

Idaho OKs direct path to college

In-state high school seniors with 3.0 GPA will be admitted to any state university

Elizabeth Rudd/Lewiston Tribune

MOSCOW - Being admitted to college may have just gotten a little easier for many of Idaho's high school seniors.

Members of the Idaho State Board of Education unanimously approved a proposal Tuesday during a meeting in Meridian to conditionally admit high school seniors with a 3.0 GPA to any of the state's eight public universities and colleges. The proposal also includes conditional admittance for students whose GPA and SAT scores equal 2,835 or higher when multiplied.

Thursday's 8-0 vote set the GPA and SAT score benchmarks for the direct admission initiative, which was previously presented to board members at their meeting in June. The initiative is intended to take a proactive approach to admitting and enrolling high school seniors to college in an effort to increase the number of students earning a post-secondary education.

More than 8,700 of

Idaho's high school seniors meet or exceed the recently approved requirements based on statewide data.

The board's consent allows the proposal to be implemented this fall. Students will receive a letter from the state board informing them they have been conditionally admitted to any of the state's universities or colleges, including the University of Idaho, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College and Boise State University.

The proposal also conditionally admits students with multiplied GPA and SAT scores below 2,835 into the state's community colleges, including the College of Southern Idaho, College of Western Idaho, Eastern Idaho Technical College and North Idaho College. Students will be fully admitted to the school of their choice once they successfully complete high school.

Carson Howell, the board's research director, said he has worked with each of the institutions to establish the approved GPA and SAT score requirements. He also worked with them to draft the board letters explaining conditional admittance, specifically that other requirements may also exist for full admission.

The letters will also encourage students who have multiplied scores below 2,835 to explore the four-year institutions because there are requirements outside GPA and SAT that affect admission, Howell said. The direct admission initiative also does not account for the ACT, which is another college admissions test commonly taken by high school students.

Howell said he is in the process of establishing an agreement for the ACT that would follow a similar system in the future. That should also increase the number of students eligible to receive the direct admissions letter, he said.

In other business:

- Board members approved a request from NIC to establish an aviation flight training program within its aerospace technology department to offer the necessary courses and flight time for students to receive a helicopter pilot license in a 7-1 vote. The program would offer students a chance to obtain a license compliant with the Federal Aviation Administration to operate a drone or unmanned aerial vehicle, which is an FAA requirement. Moscow board member Bill Goesling voted against the proposal.
- The board unanimously approved the construction phase for UI's Aquaculture Research Institute facility, which supports fish-holding and experimentation, and houses faculty, staff and student offices and laboratories. Work on the project began in 2013 and the board previously approved the planning and design phase in December 2013. The project involves demolishing the existing structure that was built on the Moscow campus in the 1920s and replacing it with a 7,500-square-foot facility. The overall project is estimated to cost \$1.8 million.

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