THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

OKANAGAN SENATE SECRETARIAT
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March 2, 2011

To: **Okanagan Senate**

From: **Admissions and Awards Committee**

Subject: **Brazilian Secondary School Evaluation (approval)**

The Admissions and Awards Committee has reviewed the proposed changes in admission requirements for Brazilian secondary school applicants to direct-entry undergraduate programs. Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of courses presented for admission, the quality of the institution attended, and their performance on standardized tests (*Vestibular*; *Exame Nacional do Ensino Medio* or ENEM; the SAT; or ACT). Applicants must satisfy program prerequisites in order to be admissible.

The Admissions and Awards Committee recommends the following:

Motion: *That Senate approve changes in admission requirements for Brazilian secondary school applicants to direct-entry undergraduate programs at UBC's Okanagan campus effective for admission to the 2011 Winter Session and thereafter.*

For the Committee
Dr. Sharon McCoubrey
Chair, Admissions and Awards Committee

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MEMO

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January 10, 2011

To: Senate Admissions and Awards Committee

From: Damara Klaassen, Associate Director, International Student Initiative
Sam Saini, Associate Director (International), Undergraduate Admissions
Maggie Hartley, Associate Registrar and Director, Undergraduate Admissions
Michelle Kruiswyk, Admissions and Enrolment Support Manager

Subject: Brazilian Secondary School Evaluation

Historically, the Brazilian system of secondary education was an 11-year system from which UBC required an additional year of post-secondary preparation prior to admission. It is now an emerging 12-year system with the first graduates anticipated in 2014. Many Canadian and US institutions have identified Brazil as a potential source of international students and some have been admitting on the basis of secondary school for a number of years. The University of Toronto, for example, has selectively admitted Brazilian students on the basis of their secondary schooling (the *Ensino Medio*) and standardized test results for several decades and advises that "they seem to be performing at or above average". Additionally, as part of a pilot program, UBC's Faculty of Arts on the Vancouver campus has been admitting students directly from Brazilian secondary schools for the past two years.

UBC's International Student Initiative (ISI) has developed on-the-ground knowledge of secondary school education in Brazil - visiting both national and international schools - and in February 2010, meeting with the state of Sao Paolo's Department of Education and representatives from each of the major curriculum coordinators. Through this activity, detailed course descriptions were obtained, translated, and submitted to UBC faculty to determine if the learning outcomes in key pre-requisite subjects (mathematics, physics, and chemistry) meet UBC requirements.

A review of key science and mathematics curricula indicates that the current curriculum is sufficiently concentrated and standardized to ensure that *Ensino Medio* students have exposure to core academic principles. Learning outcomes in chemistry, mathematics, and physics have been assessed by UBC Okanagan faculty to be equivalent to, if not more extensive than, those prescribed by the BC Ministry of Education for the Grade 12 level.

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The international admission policy outlined in the Calendar at http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=2,328,0,0 reads (emphasis is ours):

> Graduation from an approved university-preparation program within an education system that comprises 12 years of primary and secondary study **or the equivalent**. The admission average is calculated on academic courses and/or exams completed at the senior level (final year) of study. These courses and/or exams are selected by the UBC Admissions Office.

In past, Undergraduate Admissions has assessed some 11-year secondary curricula and those that were found to be comparable to a 12-year system were selectively utilized as a basis of admission to the University (e.g., the Turkish *Lise* and the Russian *Attestat*). Based on research into the Brazilian education system, the assessment of specific courses by UBC faculty, and the experiences and practices of other Canadian institutions, we recommend a similar approach with admission from Brazil.

The recommended evaluation process for applicants presenting Brazilian secondary school as a basis of admission is as follows:

- Brazilian applicants will be asked to provide both their academic records and results on a standardized test such as the *Vestibular* (a test administered for admission to Brazilian universities), the *Exame Nacional do Ensino* or ENEM (a test administered by the Brazilian government that is used to assess student and school performance nationwide), or an SAT or ACT.
- An academic assessment will be conducted on the basis of the courses presented, the quality of the institution attended, and performance on the standardized test presented. Applicants will be required to present courses that meet program pre-requisites in order to be admissible.
- If applicable, academic results will be taken into consideration alongside any information submitted in support of a broad-based admission decision.

We believe that this approach will place UBC in a position to compete for top Brazilian students looking for a higher education abroad and support the University's international enrolment goals and objectives. To whatever extent possible, we seek to implement this approach for the current admission cycle.