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**Encouraging Academic Excellence in Vermont: Review and Analysis of Scholarships,
Accelerated Learning Programs, and Incentives to Stay In state after Graduation**

This report seeks to describe and analyze the costs and benefits of offering specific scholarships and credit for accelerated learning programs at state post secondary education institutions. The report also describes scholarship programs and loan forgiveness programs that different states offer in order to encourage talented and successful students to reside in the state.

Programs and Policies at the University of Vermont

The University of Vermont offers many grants and scholarships based both on academic merit and financial need. This section describes and reviews the Green and Gold scholarship, a merit based scholarship, and compares the scholarship program with similar programs in other states.

The University of

Table 1: Green and Gold Scholarship Nominees, Applicants, and Enrollees

Admit Term	Nominees	Applicants	% Applied	Enrolled	Enrollment Change	Applicant Yield	Nominee Yield
2002	73	54	74%	25	4	46%	34%
2003	70	50	71%	19	-2	38%	27%
2004	70	58	83%	25	6	49%	36%
2005	69	57	83%	27	2	47%	39%
2006	69	59	86%	30	3	50%	43%
2007	70	59	84%	30	14	51%	43%
2008	70	65	93%	33	3	51%	47%
2009	70	63	90%	31	22	47%	46%
Average	70	56.40	81%	22.80	-1	40%	33%
St Dev:		5.79	6.7424%	5.66	7.4066	7.9794%	

Source: The University of Vermont

Table 2: Graduation Rates

Year entering	4 Year Graduation Rate	5 Year Graduation Rate
2002	72.0%	84.0%
2003	85.7%	90.5%
2004	79.0%	84.2%
2005	61.5%	N/A

Source: The University of Vermont

Figure 1 displays the four year graduation rate for first time, first year Green and Gold scholars who received credits from accelerated learning programs,² those scholars who also entered with credit, and those who received neither the Green and Gold scholarship nor accelerated learning credit. This figure indicates that those who receive credits have a consistently higher four year graduation rate when compared to the population who received neither the Green and Gold scholarship nor credit, as these two lines run practically parallel to each other, with the line representing students with credit above. Those with a Green and Gold scholarship (entering with and without credit) have had a higher graduation rate than the other groups of students. While G&G scholarship students have a higher four year graduation rate than other students, we are unable to explain the fluctuation in graduation rates evident in the figure from year to year.

² See section below that discusses different Accelerated Learning Programs in which UVM offers academic credit.

FTFY Students Entering Fall Semester



Figure 1: First time First year (FTFY) Student Entering Fall Semester

Source: The University of Vermont

Scholarships at other Universities

Many states offer financial aid that is similar in nature to Vermont's Green an032.22980Td(nat@003ddd(is)Tj/C:

- Sponsored meal plan (for

Massachusetts

One of the major scholarships in Massachusetts, similar to the Green and Gold scholarship, is the John and Abigail Adams scholarship which

provides a tuition waiver for eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts state college or university. The scholarship covers tuition only; fees and room and board are not included. Massachusetts public high school students are eligible for the scholarship when they: score at the Advanced and Proficient levels on grade 10 MCAS tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. (A student must earn a score of Advanced on the ELA or Mathematics test and a score of Proficient or higher on the second test.); **AND** have a combined score that places them in the top 25% of the graduating class in their district. Eligibility for the scholarship is based on a student's first attempt at taking the grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics. In order to receive the scholarship, students must be enrolled in a Massachusetts public high school in their senior year and will receive an award letter in the fall of their senior year.⁸

Accelerated Learning Programs

Research shows that, "Postsecondary success is predicated on both rigorous academic preparation and a clear understanding of the expectations in college."⁹ Academic acceleration programs are one way of addressing the challenge of preparing students for postsecondary education. This section describes UVM's policies in reference to gaining academic credit for these programs, and reviews the general strengths and weaknesses of the multiple accelerated learning programs, including the accelerated AP and the

Advanced Placement Courses

Advanced Placement, a program that is designed and standardized by the College Board to provide upper level classes to students pursuing advanced classes at the high school level, is a common strategy to encourage accelerated learning. College Board organizes this program that, "receive[s] recognition from more than 3,600 colleges and universities that annually receive AP Exam scores."¹¹ This number equates to over 90% of 4 year colleges in the U.S. that provide credit and/or participate in the program."¹¹ If a high school wishes to participate in the program, it is required to appoint an AP Coordinator that will be responsible for developing and overseeing the program. After each student completes one or more of the AP courses offered by his or her school, he or she has the option to complete the AP exam in order to gain credit through their chosen post secondary educational institution. The exams are graded on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 not receiving a recommendation for credit and 5 being very well qualified to receive college credit. The institution that the student chooses to send his or her scores to then decides whether to grant credit to the student. Each university accepts the AP exam grades differently. For example, Middlebury College awards AP credits for students that earn a 4 or 5 in Biology and Political Science, yet academic credit for an economics course is only granted if the student earned a 5 on the AP exam.¹² The University of Vermont is similar to Middlebury College in that it mostly awards credit for grades of 4 or higher, but the credits vary on the subject matter.¹³

According to College Board, "45% of students who have taken one AP course and 61% of students who have taken two or more AP courses are completing their bachelor's degrees in four years or less."¹⁴ In one study, researchers analyzed the enrollment of Texas student's in AP courses. The researchers found AP enrollment had increased, yet there was a growing disparity between the enrollments of white students and various minority groups, with a disproportional number of white students enrolling in AP courses.⁵ This trend is analogous to the national trend that has been supported by other studies.¹⁵

Some major challenges for students who want to enroll in these programs are financial in nature: resources available to their high schools develop these programs may create obstacles, and the financial freedom to devote extra time to study for the more difficult courses may also

¹¹ Board, College. About AP College Board (2010). <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html> (accessed April 26, 2010).

stand in the way for some students. It is well documented that if a student has the opportunity to enroll in an AP course, it will assist the student in presenting a more competitive transcript.¹⁶ Moreover, if the student earns a sufficient score, he or she will earn college credit for a fraction of the cost. When discussing the financial benefit of enrolling in an AP course, it is important to remember who it is that has the ability to benefit. One study shows that a disproportionate percentage of participants in AP and IB courses tend to be:

Middle class, white, achievement oriented students with a long history of school success indicates that AP and IB courses [and that they] may be perpetuating a form of sorting and serving of talented students that excludes numerous groups of gifted student, including minority students, students from low SES (socioeconomic status) backgrounds, gifted under achievers, and second language learners.¹⁷

This trend decreases equity, and it is suggested that, "recognizing, responding to, and supporting talent in all populations of learners must begin at the very early years of schooling and continue throughout secondary school."¹⁸

The study includes recommendations about how to address this gap by:

Broadening recruiting practices for AP and IB...school personnel must inform students from a wide variety of backgrounds of the existence and benefits of taking these courses...recruiters for these programs need to actively seek students from sources beyond honors and gifted classes, looking for academic potential in addition to proven academic performance...recruiters should make efforts to educate families and community members who may not have previous exposure to AP and IB about the programs and their potential benefits...outreach efforts for families and community members in economically disadvantaged areas that rely on parents coming to school often have low success rates as parents often feel intimidated by or unwelcome in schools.¹⁹

Educators, AP and IB coordinators, and school administrators should make an effort to be proactive in recruiting from a broad range of gifted students, encourage participation, and make the benefits of these programs known to a wider range of decision makers. However, the importance of appropriate and adaptable teacher training and curriculum development is also

¹⁶ Utkowsky, Donald H. D, Jerry M. Evensky, and Gerald S. Edmonds. "Should a High School Adopt Advanced Placement or a Concurrent Enrollment Program? An Expected Benefit Approach." *Education Finance and Policy* 4 (2009): 263-77.

¹⁷ Hertberg Davis, Holly and Carolyn M. Callahan. "A Narrow Escape: Gifted Students' Perceptions of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs." *Gifted Child Quarterly* 52 (2008): 210-211. <http://gcq.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/52/3/199> (accessed on May 3, 2010).

¹⁸ Hertberg Davis, Holly and Carolyn M. Callahan. "A Narrow Escape: Gifted Students' Perceptions of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs." *Gifted Child Quarterly* 52 (2008): 210-211. <http://gcq.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/52/3/199> (accessed on May 3, 2010)

¹⁹ Holly Hertberg Davis and Carolyn M. Callahan, "A Narrow Escape: Gifted Students' Perceptions of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs." *Gifted Child Quarterly* 52 (2008): 210-211.

put forward. "The most strenuous efforts to recruit a more diverse population of students into AP and IB programs are meaningless if the curriculum, instruction, and learning environments offered in these courses are not appropriately differentiated for individual students' needs,"²⁰ and programs should be developed so they provide "adequate scaffolding for "adequate

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"The Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program awards scholarships to academically talented high school graduates who are pursuing teaching. Students must be enrolled in a four year college or university program in Massachusetts and willing to exchange tuition for teaching in the state public school system. Interested students should check the current availability of this program."²⁵

New Hampshire

"New Hampshire high school juniors and seniors have the option to participate in a career prep program called Exploring the Art of Teaching. Students who participate are being offered incentives to pursue teaching as a career, particularly within the state. Students who participate qualify for consideration in the Future Educators Academy Scholarship. Students enrolling in a state teaching program, either two year or four year, may earn between \$5000 and \$10,000 towards tuition under the condition that they teach in the New Hampshire public school system."²⁶

California

"The basic APLE program assumes up to \$11,000 in educational loans in association with four consecutive years of full time teaching in a designated teacher shortage field in an eligible California K 12 public school. APLE participants who teach in mathematics, science, or special education may receive both the basic \$11,000 and up to \$1,000 of additional loan assumption during each of four years. \$10,000 per year for 4 years = \$40,000 total. \$1,000 per year for 4 years = \$4,000 total. \$44,000 total." ²⁷

scholarship programs. This document includes information from other states to help the state of Vermont develop its own program.

Prepared in response to a request from Representative Gilbert by Anna Isaacson, Daniel Holland, and Ian Altendorfer under the supervision of Professor Anthony Gierzynski, February 4, 2011.

Disclaimer: This report has been compiled by undergraduate students at the University of Vermont under the supervision of Professor Anthony Gierzynski. The material contained in the report does not reflect the official policy of the University of Vermont.