

Faculty Senate

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Graduate Admissions Committee

2010-2011 Annual Report

DATE: July 15, 2011
 TO: Executive Committee, Faculty Senate
 FROM: Leah Minc, Chair (2011) and Temesgen Hailemariam, Chair (2010) Graduate Admissions Committee
 SUBJECT: 2010-2011 Annual Report for the Graduate Admissions Committee
 ATTACHMENT: Annual Activity Audit Report for the Graduate Admissions Committee (2010-2011)

Committee members:

Leah Minc, Chair '12	Anthropology
Temesgen Hailemariam '11	Forest Resources
Wade Marcum '12	Nuclear Engineering & Radiation Health Physics
Elaine Pedersen '13	Design & Human Environment
Ricardo Mata-Gonzalez '13	Rangeland Ecology and Management
Mark Needham '13	Forest Ecosystems & Society

Ex-Officio: Rosemary Garagnani, for Director of Admissions

The Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC) operates under the Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate and under the policies and procedures formulated by the Graduate Council. The role of the GAC is to review files of Graduate School applicants who do not meet the minimum admission requirements. In the case of domestic applicants, the requirement is a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in the last 90 quarter hours or 60 semester hours of the first undergraduate degree. For international students, a similar GPA requirement applies, plus either a TOEFL score of 550 (213 on the computer version of the test) or a degree completed at an accredited institution that offers all course work in English.

Cases not meeting these minimum requirements may be appealed to the GAC for review, with one of the following outcomes: admit regular, admit conditionally, admit provisionally, or deny admittance. The standard condition used is that students must earn a 3.0 (B) or better in each course of the first 18 hours of graded graduate credits; provisional acceptance usually involves additional coursework as imposed by the department. If students are rejected, they may still complete 24 hours of upper division or graduate work, earning a 3.0 or better to be accepted if the department approves the acceptance. Students who use this avenue are not reconsidered by the GAC unless they wish to petition based on less than 24 hours of completed work.

In 2006, the Faculty Senate voted to streamline the appeals process for those applications not meeting the minimum requirements. This policy change established that if a department petitions for conditional admission for an applicant with a GPA of 2.75 or above, the admissions office will automatically grant the conditional admission as requested. If regular or provisional admission is requested, the file will go to the GAC for review. Similarly, if a department petitions for any form of admission for an applicant with a GPA below 2.75, the file will be reviewed by the GAC and a final admission decision will be made.

In reviewing appealed cases, the GAC considers a range of predictors for success in graduate school, including standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, and academic performance or work experience since the applicant earned a bachelor's degree. Each file is reviewed by at least two members, and all files are then discussed by the entire committee. In evaluating the file materials, the Committee looks for substantive and compelling evidence indicating that the applicant will succeed at the graduate level to justify

waiving the admission requirements.

During the period 4 August 2010 through 14 July 2011, the Committee met 20 times on essentially a biweekly basis (see [attached copy](#) of the Committee annual audit prepared by the Graduate School Admissions). The GAC considered 61 cases. Of these, 41 (67.2%) were domestic and 20 (32.8%) international. Eight (13.1%) were admitted with no conditions, 39 (63.9%) were admitted with conditions, 10 (16.4%) were admitted provisionally, 8 (13.1%) were denied admission, and 2 (3.3%) were deferred, pending additional information. Three applicants were granted simultaneous conditional and provisional status.

The relative percentage of these admission decisions is consistent with the past two years (Table 1). Most applicants are accepted conditionally, but there has been a slightly higher rejection rate this past year than prior.

The success rate of applicants admitted through the GAC review process is tracked by the Graduate School. Based on data from the past three academic years (2009, 2010, and 2011 to present), these applicants typically do very well. During this time period, 91 applicants who had been accepted conditionally were tracked and their cumulative GPA reported. On average, this group maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.64, with only six Masters Students (6.6% of conditional admissions) failing to meet the minimum GPA of 3.0. Stated alternatively, over 93% of cases recommended by the GAC for admission do succeed in graduate school.

No procedural changes to the way the Committee operates were implemented this past year. In November, 2010, the Faculty Senate had recommended that the GAC consider adopting an on-line review process in order to shorten the wait-time for files to be evaluated and to reduce the time commitment for committee members. GAC members discussed the pros and cons of different streamlining procedures extensively, but felt strongly that files might not get a thorough and fair review without face-to-face discussions and additional inputs from committee members. The current procedure provides a much better forum for transparency and genuine discussion. In addition, none of the current members felt the twice-monthly meeting schedule was onerous, and attendance this past year was excellent (even with the reduced committee membership). In the end, the Committee unanimously decided to continue the current review system and not to implement an abbreviated or electronic review system.

One policy change initiated by the Graduate Council will expand the scope of cases reviewed by the GAC. In May, 2011, the Graduate Council approved an appeals process for students holding international professional degrees, but without the required baccalaureate degree:

"Graduate programs with an international applicant who does not have a four-year bachelor's or an appropriate alternative degree, e.g. a professional degree of at least four years duration, but who meets all other requirements for admission as a graduate student at OSU, may appeal the admissions denial to the Graduate Admissions Committee. The Graduate Admissions Committee, based on evidence presented by the graduate program, will determine if the student has sufficiently demonstrated preparedness to enter a graduate program and may provide an exception to allow admissions. The Graduate Council will review this policy in one year with input from the Graduate Admissions Committee."

The GAC and the Graduate Council jointly drafted an [appeals form](#) to be completed by the department when referring such a case to the GAC. The form is designed to substantiate the student's ability to communicate proficiently in writing, their preparation to conduct research, and their development of critical thinking - skills the Graduate Council identified as critical for success in graduate school. The GAC reviewed (and admitted) the first student under purview of this new policy. In the upcoming academic year, a significant number of cases are expected under this new ruling, and this may require an expansion of GAC membership to handle the workflow.

cc: Rosemary Garagnani, Assistant Dean, Graduate School
Dr. Brenda McComb, Dean, Graduate School