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**Recruiting IB Students and Communicating the Value of IB**

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Oregon State University (OSU) has accepted International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework for college credit since 1989. As the IB has developed and gained wider acceptance in the United States, OSU has reviewed its policy of granting college credit for IB coursework. As a result of this review, our IB policy and approach have changed dramatically. The new OSU approach is much more proactive, reaching out to students, counselors and families. Our new approach is a direct result of greater understanding about the level of academic rigor and preparation, required by participation in the IB.

Approximately five years ago, we became increasingly aware of the number of IB students starting at OSU. We conducted two years of research on IB Diploma students who enrolled at OSU and learned that IB students were engaged, active, and successful in challenging OSU courses. They were successful in our Honor's College. They requested academic internships. They appeared in campus leadership positions. They performed very well academically, and they were staying at OSU. We found that they chose OSU for the extensive international opportunities our campus offered, including international study opportunities and internships.

As we pursued our research, we began to question our approach, specifically whether our credit policy was helping students or making it more difficult. IB students regularly appeared in the Admissions Office asking how to test out of first year courses. They came to OSU with credit awarded based on the results of their Higher Level exams and were prepared to test out of first year courses based on their Standard Level coursework. In addition, they registered for very challenging first year coursework.

As a result of these findings, OSU now awards a full year of credit in addition to guaranteed admission and a renewable IB scholarship for IB diplomas with a score of 30 or higher. (Please visit [http://oregonstate.edu/admissions/static/first\\_year.html](http://oregonstate.edu/admissions/static/first_year.html) for the full IB recognition policy.)

We have also changed how we promote and talk about our IB policy to prospective students and their families. By building strong, collaborative relationships with IB programme coordinators in Oregon and other targeted out-of-state areas, we have learned even more about the depth and breadth of the engaging and challenging IB curriculum. In addition, we were able to learn more about IB students, observing IB students in the classroom, attending IB senior presentation nights, and visiting with parents at IB receptions.

With our new policy and approach, we have become proactive in recruiting IB students at the high school level and promoting the IB program as excellent academic preparation for college. OSU routinely makes our Admissions staff available to visit IB classes and speak

at IB informational nights, IB parent nights, and IB senior presentation nights. IB information nights are an important opportunity to stress why IB matters. We routinely speak at 8th grade IB informational nights for students and their parents. From the university admissions perspective, presenting the value of IB to parents is very important. It helps students and parents begin to think about long range academic and career goals.

Many parents are weighing the merits of having their children take on the challenge of the IB program. They are concerned about the demands of the program and the payoff once their student gets to college. We stress that an important aspect of IB is that it prepares the student for college study. Parents are also concerned about the financial side of college, particularly in light of recent double-digit tuition increases. IB prepares the students to begin college at first year level, ensuring that they will not have to take remedial college preparation coursework, which can add time and expense. Participation in IB also increases the possibility that a student may test out of a course or be placed in a higher-level course once they get to college.

At OSU we value our role in promoting IB. We understand the importance of communicating why IB matters, and we're passionate about promoting our strong IB policy as we recruit Oregon State University's future.

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