Academic Standards Committee

Minutes of meeting held Wednesday 29 October 2003
4-5:15 pm, 301 Gardner Hall (alternate location)

Present: (Members) Rosalyn Broussard, Beth Frieders, Steve Kleisath, Julie McDonald, Brian Peckham, Machelle Schroeder, Kathleen Tigerman, Tim Zauche
(Ex Officio) Angela Udelhofen, David VanBuren

Absent: Christina Curras
Guest: John Simonson

Agenda:
1. Introductions

2. Discussion of Admissions Issues

John Simonson was invited to the ASC meeting to discuss the memo he sent to David VanBuren over the summer. John handed out the table showing UW System freshmen admissions data that was referred to in his memo. He strongly encouraged ASC to do an analysis of various admission criteria.

Our discussion generated lots of questions:
-- John’s question is why we use both the ACT and high school class rank to determine admission. Is one better than the other? Is there some other indicator that would be better?
-- Why are the ACT scores for UWP going up but at the same time the high school class rank is going down?
-- What are the issues causing the differences in trends at the different colleges in the system?

As part of the discussion, the following relevant ideas were shared:
-- More and more high schools are eliminating class rank.
-- UWP is committed to serving the needs of the five county region in southwest Wisconsin and so we do not promote ourselves as an “exclusive” institution taking only the top tier of students.
-- Many on campus believe that everyone deserves an opportunity for a quality education and therefore we do not have admissions criteria that are by nature prohibitive to the general population.
-- At the time of the meeting, UWP had already received 1200 applications of which only 29 had been rejected but almost 800 had been accepted. Of those 800, 80% were regular admits, 11% were discretionary admits, and 8% were exceptional admits.

To ensure that we gather the proper information, we must first define what we mean by “success.” Is it ultimately graduation, is it time to graduation, is it simply retention to a second semester or a second year? There can be multiple predictors of that “success” – ACT composite score, ACT subscores, high school GPA, high
school class rank, or UW System Placement scores in math and English. John suggested that we conduct a multiple regression study. Possible independent variables could be the applicant’s choice of college or their age, gender, ethnicity, or geographic location. The dependent variables would then be the graduation rates or the retention rates or whatever we defined as a “success.” We would want the data sorted by the three admission categories: regular, discretionary and exceptional.

Procedurally, ASC can begin its research only after we receive the approval of the Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management. ASC would then create a list of the information to request and submit that request to Abdollah Soofi, Director of Institutional Research. Thankfully, John agreed to help us construct an appropriate regression model.

3. ACT Writing Test

Madison and Whitewater will be requiring of their applicants the ACT writing test rather than the UW System placement test. The issue to decide is whether there is value of the ACT writing test over the system exam. We need some input from the English program in order to make a recommendation.

4. Discussion of portfolios

Due to the late hour, discussion of portfolios was deferred to our next meeting. After each reader has evaluated a portfolio, each team should collectively fill out a final evaluation form including comments.

5. Other

The ASC web page is up and running. It can be accessed at www.uwplatt.edu/~asc. The committee wondered if there could be a link from the “Campus Resources A-Z” site on the UWP homepage. [A link was installed] Any further suggestions or corrections should be forwarded to Julie.

The next meeting of the ASC is Wednesday, November 12.