

Report of the Standing Committee on Educational Affairs
September 30, 2020

The role of the Educational Affairs Committee is to consider and recommend to the Council educational policies such as registration procedures, academic advising, and the like, to hear academic appeals, and to hear reports from the Division of Academic Enhancement.

The Educational Affairs Committee met several times in Fall 2020.

On September 9, we met with the Vice President of Instruction Rahul Shivrastav. The meeting was an opportunity for Committee members to discuss alternative instructional strategies that the University implemented for Fall 2020 and how to revise and adapt those strategies for Spring 2021. The conversation was open-ended and covered many issues including instructor flexibility to adjust the use of class time, academic honesty issues, calendar scheduling (including timing of Spring break), and student attendance.

On September 10, the Committee met with Associate Provost for Academic Programs Meg Amstutz. Associate Provost Amstutz asked the Committee for input on upcoming Commencement ceremonies under COVID conditions. While recognizing the importance of social distancing and reducing potential spread of the virus in the Athens community, the Committee brainstormed about ways to keep the ceremony personal and meaningful yet also safe.

The Committee appreciated both of these opportunities to share their points of view with UGA Administration.

The Committee also formed a subcommittee in August to develop a resolution to UGA Administration that would emphasize the continuing importance of faculty governance and academic freedom in decisions related to educational affairs. The subcommittee met several times and drafted a resolution that was shared with the full committee on September 24. While there was broad agreement in the full Committee on the general statement that the Committee should be involved in decisions on matters under their purview, the resolution is being revised by the subcommittee for some specific concerns raised by Committee members. The resolution will be presented to the full Committee again at their regularly scheduled meeting on October 5. At that time, the Committee will determine the best way to share the resolution with University Council and UGA Administration.

The Petitions Subcommittee of EAC considered 124 student appeals between February 2020 and September 2020. 88 of the appeals were approved by the Subcommittee and 36 were denied. After March 2020, all meetings were held via Zoom, including Zoom meetings with students if they requested to address the subcommittee directly.