

Appendix J: Undergraduate Admissions Committee

Interviewed: Clay Torset & John Ruben, Co-Chairs, Undergraduate Admissions Committee

Interviewer: Robin Bilyeu, Committee on Committees

Dates of Interviews: March 26, 2014 & April 4, 2014

Responses/Discussion of the assessment guide questions:

1. The Standing Rules clearly states, "The Committee serves as the focal point for discussion and review of policy changes related to undergraduate admissions..." While the committee agrees they function within these standing rules, the university as a whole does not appear to be aware of their role with undergraduate admissions. A new undergraduate admissions matrix is being used for Fall 2014, but it was never presented to the committee, nor were they consulted on its use. Upon their review of the matrix, there are significant concerns with the matrix and its validity in appropriately screening applicants.

As for the composition of the committee, that may need to be reviewed or updated to more accurately reflect who is on this committee. First, they have one representative from Educational Opportunities Program, which is not mentioned in the Standing Rules, but who has become essential for the committee to use as a resource in their meetings and should be included in the Standing Rules. Second, it has been a struggle to find five Teaching Faculty to be on the committee due to their course loads during the term and, since most have 9-month appointments, their limited availability during the summer. Since the majority of meetings occur during the summer, it is important that committee members are available to attend at this time. It is important to have teaching faculty on the committee, and they wish they had more involvement, but the reality is that they are not meeting the composition requirements outlined in the Standing Rules. This year has been one of the better years, with four Teaching Faculty members on the committee, but still does not meet the composition of the members needed. Finally, having an INTO representative on the committee has provided an insight into various diversity issues, so it may be something that should become permanent, but only if we could ensure it was an OSU funded employee and not an INTO funded employee. The concerns with an INTO funded employee are self-explanatory when you look at what Faculty Senate committees represent and where their interests lie.

2. Yes, while there is not an annual report from last year, the current Co-Chairs have extensive experience on the committee and plan on compiling both this year and last year's actions in their next annual report.
3. The annual reports are fairly standard with how they are written and focused on the number of applications reviewed, acceptance rates, etc. The committee would like to see more statistics on success rates and other data that would identify specific factors of success that can help them in future decisions. This type of data gathering and computation is outside the committee's scope, but would be useful information for the university to have so it may be something to ask Institutional Research to track, compute, and provide to the committee for guidance.
4. While the Standing Rules say there will be one student member, there has not been one on this committee, and the Chair indicated that it would not be appropriate for a student member to be on the committee. Mainly, due to the files being in Nolij, a student would not have access to review them. Other concerns to a lesser degree include:
 - Confidentiality of student records
 - The committee has very frank discussions that may be misinterpreted by a student
 - Maturity level of the student and understanding that denying a student is helping them
 - Meetings are at an inconvenient time to students; Fridays 1:00-3:00 PM.
5. This committee has a direct impact on undergraduates admitted to the university which, in turn, could significantly impact the goals/results of the University's strategic plan. Specifically, in relation to Goals 1 & 2 (Academic Excellence and Improved Teaching and Learning), the students that are being admitted will provide the retention rate statistics and number of degrees granted that evaluate those goals.

This is where the Admissions Matrix for Fall is a concern for the committee. The university will begin auto-admitting students below 3.0 GPA to meet the 35,000 student target for Fall. This is not in the best interest of the university, especially if it results in an increased number of students not succeeding at college. It is not only a disservice to the student who has the expectation of earning a degree and is unable to, but it will show up in lower retention rates.

6. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee provides individualized reviews of admissions applications and identifies students of disadvantaged backgrounds that are likely to be successful at the university. It also keeps faculty involved in determining who they will teach. Both of these add value to the university and faculty governance. However, the committee can only add value if they are consulted on undergraduate admissions of applicants not meeting the admission requirements. In situations like the Admissions Matrix being used this Fall, they were not consulted and, after failed efforts of finding out who approved the use of the matrix, their function and duty have been undermined and are not adding any value. This creates uncertainty and complete lack of appreciation for the committee's knowledge and experience. Had they been consulted, they would have pointed out the flaws in the matrix and asked to review what the results would have been if it had been applied to last year's applicants.
7. The committee is needed and faculty need to be involved in deciding who they teach, but the Executive Council needs to ensure the committee has the authority and are responsible for things within their boundaries. If decisions can be made without the committee, the Standing Rules need to be re-evaluated, or at least whichever office on campus has the authority to create things like the Admissions Matrix, needs to be educated on the committee's existence and consult with them.

On a larger scale, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee may want to look into providing more education to new hires with regards to what Faculty Senate is and does. It has been this committee's experience that decisions are being made without input or even consultation with Faculty Senate. The value of Faculty Senate is being unintentionally diminished by people that are ignorant of the governing body or that the Senate should be consulted on some of the major policy and regulatory decisions that are being made. This could be done in a number of ways, from basic education, adding to pre-existing campus workshops, or including it in new hire orientation/education. This education is especially important for administrative positions.

8. This committee absolutely enhances OSU's commitment to diversity by providing support to students with disadvantaged backgrounds. They ensure those students are given appropriate consideration for admission to the university, where they would otherwise not be considered.