

MINUTES
EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
November 1, 2005

Members Present: James Anderson, Rose Chepyator-Thomson, Ann Crowther, Karen Leonas, Sarajane Love, Denise Mewborn, William Vencill, Theresa Glasheen, Daniel Byrd
Guests: Rebecca Macon - Registrar, Karen Bauer and Charlie Mathies – Institutional Research, Malcolm Adams – Mathematics, Karen Boyd - OVPI

Dr. James Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. and reported on the October Petitions Subcommittee's meeting. The minutes of the September 20 Educational Affairs Committee were corrected to include William Vencill as an attendee, then approved.

Dr. Bauer distributed information her office has collected in the analysis of its study of UGA's undergraduate GPA's between 1998-2004. She reported that the data are complex with many variables but general observations could be made such as, "female undergraduates earned higher grades from non-tenure track and female faculty. Findings show that in general, grades for male students did not vary significantly by the gender of the faculty member."

Dr. Bauer's report generated a lengthy discussion related to the variables, findings, and whether there should be additional study. A multilinear regression model was applied to the grade distribution over time, including the effects of the most frequently suggested variables to account for the time trend of increasing grade point average. These variables included student SAT scores, high school GPA, student and faculty gender, faculty age and rank, etc. The model could account for only ca. 22 % of the observed trend in GPA. Additional, unidentified factors had a much larger effect on GPA than the obvious suspects. While these results do not yield a positive identification of the causes of the grading trend, they also do not allow the exclusion of grade inflation as a possible cause. The inability of the model to explain the trend on the basis of the usually suggested causes is in fact compatible with the hypothesis of grade inflation, although insufficient data have been obtained to prove its validity. The members thanked Dr. Bauer for her work and agreed that the report is a good starting point for future discussion with Vice Presidents Dunn and Morehead in coordination with their report on the General Education Task Force Committee's recommendations.

The University's Academic Renewal Policy was presented with a recommendation to delete the sentence in the policy which states: "If a student granted Academic Renewal does not enroll for the semester for which Academic Renewal status is sought, the student must reapply for Academic Renewal." The members voted to approve the deletion of the sentence. Debbie Bell and Rebecca Macon will work together to include language on the approval letters to students granted Academic Renewal that will clarify the fact that the student MUST return to UGA prior to completing any other coursework at another institution for the Renewal status to be effective.

Dean Hugh Ruppensburg's request for EAC review of a professor's authority to drop a student from a class was discussed. Karen Leonas agreed to study the University's Course Withdrawal Policy for possible revision/clarification and will make a report at the next meeting of the Educational Affairs Committee.

Dr. Leonas discussed an e-mail she received from a colleague related to the distribution of student football tickets on the first day of class. Dr. Malcolm Adams, chair of the University Council's Intercollegiate Athletic Committee said that he has spoken with Damon Evans, Athletic Director and that his committee will follow up on this issue.

The Executive Committee of the University Council asked that the EAC review the equity of access to the University related to scholarships and financial need. Dr. Anderson will contact the researchers at UGA who are studying this issue and invite them to a future meeting.

Time ran out before a thorough discussion and vote to the proposed revisions to the Educational Affairs Operating Procedures. Dr. Anderson stated that he is still concerned about the grade appeal guidelines. The members were asked to review the proposal and be prepared to vote on either the entire document or portions of the proposal at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Educational Affairs Committee will be Tuesday, January 10 at 10:45 a.m. in Room 144 Tate Center.