

Report of the Educational Affairs Committee to the University Council
February 21, 2013

The Educational Affairs Committee has met four times since our last report at the February 2012 University Council Meeting. The Petitions Subcommittee has met monthly since then and has reviewed 144 petitions: approving 90 and denying 54.

We have no action items at today's meeting, although I would like to report on some items on our agenda in the past year.

The committee has discussed in some detail the university course withdrawal policy that limits undergraduates to 4 withdrawals. Since the withdrawal policy was instituted in Fall 2008, the total number of withdrawals has not changed significantly. However, the right tail of the distribution of total withdrawals has been largely eliminated except for a few cases of hardship withdrawals (where students can accumulate more than 4 withdrawals). So the policy has been successful in preventing a small number of students from accumulating many withdrawals. At the time this policy was instituted, we had noted that most students do not withdraw from more than 4 courses and we guessed that the policy would not affect most students. That would explain why the total number of withdrawals has remained constant; although I think we all hoped that the number of withdrawals would decrease.

We have worked considerably in clarifying the withdrawal policy:

1. Hardship withdrawals are allowed under the policy, and the Office of Student Services is able to process hardship withdrawals from courses only in the semester that the hardship occurs. Any hardship withdrawals requested after the semester has concluded must be appealed to the Educational Affairs Committee.
2. Once the withdrawal deadline has passed, instructors cannot change a grade from WF to WP (or any other grade). After that deadline, a grade change becomes an appeal of university policy and must be appealed to the Educational Affairs Committee. An instructor can change a WF to a WP (as a grade change) only before the withdrawal deadline.

We are also working with the Registrar to help make the withdrawal process clearer for students.

An issue has surfaced that we believe is related to withdrawals and that is the increased use of the "incomplete" grade. We would remind faculty that the "I" grade is reserved for a student completing a *substantial* part of a course and should not be assigned as a substitute for a withdrawal.

The EAC also discussed the ruling at Georgia State that they will allow course credit for MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). We were concerned that this might mean that UGA would be required to accept MOOC course credit because of BOR rules on the transfer of credits among USG schools. We were assured that even if students at Georgia State were given course credit, those credits would not transfer to the University of Georgia because Admissions notes the ultimate origin of transfer credits and we do not accept credit from MOOC's.

Finally, we have been studying changes in the % of students graduating with honors. Since 1999, the % of UGA students graduating with honors has almost doubled, increasing from 20.3% to 39.5%. That trend is true at the college level. During that time period, the incoming SAT scores of first-year students have increased 4%. The EAC has begun looking into possible changes to graduation honors criteria and we welcome your input.

"Respectfully submitted,



Rodney Mauricio, Ph.D.
Chair, Educational Affairs Committee