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Should AP Add African-American History?

By Scott Jaschik
Inside Higher Education

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The Advanced Placement program offers curriculums and testing in 37 areas -- chemistry and calculus, art history and Latin literature, Chinese language and culture and European history, to name just a few. But there is no AP in African-American history.

Some school district officials have recently suggested that such an AP program be created -- but the College Board is skeptical. College Board officials say their doubts have nothing to do with the significance of African-American history, but with the reactions they have received from college educators they have consulted. For a variety of reasons, the College Board says, college officials prefer to be teaching African-American history themselves, as opposed to having students enter college with AP credit in the field. If colleges wanted to have an AP offering in African-American history, the board would be open to the idea, its officials say.

The difference of opinion points to a number of questions that surround the AP program: Is its purpose to help students place out of introductory courses or to encourage them to study with greater rigor in high school (or both)? Why do some AP programs attract more members of certain ethnic or racial groups than others? Why are black students significantly less likely than the population as a whole to take AP courses? With many competitive colleges expecting applicants to have AP courses on their transcripts, should the College Board be trying new strategies to get more black students involved in the program? [Read this full article at *Inside Higher Education* >>>].