

**Five-Year Annual Review  
Academic Requirements Committee**

Faculty Senate Committee on Committees  
2004

This review of the Academic Requirements Committee is submitted in accordance with the duties of the Committee on Committees to review each Faculty Senate Committee at five-year intervals, using the following five criteria established by the Faculty Senate:

1. Do the Standing Rules clearly reflect the function and composition of this committee?
2. Have the Committee's action or function, as reported in the annual reports and based on consultation with the current chair and committee, been consistent with their Standing Rules?
3. Do the annual reports provide a memory of the issues this committee addressed, their activities, and any outcomes?
4. What has been the role/benefit of student members?
5. What connection is there to the University's strategic goals?

The Committee on Committees reports that:

1. Yes, there seems to be a direct correlation between the current work of the committee and the Standing Rules. There are seven faculty and at least one undergraduate advisor. There are no student members, at least that attend the meetings. Also, teaching faculty are significantly underrepresented probably due to the very significant time commitment of two hours every week.
2. The annual reports and the chair confirm that the committee considers petitions from students requesting deviations for Academic Regulations. This past year the committee actively reviewed 1754 petitions with an additional 524 being preapproved by the Registrar's Office. This is approximately 54 petitions per weekly meeting.
3. The reports provide a clear record of committee issues and working procedures. There are several issues that reoccur in the reports of the last five years:
  - a. Audit window too narrow. This rule generates a lot of petitions and the committee does not understand why the window could not be wider. Further, it has been difficult determining the rationale from Academic Regulations reports for keeping the window to two weeks. Therefore it has been difficult to determine guidelines for exceptions.
  - b. There is a recurring concern about medical withdrawals, most recently concerning depression as the reason for withdrawal.
  - c. There is an inconsistency between the Regulation for Incompletes being limited to one year and the practice of granting extensions. Faculty do not follow or enforce the rule for Incompletes.
  - d. There is need for faculty training because the work of the committee is so intense. Also the intensity of the committee seems to result in many absences making it difficult to carry out the high work load.
4. Student members are very beneficial because they have such a different perspective. However, very rarely has a student member actually attended. In the year the current chair has served, there's only been one student she has been aware of as being appointed and they never attended or responded to email. Getting students to serve appears to be a challenge. Part of this may be the demands this committee makes on time.
5. Two relevant goals from the strategic plan document are:
  - Goal 1. Provide outstanding academic programs that further strengthen our performance and pre-eminence in the five thematic areas.
  - Goal 2. Improve the teaching and learning environment and achieve student persistence and

success through graduation and beyond that matches the best land grant universities in the country.

The chair reports that it is a constant balance between trying to maintain integrity of the regulations and trying to allow flexibility so that students don't feel unduly penalized by them when there are extenuating circumstances. In this sense, the Academic Requirements Committee has a central role in maintaining the integrity of academic programs yet motivating student persistence and success. That is a tough job

Submitted by Larry Flick, Department of Science and Mathematics Education, Committee on Committees