

COMMITTEE: Admissions & Retention Policies

MEETING DATE: 5 December 2016

PERSON PRESIDING: Jay Newhard

REGULAR MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Amy Frank, Johannes Hattingh, Gregory Lapicki, Jay Newhard, Daniel Shouse, Beth Thompson,

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Fletcher, Jane Geissler, Amber Thomas, Trey Nance (rep. of student body)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lori Lee

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Minutes approved unanimously.

Agenda Item: Proposed change to transfer student admissions policy

Discussion: Committee has been asked to consider a change to transfer student admission policy. Current policy requires a minimum GPA of 2.5 and that students be in good standing at their previous institution. Some students are admitted with a GPA below 2.5 after a "holistic" review by admissions, but very few students with a GPA below 2.5 apply due to the stated requirements. Current policy was put in place by an Executive Council order as a mechanism to manage enrollment in response to an unusually large freshman population in 2008. Prior to 2009, the transfer admissions policy only required students to be in "good standing" and there was no minimum GPA requirement.

Fletcher summarized the rationale for the proposed change, although he noted that it is unclear if this change will require faculty senate approval since the current policy did not go through the faculty senate, but is the result of an Executive Council order. ECU's strategic plan calls for 5% growth in transfer student population per year; this will be exceedingly difficult with current GPA requirements. Approximately half of the schools in the UNC system have a 2.0 GPA requirement, and ECU is at a competitive disadvantage for these students. It is not feasible to increase undergraduate student population by admitting more freshman as this population is limited by the number of beds available (because freshman are required to live on campus).

Under the proposed policy, not all students with GPA > 2.0 would be admitted. Those with a GPA < 2.3 will be subjected to a "holistic" review. The committee inquired about why a GPA of 2.3 was chosen as the threshold for holistic review; the response was that there had to be a cut-off and 2.3 was a good compromise. The committee also inquired about adopting the 2.0 minimum GPA requirement, but subject applications with 2.0 < GPA < 2.5 to holistic review. There were concerns that this would be too labor intensive and impractical. Fletcher noted that it is unclear what the pool of students between 2.0-2.5 GPA would look like or how many applicants would likely fall in this category, because most of them are not applying. Although ECU does admit some transfer students with a GPA below 2.5 following a holistic review, since the posted requirements are that the minimum GPA is 2.5, few students apply with a GPA lower than 2.5.

Jane Geissler noted that there is a trade-off between admission requirements and graduation rates. Since more stringent requirements were put in place (2009), graduation rates of transfer students has increased relative to the native population. In contrast, at UNC-Charlotte, which has a 2.0 GPA

requirement, graduation rates of transfer students have remained constant, suggesting that the more stringent requirements have led to increased graduation rates among transfers.

Geissler also noted that just because a student is admitted to ECU does not guarantee admission into a major. Many majors require 2.5 GPA to be admitted, and relatively few majors are available to transfer students with a GPA < 2.5. There is a concern that some of these students will be funneled into University Studies degree.

Fletcher proposed a motion to adopt the policy as outlined (2.0). Motion passed: 6 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstained.

Others on the committee suggested a 2.25 minimum GPA as compromise. Committee noted that at 140 credit hours students have to pay 1.5x tuition, and that lowering standards might lead to more students hitting this threshold and potentially leaving without a degree, or with more debt.

Committee also felt policy should be tried for limited number of years (5 years?) and then re-evaluated with data about who was admitted and how they did. Also request annual report to faculty committee about admitted transfer students and impact of new admissions policy.

Action Taken: Jay Newhard will report to faculty senate.

Assigned additional duties to: Jane Geisser will compile a list of majors available to students with a 2.0 GPA and distribute to the committee.

NEXT MEETING: 9 January, 2107

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:

1. Independent study contracts