Academic Standards Committee

Minutes of meeting held Wednesday, 9 April 2003
4-5:45 pm, 261 Gardner Hall

Present: (Members) Rosalyn Broussard, Dennis Ciesielski, Christina Curras, Beth Frieders, Julie McDonald, Machelle Schroeder; (Ex Officio) David VanBuren

Absent: (Ex Officio) David Boyles, Dick Schumacher

Meeting agenda

1. Discussion with Abdollah Soofi, Director of Institutional Research

   One of ASC’s duties is to “observe trends in admissions and make recommendations to appropriate bodies.” We recognize that this requires institutional data gathered over time and so we invited Abdollah to attend our meeting.

   The overriding questions in our analysis of data will be: 1) Is the current admission process working? and 2) Are the admission standards appropriate? If not, we need to make recommendations for changes.

   To answer the first question, we felt that we needed data separated out for the different admissions categories. In the current University undergraduate catalog (pages 6 & 7), only two categories are identified: Category I (regular) and Category II (discretionary). During our discussion with Soofi, we realized that the Admissions Office currently uses three categories of admission: Regular, Discretionary and Exceptional. (Beth will contact Admissions to get a copy of the new admission requirements.) It seems that the Exceptional category was created without any input from the ASC.

   The committee wants to focus on retention/graduation rates for each of the three categories to see if there are significant differences among the categories or from the University as a whole. If not, there would appear to be no problem with the current admission process. If however, there are differences, then the ASC needs to try to determine why.

   To further delve into the question then, the committee felt that the following data would, perhaps, be useful: i) retention rates from 1st to 2nd semester and from 1st to 2nd year; ii) ACT scores; iii) graduation rates; iv) age (to identify the non-traditional student). It was thought that data sorted by ethnicity and gender might also be useful. We would want the data sorted by the three new admission categories: regular, discretionary and exceptional. Dave VanBuren suggested that we might also compare the data to the printout of students who have been dismissed from the University.

   Soofi brought to the meeting several reports he had already run on Fall 2002 students: i) average GPA by majors, ii) ACT scores by major; and iii) gender enrollment numbers. After looking at this data, the committee asked that Soofi also indicate the number of students in each major in the ACT report.
Soofi cautioned us to be very focused on our goal and the type of data we really needed. He will probably be able to pull data together given our constraints. The committee emphasized again that we needed the data for each separate category as well as for the University as a whole so that we could make appropriate comparisons. However, we recognized the need to be careful when comparing any data over time given the change in the admission categories.

It was felt that the committee would need to develop a more focused list of constraints to give to Soofi in order to get the “best” data possible.

2. Review 2nd draft of committee report for UUCC (on S-drive and distributed by email from Julie)

Discussion led to suggestions for editing. The comments will be incorporated in the final report. We are on the agenda for the April 16th UUCC meeting.

One internal comment related to item II.3.d: While the liaison to a department/program could in fact be someone from that department/program, perhaps the person who holds the informational meeting should be an “outsider.”

3. Proposed new membership for Committee

Beth recommended to the Faculty Senate on April 8 (for a first hearing) that the committee membership be increased to three (3) from each college for a total of nine members. Two members would take over some of the administrative duties that Dave Boyles had performed and one member would serve as secretary still leaving six members to review portfolios. THE COMMITTEE APPROVED OF THIS RECOMMENDATION.

4. Other

All are welcome to attend the April 16 UUCC meeting.

The final ASC meeting for the year will be on April 23, 2003.