***

Equity is the fairness of providing highly challenging and stimulating curriculum so that students of comparable motivation and ability are equally prepared for an AP exam. Equity is the *heart* of the Big 10 Collaboration Grant. In order to succeed on an AP exam a student must be well prepared via coursework that matches the demands of the exam. Today's schools differ tremendously in the curriculum that they offer, even though the titles of the courses indicated similarity.

Coursework that leads to success on AP exams is coursework that provides challenging and meaningful content and learning experiences. Such coursework does not exist apart from the skills and training of the teacher. Equity is foremost an issue of teacher preparation and administrative commitment.

***Access***

Access means reasonable availability. Our focus is making the standard of excellence, the AP exam, accessible to high school students. From the statistics comprised by The College Board the following are students who do not have reasonable access to AP exams:

- minority students, especially those from underrepresented groups;
- students from economic poverty backgrounds;
- students in rural/small schools.

At the most basic level access means that AP courses and exams are offered in a school. However, availability in a school is a superficial definition of access. An AP exam may be "given" at a school, but the true availability can differ among students within the school. If a student cannot financially afford to take an AP exam, this is not reasonable access. If students are not educated about AP, not encouraged to take AP, and not prepared to take an AP exam, then the *presence* of AP exams within a building is not reasonable access for all students. The goal of this proposal is not only to bring the AP exams to the three groups of students identified by The College Board, but also to develop a culture within each school that informs students about AP and encourages them to consider AP as part of their high school experience. This goal can be met best by teachers in the building who are prepared and enthusiastic about making AP courses and exams accessible to their students.

*Excellence without equity and access is elitism.  
Equity and access without excellence is mediocrity.*