

Ad Hoc Faculty Admissions Committee Report

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Committee Members

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Background

The Admissions Task Force was formed in the spring of 2014 in response to sentiments that were expressed regarding greater involvement by faculty in the admissions process. The Faculty Admissions Task Force determined that much more work and time was needed than what could be accomplished in the five short weeks they were given. The Ad Hoc Faculty Admissions Committee was formed in response to this.

During the 2014-15 academic year, the Ad Hoc Faculty Admissions Committee met as a committee on approximately seven occasions. This included meetings with Karl Smith and Alice Few, as well as standalone meetings.

Recommendations

Based on these meetings and the research conducted by members of the committee, the following recommendations are made:

1. **The Ad Hoc Faculty Admissions Committee should become a regular committee for two primary reasons:**
 - a. A significant amount of work still needs to be done to understand any underlying issues with those students we are admitting and possible solutions to address these issues, and
 - b. There must be a mechanism for faculty to hear and make recommendations with respect to appeals of admission denials.

2. **Any future committee that is established with a similar purpose to the Faculty Admissions Task Force and/or the Ad Hoc Faculty Admissions Committee must have access to data sets necessary for proper data analysis.**

Meetings with Alice Few, UW Tacoma's Institutional Research person, went well and there appeared to be a mutual understanding of what data was needed. However, we still have not received the requested data since our initial request in November of 2014 despite several follow-up requests.

This data and the subsequent analyses of it are absolutely essential if we are to truly understand indicators of success and failure for the unique population of UW Tacoma.

3. **Echoing the report from the Faculty Admissions Task Force, it is imperative that our admissions policy results in our admitting those who we can support and denying admission to those who we are not able to support.**

We acknowledge the unique role that UW Tacoma plays in our local community, including providing access to higher education opportunities at a top-notch university. However, this must be counter-balanced by appropriate resources and support mechanisms to ensure that those less prepared to be successful with the rigor of a university education are able to ultimately achieve success.

These resources and support mechanisms require a true commitment in terms of time and financial resources. However, anecdotal evidence from several other universities that have faced similar challenges has shown that such a commitment can lead to profound successes. This includes significantly increasing the 4-year and 6-year

graduation rates, a metric of great importance as we continue to grow and attract high-caliber students locally, nationally, and internationally.

- 4. Continuing with the above recommendation and motivated by the successes of other universities facing similar challenges, we recommend that UW Tacoma implement the following programs:**
- a. Continue to perform holistic reviews of applications.
 - b. Improve summer programs for entering students with an identified weakness. For example, students who have scored below 400 on the reading/writing portion of the SAT should be required to take an English composition course, while those who are not ready for college-level math should be required to take a math course.
 - c. Acknowledge that under-prepared students will not be able to graduate in the traditional 4 years, so arrange their financial aid packages to reflect this.
 - d. After the data to analyze the fate of entering students with various levels of preparation has become available and has been analyzed, share the results with UWT faculty and discuss the appropriateness of our current automatic admittance thresholds (GPA = 2.7 and SAT sections > 400).

The documents “Best Practices in Admissions Decisions” and “Toward a Taxonomy of The Best Practices in the Admissions Decision-Making Process,” both reports coming out of College Board conferences on Admission Models, were formative reading for our group. These documents identify two key elements of the admissions process which seem relevant to UWT. The first is that the admissions process must be built on a broad consensus across the institution, and the second is that the process should be flexible and subject to evaluation, review, and revision. The admissions office at UWT is currently practicing the second element, as applications not admissible under the fixed cut-off criteria undergo a holistic review. In addition, this year the admissions committee has used the ad-hoc admissions committee to evaluate contested applications. The first element, building a broad consensus around admissions thresholds, should be addressed after data is made available and has been analyzed.