

Academic Requirements Committee

Annual Report 2022-2023

To: Executive Committee, Oregon State University Faculty Senate
From: Kyle Whitehouse, Chair, Academic Requirements Committee
Date: July 15, 2023
Re: Annual Report for 2022-2023

The Academic Requirements Committee meets weekly during the academic year, generally filling the scheduled two-hour meeting block with petition reviews. During summer term, meetings are held every two weeks to allow for vacation schedules. Committee meetings continue to be conducted using Zoom, which accommodates hybrid work schedules and participation. The committee consists of both voting and ex-officio members from a variety of central campus units, colleges and departments and is supported by the Office of the Registrar (OtR). AY23 committee membership is listed at the end of this report.

The committee reviewed 1,175 petitions in 2022-2023 of the 2,556 petitions submitted to the OtR. The OtR pre-approved the remaining 1,381 petitions per the [Pre-Approved ARC Chart](#). The committee does not see pre-approved petitions; these numbers are not included in counts throughout this report. See [Appendix A](#) for pre-approval numbers and [Appendix B](#) for the [Pre-Approved ARC Chart](#).

Additionally, the committee does not see petitions advanced by Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA) or Office of Student Life (OSL). In 2022-2023, EOA advanced 43 petitions and OSL advanced 3 petitions.

		2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	Percent Change: Current Year over Last Year
Total Petitions		1,175	1,039	797	+13.1%
	Approved ¹	601 (51.1%)	613 (59%)	576 (72.3%)	-7.9%
	Denied ²	483 (41.1%)	339 (32.6%)	153 (19.2%)	+8.5%
	Denied drop/ Approved withdraw ³	80 (6.8%)	75 (7.2%)	43 (5.4%)	-0.4%
	Deferred ⁴	11 (1%)	12 (1.2%)	25 (3.1%)	-0.2%
Campus					
	Corvallis	742 (63.1%)	642 (61.8%)	476 (59.7%)	+1.3%
	Ecampus	404 (34.4%)	357 (34.4%)	274 (34.4%)	No Change
	Cascades	28 (2.4%)	39 (3.7%)	39 (4.9%)	-1.3%
	La Grande	0 (0%)	1 (.1%)	1 (.1%)	-0.1%
	PDX	1 (.1%)	0 (0%)	7 (.9%)	+0.1%
International					
	Domestic	1077 (91.7%)	972 (93.5%)	724 (90.8%)	-1.8%
	International	98 (8.3%)	67 (6.5%)	73 (9.2%)	+1.8%
Late Course Adds⁵	Total	32 (2.7%)	15 (1.4%)	4 (.5%)	+113%
	Approved	8 (25%)	5 (66.6%)	3 (75%)	
	Denied	24 (75%)	10 (33.4%)	1 (25%)	
	Deferred	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Late Course Withdrawals	Total	372 (31.7%)	272 (26.2%)	98 (12.3%)	+36.8%
	Approved	212 (57%)	155 (57%)	74 (75.5%)	
	Denied	155 (41.7%)	116 (42.6%)	19 (19.4%)	
	Deferred	5 (1.3%)	1 (.4%)	5 (5.1%)	

¹ Includes Approved by committee; Deferred by committee, then approved.

² Includes Denied by committee; Deferred by committee, then denied.

³ The committee may deny a drop and approve a withdrawal instead if the student's petition does not meet the drop guidelines but meets the withdraw guidelines. Includes denied drop, approve Withdraw; Deferred then denied drop, approve Withdraw.

⁴ The committee defers petitions when there is important information missing, such as medical documentation or course activity records. (Deferred by committee).

⁵ Not included are those petitions preapproved according to the Pre-Approved ARC Chart.

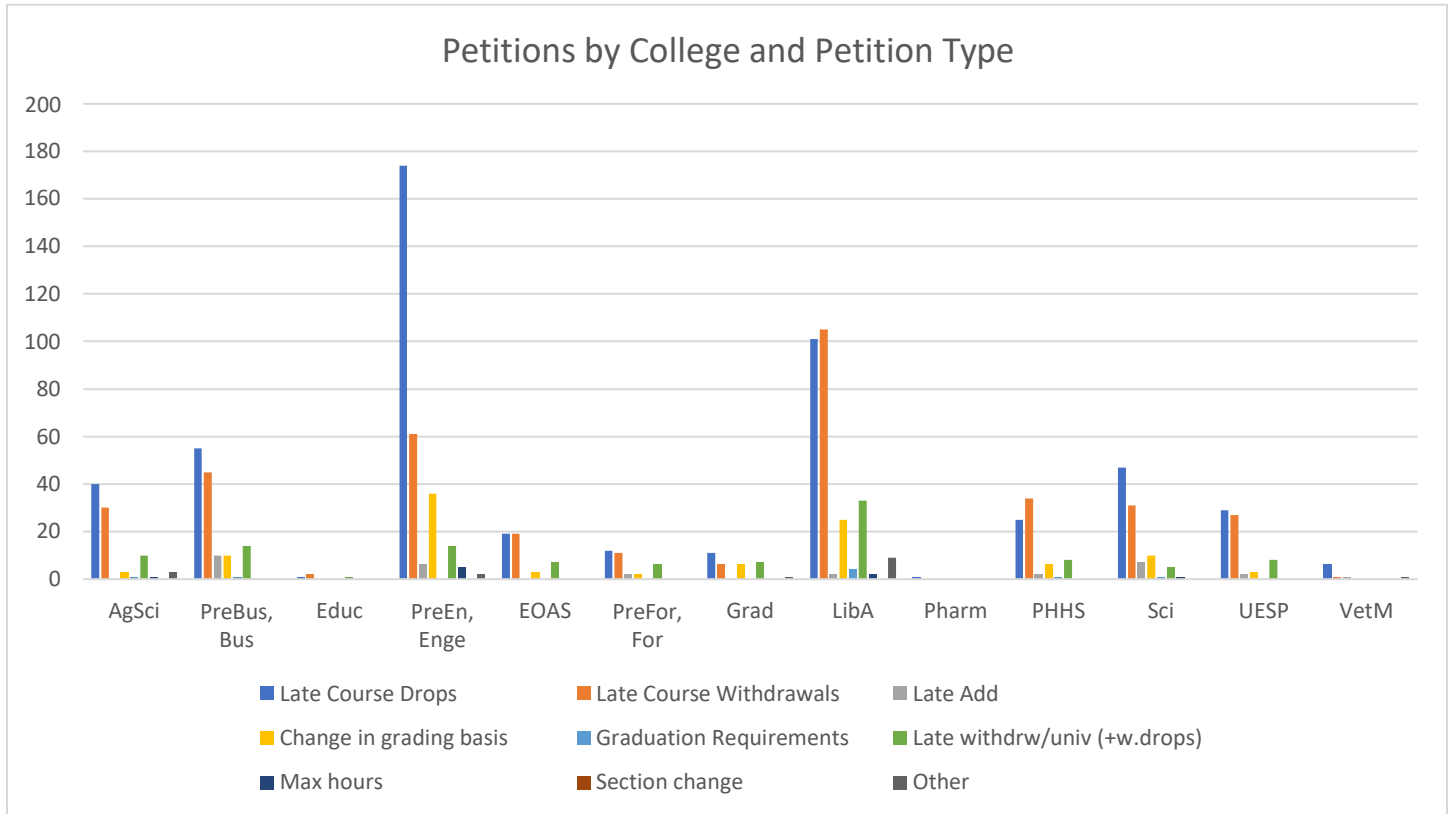
		2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	Percent Change: Current Year over Last Year
Late Course Drops⁵	Total	521 (44.3%)	543 (52.3%)	468 (58.7%)	-4.1%
	Approved	239 (45.9%)	317 (58.4%)	330 (70.5%)	
	Denied	215 (42.1%)	173 (31.9%)	90 (19.2%)	
	Deferred	5 (.1%)	2 (.3%)	14 (3%)	
	Denied drop/approve withdraw	62 (11.9%)	51 (9.4%)	34 (7.3%)	
Changing of grading basis	Total	104 (8.9%)	68 (6.5%)	101 (12.7%)	+52.9%
	Approved	56 (53.8%)	47 (69.1%)	74 (73.2%)	
	Denied	48 (46.2%)	18 (26.5%)	24 (23.8%)	
	Deferred	0 (0%)	3 (4.4%)	3 (3%)	
Late Withdrawals from the university/term	Total	76 (6.5%)	65 (6.3%)	34 (4.3%)	+16.9%
	Approved	58 (76.3%)	52 (80%)	29 (85.3%)	
	Denied	17 (22.4%)	13 (20%)	5 (14.7%)	
	Deferred	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Late Withdrawals from the university/term with drops⁵	Total	37 (3.1%)	65 (6.3%)	70 (8.8%)	-43.1%
	Approved	12 (32.4%)	32 (49.3%)	52 (74.3%)	
	Denied	7 (18.9%)	11 (16.9%)	7 (10%)	
	Denied drop, approve withdraw	18 (48.7%)	22 (33.8%)	9 (12.9%)	
	Deferred	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.8%)	
Exception to graduation requirements	Total	8 (.7%)	7 (.7%)	6 (.7%)	+14.3%
	Approved	1 (12.5%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (33.3%)	
	Denied	7 (87.5%)	6 (85.7%)	4 (66.7%)	
Misc. petitions⁶		25 (2.1%)	4 (.3%)	16 (2%)	+525%

Undergraduate Petitions	No. of students submitting petitions ⁷	Late Course Drops	Late Course Withdrawals	Late Add	Change in grading basis	Graduation Requirements	Late withdraw/univ (+w.drops)	Other	TOTAL
Freshman	78	46	41	9	20	0	9	0	125
Sophomore	104	52	73	6	18	0	19	1	169
Junior	125	86	95	4	14	1	24	2	226
Senior	276	221	125	11	35	6	37	20	455
TOTAL	583	405	334	30	87	7	89	23	975

Student by Level ⁸	No. of students submitting petitions ⁷	Late Course	Late Course Withdrawal	Late Add	Change in grading	Graduation Requirement	Late withdraw/univ (+w.drops)	Other	TOTAL
1 (Undergrad)	583	405	334	30	87	7	89	23	975
2 (MA, PhD)	71	41	23	1	11	0	7	1	84
3 (Post-Bacc)	55	53	10	0	1	1	6	0	71
4 (Non-degree)	34	17	2	1	5	0	11	1	37
5 (Professional students/ VetMed/Pharm)	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
6 (INTO)	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	749	521	372	32	104	8	113	25	1175

⁶ AR13, AR20, section changes not pre-approved, max hours

⁷ De-duplicated list. This is individual students.



⁸ As defined in Banner

By College	Late Course Drops	Late Course	Late Add	Change in grading basis	Graduation Requirements	Late withdraw/univ (+w.drops)	Max hours	Section change	Other	Total Approved	Total Denied/Deferred
AgSci	40	30	0	3	1	10	1	0	3	43	45
PreBus, Bus	55	45	10	10	1	14	0	0	0	62	73
Educ	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0
PreEn, Enge	174	61	6	36	0	14	5	0	2	149	149
EOAS	19	19	0	3	0	7	0	0	0	33	15
PreFor, For	12	11	2	2	0	6	0	0	0	18	15
Grad	11	6	0	6	0	7	0	0	1	20	11
LibA	101	105	2	25	4	33	2	0	9	144	137
Pharm	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
PHHS	25	34	2	6	1	8	0	0	0	48	28
Sci	47	31	7	10	1	5	1	0	0	50	52
UESP	29	27	2	3	0	8	0	0	0	25	44
VetM	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5

Discussion

The total number of petitions submitted by students in academic year 2022-23 was 2,556, a small increase (nearly 3%) over the previous academic year. 54% of these petitions met conditions for pre-approval by the OtR team (see footnote 5 above and a more complete depiction of those pre-approved petitions at the end of this report). The remaining 1,175 petitions were forwarded to and considered by the committee, a 13% increase over the previous year. Of those reviewed by the committee this year, the distribution of petition types was mostly for late course drops (+44.3%) followed by late course withdraws (+31.7%).

It is interesting to note that the number of miscellaneous petitions increased significantly over previous years (+525%). These petitions included requests to correct inadvertent course section registrations and exceptions to AR 7 (maximum credit overload), AR12 (course withdraw limit), and AR20 (repeat course limit). A notable theme in the student statements was an effort to lower the cost of education and/or to mitigate the impact of lost or insufficient academic funding. For similar reasons, the number of petitions for an exception to graduation requirements continues to increase (+14%). These petitions are particularly challenging for the committee to navigate, and yet the committee members do so with a balance of consistency and empathy that represents their commitment to their service to both the university and to the students. Academic Requirement Committee Guidelines limit the committee's authority to approve exceptions to university graduation requirements (see full discussion in Recommendation #2 below). In AY23, only one of these eight petitions was recommended for approval to the Provost designee.

Closer consideration of the total number of petitions shows the greatest increase appears to be for late course adds, however, most of those petitions were not supported by the instructor and were denied by the committee. Of the petitions received for late course drops, which continues to be the most common petition submitted to the committee, slightly more were approved than denied. Sixty-two of the denied petitions, however, met the requirements for a course withdraw given the timing of the extenuating circumstances and, in these cases, the committee denied the petition for late drop and approved late withdraws.

Demographic distribution of the students submitting petitions in AY23 does not appear to be significantly different than the previous academic year. Despite differences in growth between campuses, petition by campus is not significantly different in AY23 than in AY22. The number of petitions submitted by domestic and international students maintained a similar ratio to previous years. The college distribution by petition type confirms that the leading petition types by college are similar (late course drops and withdraws lead other petition types), and those numbers continue to be higher in the College of Engineering and the College of Liberal Arts. Additionally, students in the College of Liberal Arts submitted more petitions for a change of

grading basis and late withdraw from the term/university than those from other colleges, and these patterns are consistent with previous years.

The committee approved 51% of the total petitions reviewed while denying 41%. This ratio more closely matches years prior to AY21 when the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic greatly disrupted the student experience. While maintaining their commitment to a compassionate review and sensitivity for students continuing to navigate these impacts and/or those who are surfacing petitions from previous academic terms that were impacted during the pandemic, committee members continue to honor the committee's charge to deliberate with careful and equitable consideration.

Accomplishments in AY22

1. New member training and onboarding: the chair and representatives from the OtR worked together to coordinate training for new members which will be offered to the full committee membership each fall term, regardless of tenure or experience of individual committee members.
2. Student members: two students were nominated by their respective leadership organizations to serve on the committee in AY23. Unfortunately, neither student maintained active participation past initial engagement, citing conflicts with their academic schedules. The experiences gave the chair, assistants to the Faculty Senate, and OtR the opportunity to outline onboarding content specific to a student member, including arrangements for FERPA training and preparing student members to review sensitive information and significant impact stories from peers.
3. Full committee membership: the committee is grateful for the quick attention to membership needs this year as one unanticipated vacancy was filled quickly so that the committee could operate efficiently, allowing greater flexibility for absences among voting members that still enabled meeting quorum requirements and ensuring more and diverse perspectives in the deliberations.
4. New Academic Advisor training: the chair continues to work closely with the director of Cross Campus Strategic Initiatives (CCSI) to update communication and training regarding committee practices and student petition processes for all new academic advisors, academic counselors and faculty advisors and program leads. This ensures timely delivery of updates and resulted in a co-delivered presentation. These sessions will be offered roughly each academic quarter in AY24 and beyond.

Issues and Recommendations for AY23

The following recommendations are offered with much consideration and with two goals in mind: improving committee efficiencies and improving the student experience. As the number of petitions continues to increase each year, the chair is mindful that voting committee members spend 5-7 hours weekly and OtR staff dedicate even more time in service to the committee. The following suggestions will require collaborative efforts and the commitment of various stakeholders across the university.

1. Online petition form, phase two

Rationale/background: the online petition workflow was launched by the OtR in March 2022 and has been a great improvement for the university community in so many ways, made possible by committed OtR efforts to utilize online tools and university IT solutions that ensured information security during the transition to more accessible and equitable processes. The Academic Requirements Committee advocates for the following next-phase improvements:

- a. Sharing data and reporting internally to 1) track petitions more effectively and reduce inefficiencies, 2) make data-informed adjustments to relevant processes and communication.
- b. Developing the online version of a previously available petition for a late withdraw from the university/term. This registration action is still available to students with a separate deadline still published for each term, and the impact of losing the petition has increased the cost to students in both *time* (committee denials and appeals resulting from disjointed withdraw from term requests that are processed as individual course withdraws and a more rigid consideration

of issues than full term withdraws allow such as selectivity, grade management and course engagement) and cost (the student's processing fee is multiplied). Without this petition available in any form, what was once assessed as a single processing fee (\$20) can now cost the student \$40 - \$100 or more. A similar discussion was raised by the Academic Advising Council in AY23. If an online version of this petition can't be easily introduced in AY24, perhaps the paper petition for late withdraw from the term could be reinstated – not an ideal solution but perhaps more fair to students.

- c. Editing the petition for exceeding maximum course credits (AR7) to mirror the language in AR7.1.a. and AR7.1.b. Adding language or a new field that requires designated signers to indicate their support/non- support meets the standard outlined in the Academic Regulation. The current petition provides space for signature only, and the committee often denies or defers these petitions when comments are not added that clearly indicate support. This creates additional work and time for the student, advisor, head advisor, OtR staff and committee members.

2. Pilot a new review process for petitions for an exception to graduation requirements (AR 25)

Rationale: As mentioned above, petitions for an exception to graduation requirements face barriers that need attention. First, according to Academic Requirements Committee guidelines, the committee does not approve or deny these requests, but instead considers these petitions with much debate before forwarding a recommendation to the Vice Provost/designee for a final decision. Students are still afforded three attempts with the committee but, because the committee *does not recommend* requests to graduate with less than 180 credits or a 2.0 GPA, and it *rarely recommends* exceptions to other requirements outlined by AR 25 (see [Academic Requirements Committee Guidelines](#), page 4: Graduation Requirements), important time is lost for everyone involved. Students pursue an exception because they believe their circumstances are the result of university resources that failed them. Understandably, the issues are complex and deserve full consideration by those with authority to address the cause and potential solution. However, the committee is limited. The primary reason students petition for an exception to graduation requirements is because they discover that they have fallen short of meeting 180 credits despite advising and My Degrees guidance. The reasons are varied and, in nearly every instance, the academic advisor and college support the student. In fact, the college may have oversight or authority to resolve the student's issue before involving the committee and, in these cases, focusing efforts at the program level may lead to quicker resolution. A series of committee denials over several weeks or months, typical for these petitions currently, leads to the student waiting for the Provost designee's final determination, most often also a denial. All of this requires time and a dependency on outcomes that a student so close to graduation does not have. While the total number of this petition type is relatively small compared to other petition types, the current process requires unnecessary energy, time and stress.

Proposal: Test a new process for these petitions and evaluate outcomes at the end of spring term so that appropriate updates can be drafted for the Academic Requirements Committee guidelines. For this pilot, petitions that address exceptions to graduation requirements (AR 25) would be reviewed instead by a small team of stakeholders who have the authority to fully consider, take action and/or make final recommendations. We recommend that three roles form the review committee: the Registrar or designee, College Head advisor or designee, and a representative from the graduation certification team. These representatives have access to the information needed and a mandate to either act at the college/university level to address the student's concern or make a recommendation to the Provost or designee directly. During the pilot, decisions made by the Provost designee will continue to be the final word, and students will still have access to the same appeal process which includes submitting a petition with two opportunities to appeal. The Academic Requirements Committee chair(s) will work with the OtR to develop final details of a pilot that can test this or a similar process.

3. Incomplete petitions, specifically those without supporting documentation, should not be added to the Academic Requirements Committee docket until they are complete

Rationale: Students are required to include supporting documentation before submitting an online petition, although this doesn't always happen. Even though Guidance with examples of appropriate documentation has been added to the online petition instructions, it is not uncommon for incomplete petitions to make it to the committee docket each week, resulting in a denial. As the number of petitions submitted each year continues to grow, it is worth finding time-saving solutions where possible. It may be possible to automate communication to students in these situations, further reducing manual processing for OtR staff. In addition to saving time spent on these non-qualifying petitions and attempting to collect supporting documentation, this update protects the student's access to the appeal process by ensuring the first review of their petition includes necessary documentation. The committee recommends one or both of the following solutions:

Proposals:

- A. (Simple edit) Update the student certification statement on the petition with stronger language:

"I understand that my personal statement is necessary but not sufficient for committee review. Supporting documentation [see examples here: link] is required to help you demonstrate your case and make this process as efficient as possible. If it is determined that supporting documentation was not included, is not directly relevant to the timeline or does not address the circumstances, I understand that my petition may be delayed, deferred or denied."

- B. (Requires more time and staff involvement) A member of the OTR records team reviews each petition, communicates with students when documentation is missing or does not meet the minimum requirements, and adds petitions when they are complete with supporting documentation that:
- Supports timeline of the extenuating circumstances
 - Addresses at least one issue mentioned in student statement
 - Includes a statement or letter of support from OSU affiliate in lieu of the above

4. Pre-denial chart for petition types that will not be approved by the Academic Requirements Committee

Rationale: It seems there is no history of denying petitions before they reach the committee. While students are entitled to the full petition and appeal process, there are a few, key examples of petitions that that will not meet Academic Requirements Committee Guidelines for approval and could be addressed by the OtR rather than referred to the committee for denial. These denials could be communicated without delay so that the student can quickly address the denial reason through appeal to the committee, if the situation warrants it (an example might be getting faculty approval to add a course late in the term). Delaying a decision by waiting for the next committee meeting is not necessary in these cases and denying them expeditiously so the student can take appropriate action (appeal or move on) is in the student's best interest.

Proposal: Create a pre-denial chart for the following, limited petition types. The OtR team

could fully process these petitions as denials with an option to forward others if they determine that fuller consideration should be given by the committee for these petition types:

- Audit/Add a course late, not supported by instructor (AR 30)
- Exceeds credit limit without college head advisor or major advisor support (AR 7), see recommendation
1.c. above
- Any petition submitted 90+ days after graduation conferral (per OtR)

5. Pre-approve undergraduate students petitioning for a course level change (500- to 400- level)

Rationale: The committee reviews petitions from students who discover they have inadvertently registered for the graduate level of a dual listed course (ex. 4xx/5xx). Registration tools do not prevent a student from registering incorrectly, and a mistake it is not easily detected by the student or instructor when the curriculum requirements are the same for both levels until a final graduate-level assignment is required of students enrolled at the 500-level. When these petitions are supported by the instructor, they should be pre-approved and not forwarded to the committee. These petitions are pre-approved for graduate students in current and past terms.

Proposal: Update the pre-approval guidelines (see [Appendix B](#) in this report) by adding undergraduate students to level changes in the current term (not to be pre-approved for undergraduates petitioning a level change in a previous term).

6. Additional requests based on previous Academic Requirements Committee annual report recommendations and continuing opportunities for improvement:

Rationale: The following issues have been identified by the committee as opportunities for improvement to the petition review process over the previous 2-3 years. These have been outlined in more detail in previous Academic Requirements Committee annual reports and remain recommendations this year:

- a. Revisit the language on the Academic Requirements Committee petition that describes the petition as a "one-time exception." Determine with the OtR what the intent of this phrase has been and what capacity there is to monitor and uphold this expectation. If there is no rationale or means for enforcing, this phrase should be addressed.
- b. Update language in the petition denial letters received by students so that it is user-friendly and communicates denial reasons in plain language (such as 'selectivity' and 'course engagement/exposure to the curriculum'). This will improve the student's understanding and ability to take appropriate action and overall communication processes.
- c. Provide highly visible instructor/advisor and student resources to improve navigation of petition processes, terminology and concepts such as selectivity and course engagement/exposure to the curriculum and that clarifies the university's definitions and timelines for a course drop vs. course withdraw.
- d. Explore how to provide annual training (that includes DEI and trauma-informed perspectives) and data on an annual basis to inform Academic Requirements Committee processes and decision making.

Proposal: Meet with the OtR staff during AY24 to discuss a road map for addressing reasonable solutions that include both previous and current

recommendations.

One additional note for consideration by the Executive Committee:

Various university offices are responsible for programs with requirements for maintaining student status (i.e., ROTC, OIS, Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, VA, etc.) or that ensure institution compliance. Any one of these may be impacted when petitions for late change of registration are approved, particularly when changes must be processed for previous terms. These might involve the return of tuition and fees that might impact financial aid awarding and reporting, reduced credits resulting from a late drop or withdraw when the student was required to maintain full-time enrollment for VA or for Visa requirements, for example. It may be beneficial for the Executive Committee to explore the broader implications and institutional risks of late changes of registration and related processes, to collaborate with key institution partners to ensure guidelines are appropriate and that both student and university interests are recognized while unintended consequences are avoided.

It has once again been my pleasure to serve as chair for the Academic Requirements Committee and to serve with colleagues who prioritize our service with dedication and compassion. Reading students' stories about personal trials and crises they are managing in addition to their academic commitment is often heavy and difficult work, and we have deep respect for students' vulnerability throughout this process. The Academic Requirements Committee members are especially grateful for the support of our hard-working colleagues across Oregon State who work directly with these students and who supported and informed our work this year. I respectfully submit recommendations again this year as possible solutions as an additional acknowledgement of the time, effort, and emotional energy given by these committee members:

2022-2023 Academic Requirements Committee Members

Kyle Whitehouse (Chair) '25	Ecampus Student Success
Joan Stueve '23	Nuclear Science & Engineering
Sara Clark '24	College of Science, Mathematics
Michael Trevathan '24	College of Liberal Arts, School of Public Policy
Faith Vawter '24	College of Agricultural Sciences, Leadership Academy
Keith Raab '25	Office of Financial Aid
Evan Smouse '25	College of Business
Autumn VanderLinden (ended 12/31/2022)	College of Forestry, Natural Resources

Student members (2) – none appointed

Ex-officio members:

Office of the Registrar (varies by term) – Jennifer Ketterman, Autumn Landis, Michael Jefferies, and Kristin Benson (with special thanks to Kristin for preparing the data for the annual report)

Disability Access Services (varies by term) – Tracy Bentley-Townlin and Kevin Bonomolo
Graduate School – Jessica Beck