

College Readiness and Completion:

Part 1. Update on statewide meetings

Offices of the President, Academic Affairs, & Student Affairs
November 2011



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Statewide meetings: the process

1. Notifications of meetings

- 288 notifications for campus presentations
- 922 invitations (by email and postal service) to statewide presentations
 - State senators and representatives
 - School superintendents
 - School board members
 - Middle and senior high school principals and counselors
 - Wyoming State Board of Education members
- Information to Wyoming media outlets
- Advertisements in local newspapers

Wyoming music, art and theater educator associations also contacted their memberships. Wyoming Music Educator Association alone has 355 members.



Statewide meetings: the process

2. Campus meetings

- ASUW leadership and full board
- Faculty Senate executive and full board
- Executive Council
- Academic Deans and Directors
- Student Affairs Directors Council, Admissions Staff, Multicultural Affairs, Diversity Team, Enrollment Management, TRiO/SEO Staff, and others
- Academic Affairs/Student Affairs Leaders Conference
- P-16 Council



Source: UW OIA

Statewide meetings: the process

3. Statewide meetings—town hall meetings

Town	Date	Attendance
Riverton	October 4	30
Sheridan	October 12	30
Casper	October 25	19
Rock Springs	October 26	28
Cody	October 27	22
Cheyenne	November 4	40
Laramie	November 7	44
Gillette	November 9	18



Statewide meetings: the process

3. Other statewide meetings

- Wyoming Education Association
- Wyoming Transfer Conference
- UW-School Partnership meeting
- Wyoming Assoc. of School Administrators
- Wyoming Assoc. of Secondary School Principals
- Worland Rotary Club



Statewide meetings: the process

4. Written comments (n = 44)

- All comments were acknowledged
- Copies of all comments and replies were compiled for Board of Trustee review

5. Information sharing

- Presentations, handouts, fact sheets, and meeting summaries are available on Academic Affairs website: <http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/resources/admissions.html>



Statewide meetings: the findings

Main areas of concern

- Hathaway Success Curriculum:
 - **Lack of fine arts component**
 - **Scheduling problems in high school**
 - Concern over foreign language requirement
 - Lack of vocational education component
 - Loss of local control
 - Concern for non-college bound students
 - Hathaway lowers rigor and hurts top students
- GPA requirement: possibility of weighted grades for honors and AP courses



Statewide meetings: the findings

Some other concerns that are not directly related to the proposed admissions standards were raised at our meetings:

- Remedial math does not count toward hours for Hathaway scholarship
- Non-native speaking UW instructors
- Limited class availability at UW



Statewide meetings: the findings

Positive comments:

- Support proposal; will help our students prepare for college and avoid “lost senior year”
- It is sufficient that UW urges students to take additional coursework in high school, including fine arts.
- Support continued admission to all students currently admitted
- Appreciation for academic support programs, particularly “what Synergy does is amazing”



Statements from UW groups

- ASUW resolution #2336 in support
 - ASUW “advocates for high student motivation and performance”
 - The proposal will “increase academic success and elevate UW’s stature nationally”
- Academic Planning Committee of Faculty Senate in support
 - “University should adopt more rigorous admission standards”
 - They “should be compatible with the HSC”
 - The university should “require or recommend additional coursework beyond the HSC core”
- Academic Deans and Directors statement of support
 - Changes “reinforce the importance of academic preparation”
 - “Raise the level of instruction in UW classes”



Concerns: fine arts omission from HSC

People concerned about the lack of a fine arts requirement in the Hathaway Success Curriculum had 3 claims:

- Claim 1: The omission implies that fine arts are not valued, even though:
 - it is well established that study of fine arts contribute to the formation of a well-rounded person, and
 - fine arts students are very bright and creative.
- Claim 2: Because fine arts are not required, fine arts enrollments have declined in Wyoming high schools and at UW.
- Claim 3: If a fine arts requirement is added, it will cause scheduling problems for Wyoming high schools.



Value of the fine arts

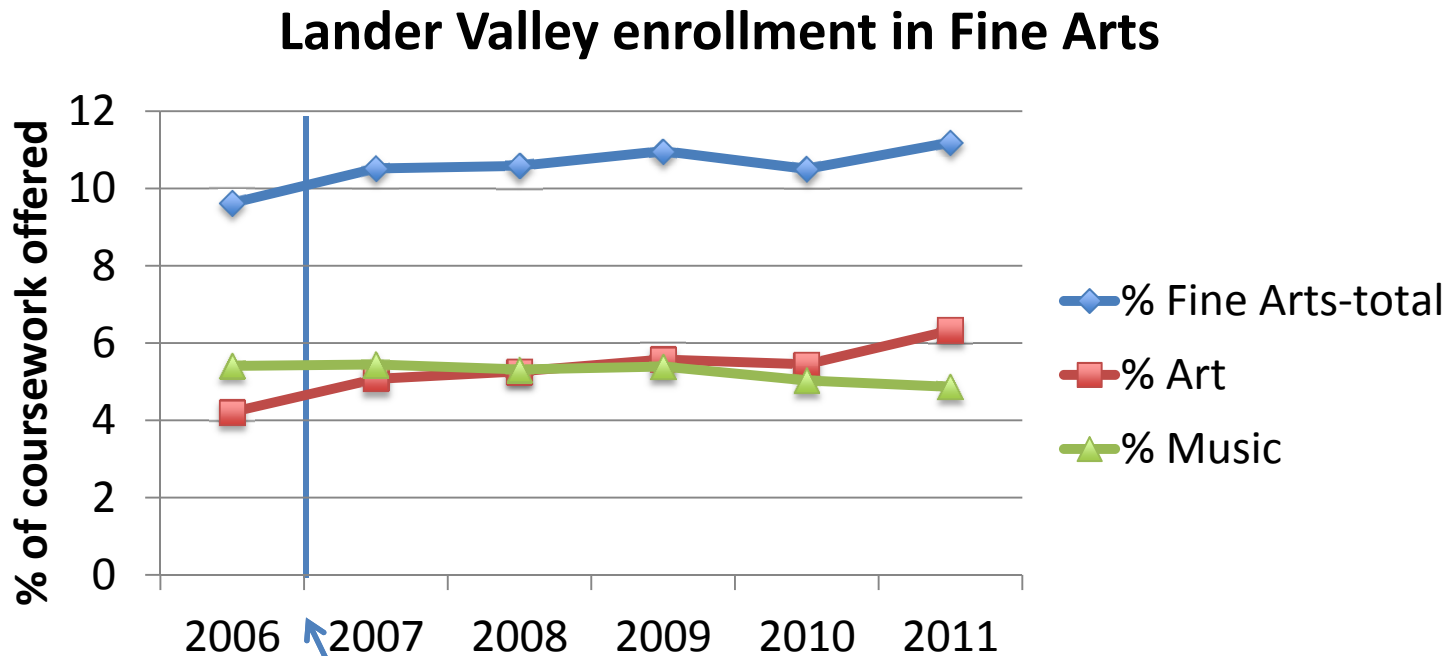
UW agrees that the fine arts are an important component of preparation for college.

- It is important to keep room for them (and other non-Hathaway subjects) in students' high school schedules.
- Whether UW requires students to take fine arts in high school is not an indicator of the value of these subjects, just as it is not an indicator of their value at UW.
- Requiring students to take fine arts would have unintended effects on high school classes in these subjects.



Fine arts enrollments in high school

Only Lander Valley High School provided enrollment data.
Lander Valley requires HSC for high school graduation.



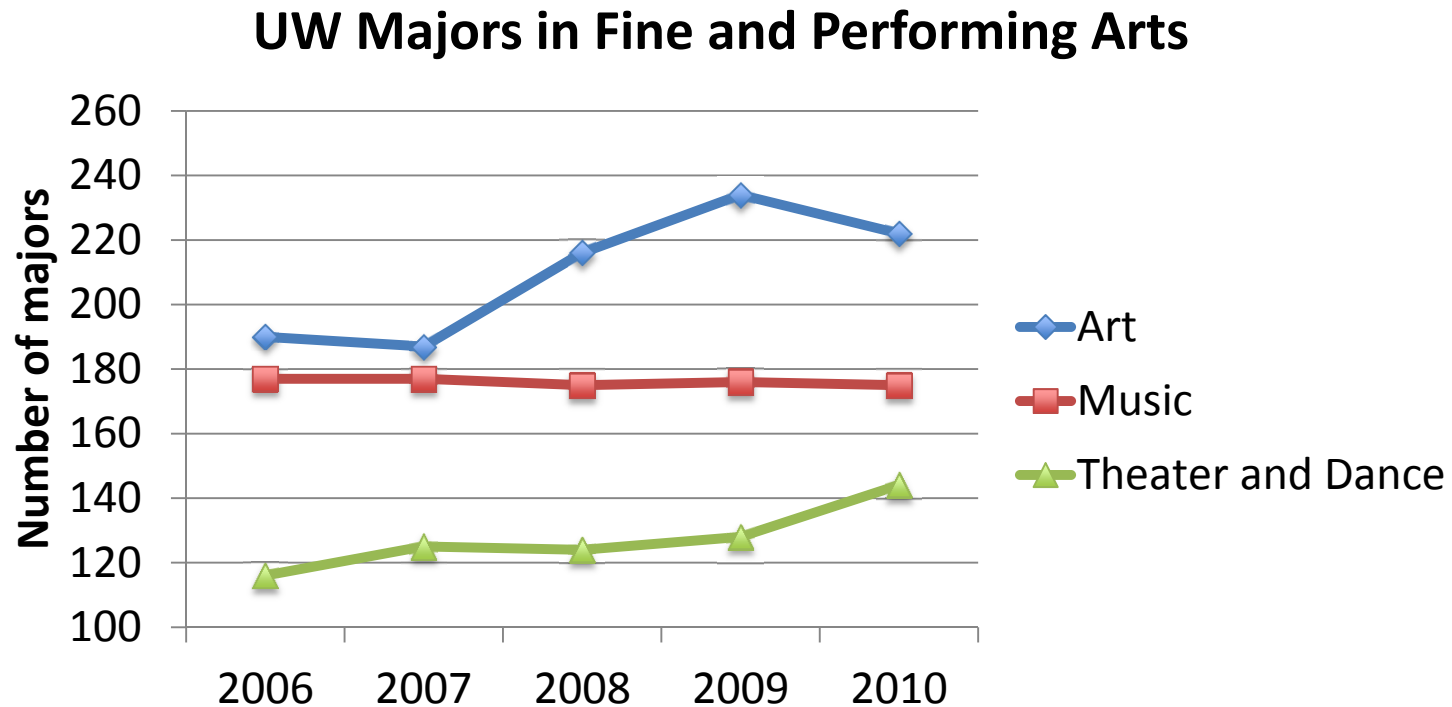
Date Lander Valley adopted HSC for high school graduation



Source: John Metcalfe, Lander Valley High School

Fine Arts enrollments at UW

UW majors in art and theater are increasing and music is static.



Source: UW OIA, 12 October 2011

Concerns: scheduling issues and HSC

School districts with 28 academic units in high school report more scheduling difficulties than those with 32 academic units.

School districts that offer foreign language and algebra 1 in middle school report fewer scheduling problems, since 2 of 17 units of HSC can be completed in middle school.

We were told that students tend to take many HSC courses early in high school.

- This reduces slots for electives in grades 9 and 10.
- It can lead to the “lost senior year.”

A more uniform distribution over four years would help dramatically.



Concerns: scheduling issues and HSC

We were told that some districts stack electives into a few hours of the school day, forcing students to choose between two or more desired electives.

We were told that some districts and schools arrange schedules so departments have the same hour free for department-wide planning. This means a subject is not taught every hour.

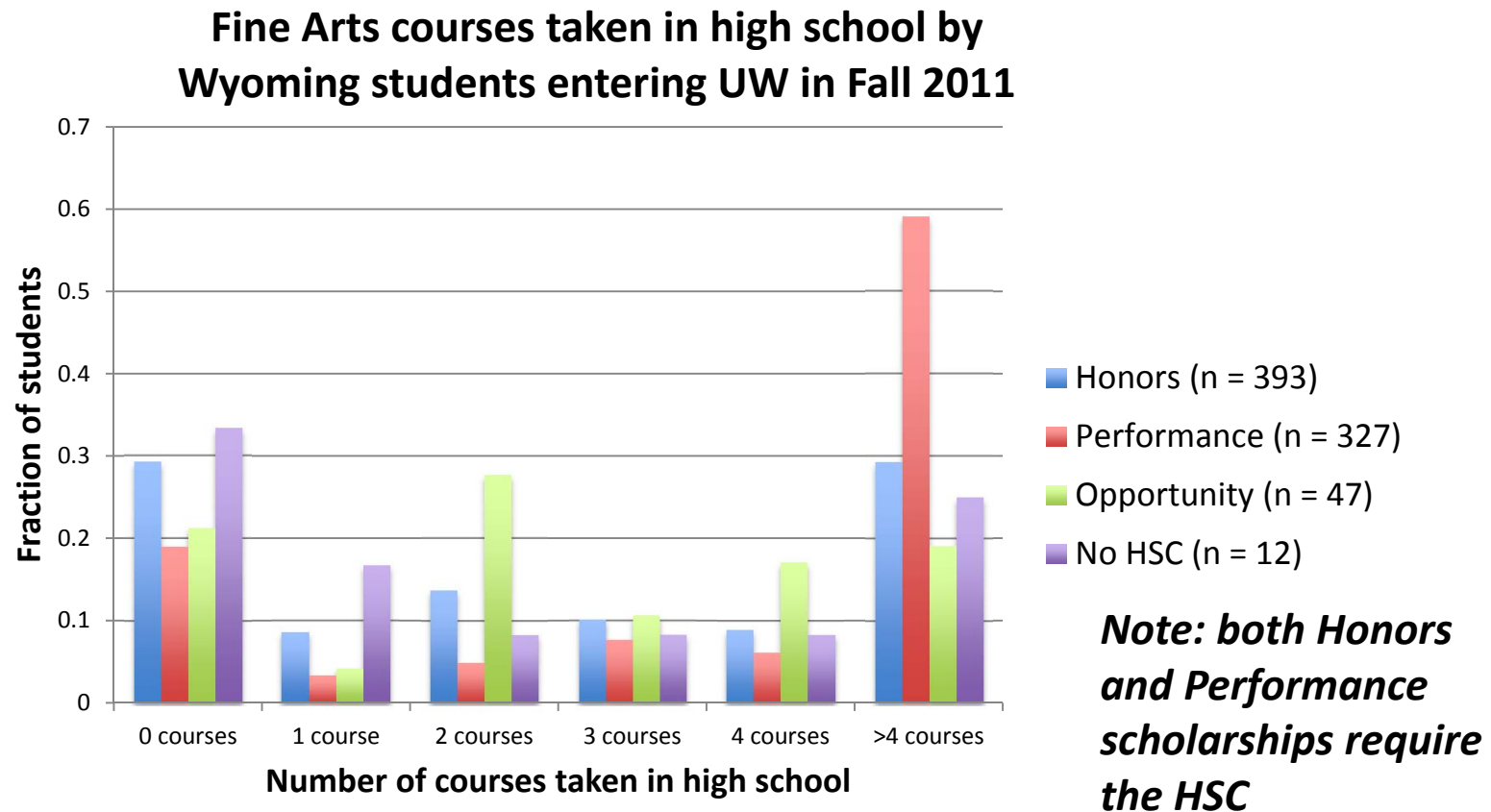
However, there are some districts of all sizes that reported no scheduling problems with the current HSC, and 90% of Wyoming students entering UW in 2011 completed the HSC.

Some small districts have creative ways of offering electives.



Concerns: scheduling issues and HSC

Students who complete the HSC take more fine arts than others



Source: UW Office of Admissions and WDE 15 November 2011

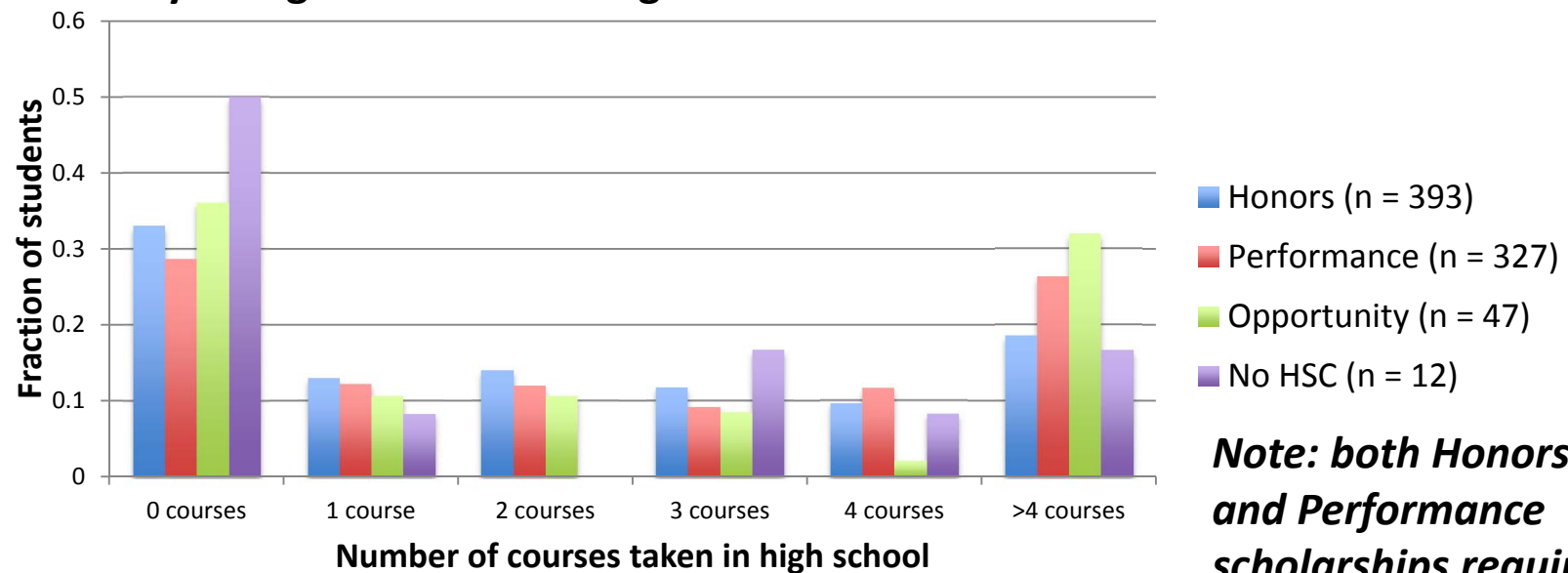


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Concerns: scheduling issues and HSC

Students who complete the HSC at the opportunity level take more career-tech courses than other students

Career Tech courses taken in high school by Wyoming students entering UW in Fall 2011



Note: both Honors and Performance scholarships require the HSC



Source: UW Office of Admissions and WDE 15 November 2011



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Proposed standards for admission:

Assured admission. 4 years of English, Math (including Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry), and Science; 3 years of Social Studies; and 2 years of a single Foreign Language, minimum high school GPA of 3.0, and ACT of 21 or higher (SAT \geq 990). UW accepts foreign language and math completed in middle school. UW strongly urges high school students to take additional coursework, especially in visual or performing arts, behavioral or social sciences, humanities, or foreign languages.

Admission with support. Minimum high school GPA or 2.25 and ACT score of 20; high school curriculum can vary. Students admitted with support will participate in our Synergy program or other academic transition programs.

Students may continue to be admitted by exception.



2. Observations:

Institution	Minimum Curriculum: English/Math/Science/Soc.Stud./ Foreign language
Black Hills State	4/3/3/3/0
University of Nebraska	4/4/3/3/2
New Mexico State	4/3/2/0/1
North Dakota State	4/3/3/3/0
Oregon State	4/3/3/3/2
University of Wyoming proposed standards	4/4/4/3/2
Montana State-Bozeman	4/3/2/3/0
University of Nevada-Reno	4/3/3/3/0
Colorado State	4/4/3/3/2
University of Arizona	4/4/3/2/2
Washington State	4/3/2/3/2
University of Denver (<i>average student</i>)	4/4/4/4/4
Colorado College (<i>average student</i>)	20 solid academic courses

U. Wyoming is the only public college in the region to require 4 years of science

Observations:

1. Foreign language and math taken in middle school counts towards the Hathaway requirements. Taking these classes in middle school is a good way to free up more time for other coursework in high school.
2. Although 28-32 units are scheduled in high school, many districts require only 24 units to graduate. This contributes to the “lost senior year.” Students should be encouraged to enroll in all 28-32 units of coursework to take full advantage of the rich array of classes that are available in high school, including honors and AP courses.
3. Dual and concurrent enrollment in community college courses while in high school is a tuition-free strategy for getting a head-start on the college career.

Concluding statement

Any proposed change causes concern, however:

- 90% of Wyoming students will not be affected by the proposed curriculum changes—they already meet the HSC. These students come from high schools of all sizes across Wyoming.
- For the other 10%, there is no loss of access, and improved support for these less well-prepared students.
- Aligning with HSC gives students and families a single set of high school coursework to complete for both UW admission and Hathaway scholarship.
- UW retention and graduation rates should improve.