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Session 478

Corresponding Outcomes – The suitability of International Three year Degrees for Post- Graduate Study at U.S. Universities

April 18, 2006

Presentation

**“Are We Asking the Right Questions in Considering the
International Three-year Undergraduate Degree for Post-
graduate Study in U.S. Universities?: Essential Common
Information for “Decision-making.”**

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Overview

- Purpose of the Admissions Decision Process
- Variation in the Nature of the Graduate School Admission Processes in U.S. Universities
- Variation in Graduate Admissions Practices in U.S. Universities
- Essential and Common Information needed for Effective and Equitable Decisions for Graduate Admissions
- Outstanding Issues regarding Comparability and Effectiveness of U.S. and International Application Tools and Sources in Providing Essential Information for Graduate Admission Decisions.

Purposes of the Graduate Admissions Decision Process

- To ensure that admissions decisions are aligned with the philosophy, mission and goals of the university and departmental graduate program.
- To ensure that admissions decisions are based on a “holistic review of the credentials and backgrounds presented by each applicant.”¹
- To achieve admission of students based on standards determined by the councils of faculty representative of all graduate degrees created either centrally or de-centrally within colleges. These standards should address the ideals of consistency, quality, efficiency and equity.

- To continually monitor and improve its effectiveness through validation of its outcomes; i.e. assessing the success or failure of those admitted as correlated with their admissions credentials.
- “Regardless of mission and administrative structure, graduate admissions processes are best when they facilitate the matriculation of applicants who indicate promise of successfully completing their chosen programs and when they match the applicants’ knowledge, interest and skills with the requirements and characteristics of those programs.”¹

¹“An Essential Guide to Graduate Admissions. A Policy Statement – Council of Graduate Schools, 2005.”

Differences in the Processes and University Offices Involved in Admission Decisions for International Students Applying to U.S. Graduate Schools*

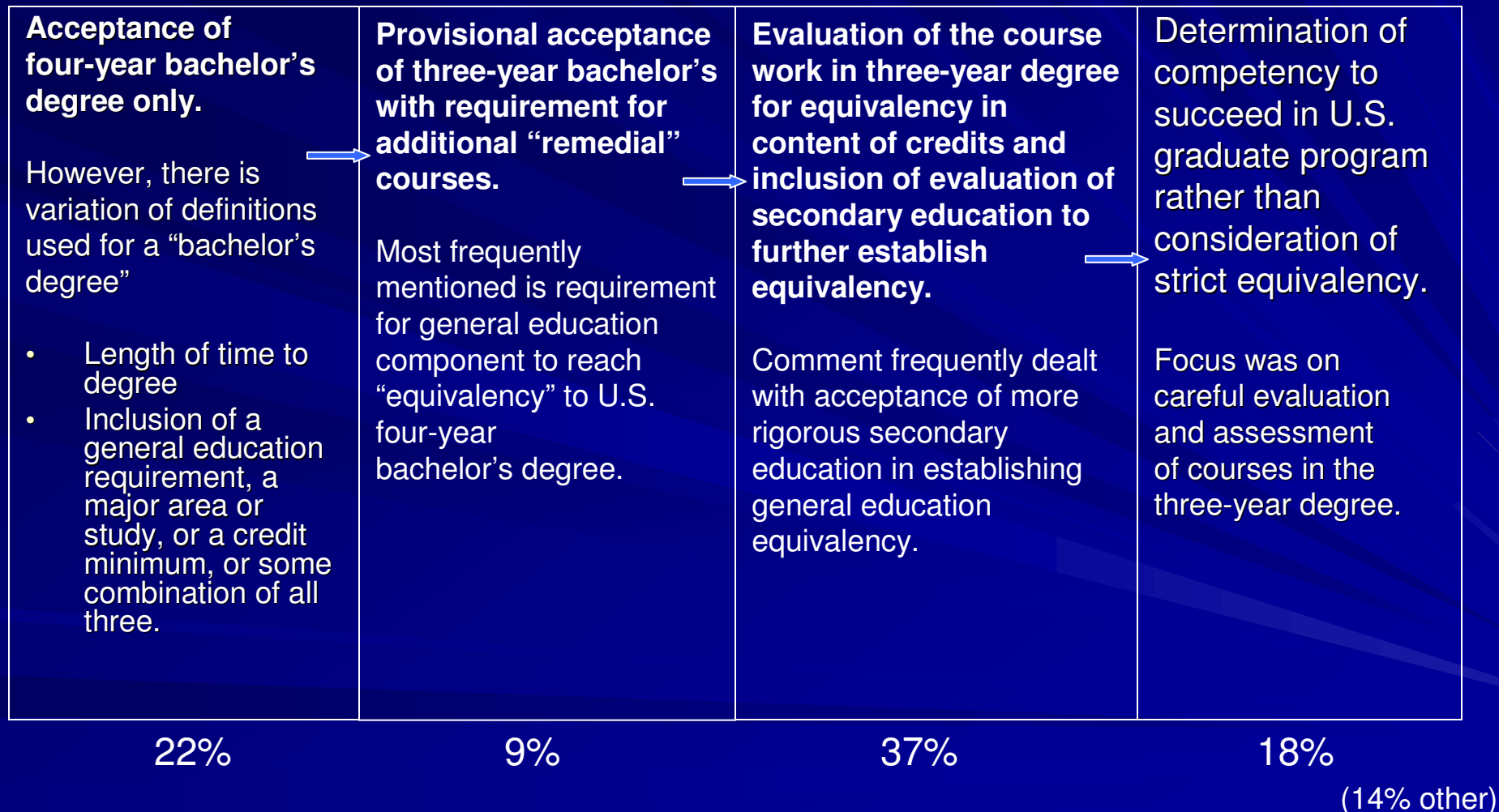


* U of Southern California, New York University, Columbia, Purdue, U of Texas, Boston Ohio State, U of Illinois, U of Michigan, U of Florida

** AACRAO, Foreign Education Credential Required, 5th Edition

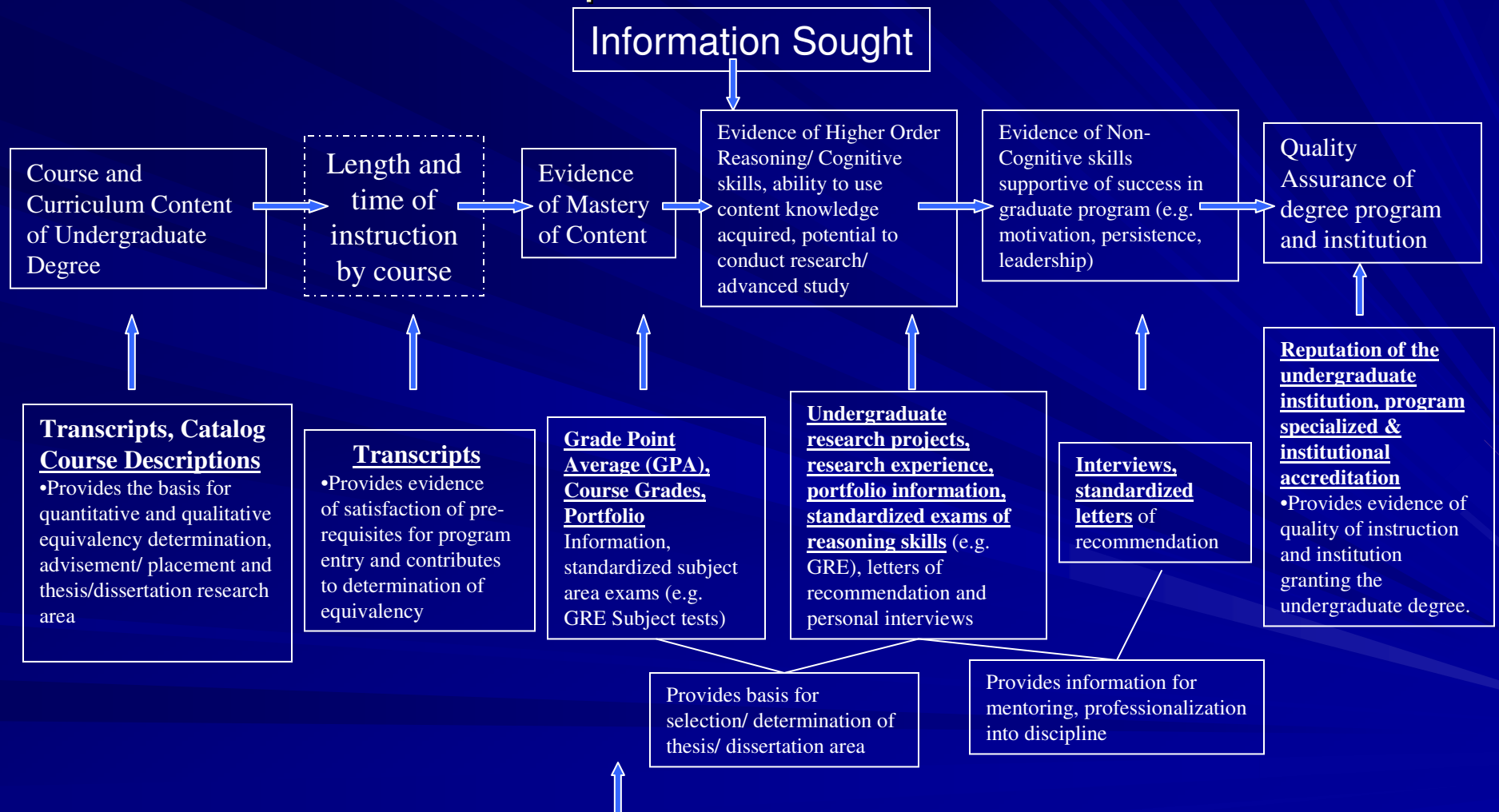
About 50% of U.S. Graduate Schools have more centralized Admissions processes: 30% employ a decentralized model. 20% are collaborative across levels. (Centralized vs. Decentralized: Results from the NAGAP Survey of Member Organizational Structures" Perspective, NAGAP, 2003.)

Current Practices of Admissions Professionals in Evaluation of a Three-year Undergraduate Degree for Admission to a U.S. Graduate Program



Percentages of institutions (125 responding) reporting predominant use of these practices
(2005 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey III)

Essential and Common Information needed for Effective, Consistent and Equitable Decisions for Graduate Admissions, Advisement and Placement in U.S. Graduate Programs: Linking Purpose with Process



Sources of Information from U.S. Undergraduate Institutions for evaluation of applicant credentials

Outstanding Issues Regarding Comparability and Effectiveness of U.S. and International Application Tools and Sources in Providing Essential Information for Graduate Admission Decisions

- Grade Point Average (GPA): There is not an equivalent concept in the European university system.
- Diploma Supplement: The U.S. Admissions Officers and Graduate policy makers need more explanation regarding the type of information this contains. It is a detailed description of what the student should know, not evidence of mastery.
- ECTS: Cannot be compared to the U.S. credit or contact hours; more information is needed concerning the information that it carries; it cannot be easily used for quantitative or qualitative equivalency.

- Accreditation as a means of quality control:
European university system quality control traditionally done through the Ministries of Higher Education in each country.
- Database of European Countries Adopting the “Bologna Degree Cycle” does not yet exist.
- U.S. Graduate Schools have no consistent set of policies and practices on international graduate admissions.
- U.S. Graduate Schools need more consistency in evaluation of international student applicants to ensure fairness and equity to all three year undergraduate degree holders.