



# The University of Georgia

University Council  
Athens, Georgia 30602

## EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – 2015-2016

Dr. Rodney Mauricio, Arts and Sciences, Chair

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences - Dr. Jean Williams-Woodward  
(also representing Forestry and Natural Resources)

Arts and Sciences - Dr. Roxanne Ederle  
Dr. Mark Farmer

Business – Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

Education – Dr. Laura Bierema

Environment and Design – Mr. David Spooner  
(also representing Public Health, Social Work, and Ecology)

Family and Consumer Sciences - Dr. Andy Carswell

Journalism and Mass Communication – Dr. Jeong-Yeob Han

Public and International Affairs – Dr. Andy Owsiak

Veterinary Medicine – Dr. Shannon Holmes  
(also representing Pharmacy, Law, and Engineering)

Provost's Representative – Dr. Rahul Shrivastav

Undergraduate Student Representative – Mr. Houston Gaines

Graduate/Professional Student Representative – Ms. Audrey Lewis

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The Educational Affairs Committee is a 13-member standing committee of University Council, with faculty representing each school and college. The membership includes the Provost and representative of both undergraduate and graduate students. The EAC considers and recommends educational policies to the University Council. Most importantly, faculty of the EAC hear all student petitions on academic matters on a monthly basis.

The Educational Affairs Committee last met as a full committee on March 28, 2016. Our most important item of business was electing a new chair. I am pleased to announce that Dr. Jean Williams-Woodward, of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, was elected the Chair for the 2016-17 academic year.

I have served as Chair of EAC since 2011 and this July retire from the committee, with tenure. So I hope that you will indulge my looking back in this report over my 5 years as chair.

Since my last report to University Council, the Petition Subcommittee met five times and reviewed 168 appeals. Of these appeals, 142 were approved and 57 were denied. During my time as chair of EAC and thus Chair of the Petitions Subcommittee (with 2 more meetings scheduled until Jean takes over), we have heard 1321 appeals, approving 913 and denying 408.

The Petitions Subcommittee is, in my opinion, by far, the most challenging committee assignment at the University of Georgia. This committee wrestles every month with passion, empathy and judgment to uphold University standards while dealing with the really profound issues that some of our students face. I have lost more hours of sleep – and endured numerous nightmares -- over these decisions than I care to recall. I have seen more graphic crime scene descriptions, medically explicit photos and details of sexual assault and drug dependence than I thought possible 5 years ago from my office in the Life

Sciences Building. Every member of this committee can share her exhausting experiences serving on this subcommittee.

Some have called for these academic decisions to be moved outside the sphere of faculty governance. First, given that these are, at their base, academic appeals, faculty must remain in charge of these decisions. But serving on this committee has made me a far far more empathetic faculty member and that reason alone should suffice for keeping faculty at the core of this process.

The EAC considers and recommends educational policies to the University Council. Over the past 5 years, EAC has made significant changes to policies governing (1) write-in courses, (2) course challenges, (3) drop/add and (4) withdrawals. We have made a large number of procedural changes that have significantly streamlined and made the appeals process much more transparent, particularly with respect to graduate students, hardship withdrawals, academic renewal, and Title IX compliance. And we have moved to enhance academic rigor by raising the bar, at least a tiny bit higher, for graduation honors.

Although EAC has had its successes, we continue to face challenges that will need to be addressed at the committee level and at this Council, including issues dealing with (1) the number of retroactive hardship withdrawals, (2) write-in course policy implementation, (3) grading issues, including the misuse of the incomplete grade and the non-reporting of grades by instructors, (4) the course repeat policy and (5) continued monitoring of graduation honors.

Part of the landscape of challenges in higher education is the moving targets across administrative levels. This leads me to our first action item: a revision of UGA's Academic Renewal Policy to be in agreement with revised Board of Regents policy. The only substantive change to current UGA policy is that the revised policy will allow students to complete coursework at other institutions prior to returning to UGA and receiving Academic Renewal status.

#### COMMITTEE MOVES FOR A VOTE ON REVISION TO ACADEMIC RENEWAL POLICY

The final challenge that EAC encounters each year is the approval of the academic calendar. As I have noted at every one of my reports to Council over the past years, the construction of the academic calendar is increasingly constrained by a variety of factors. Without some significant action by EAC and this Council, the calendar will continue to be a challenge.

This leads to our second action item – the approval of the 2017-2018 academic calendar.

#### COMMITTEE MOVES FOR A VOTE ON THE 2017-18 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rodney Mauricio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rodney" and last name "Mauricio" clearly legible.

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