

COMMITTEE: Admissions & Retention Policies

MEETING DATE: November 6, 2017

PERSON PRESIDING: Jay Newhard

REGULAR MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Daniel Shouse, Gregory Lapicki, Beth Thompson, Guglielmo Fucci, and Jay Newhard

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Fletcher, Jayne Geissler, Amy Frank, and Stephanie Michelle Mortensen

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: Approval of the minutes of the September and October meetings

Action Taken: Jay Newhard moved that the minutes of the September and October meetings be approved by the committee. The minutes were unanimously approved

Agenda Item: Discussion about English Language Requirements for Undergraduate Admission

Discussion: In mid-July, Provost Ron Mitchelson approved recommendations to reduce ECU's English language requirements for undergraduate admissions from 80 to 71 in the TOEFL and from 6.5 to 6.0 on the IELTS. This action was taken in order to move ECU's required TOEFL and IELTS scores from one of the highest to the median level among our peer institutions. The committee discussed the above recommendation by Provost Ron Mitchelson. A few concerns were expressed about students that might enroll at the University and have poor English skills. It was pointed out that the University does not offer many options to help foreign students who might have problems with the language. However while the first semester in school could be challenging for foreign students with poor English skills, they usually do much better in the subsequent semesters.

Action Taken: Fucci moved that the committee concur with the Provost's recommendation to reduce ECU's English language requirements for undergraduate admissions. Newhard seconded. The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Agenda Item: Discussion about policies on final examination retake.

Discussion: A request has been made from one college to allow graduating students to re-take the final in the following situation: A student is passing the course prior to the final. However, receiving a failing grade on the final prevented the student from passing the course. The committee was tasked with discussing a policy which would allow students in the aforementioned situation to retake the exam. The committee agreed that faculty members already make decisions on whether to allow a student to retake a final exam. The introduction of a policy could potentially create problems of academic freedom and it might be vulnerable to abuse by the students. The committee agreed that a decision regarding a final exam retake should not be a matter for a policy but it should be left to the individual faculty member. The committee decided that it requires more information about the matter and Jayne Geissler will ask for clarifications to the college that brought up the issue.

Action Taken: Newhard tabled the issue for future meetings when additional information will be available.

Agenda Item: Discussion about University excused absences and student absence policy

Discussion: The committee summarized the discussion it had with John Stiller and Lynn Roeder about student absence policies relating to medical absences. A few concerns were raised about how to handle situations with students who might miss a large number of classes due to illness. It was pointed out that thanks to the new policy faculty members would be relieved from the burden of making a decision on the gravity of a student's medical emergency for the purpose of excusing absences from class. The committee also discussed the possibility to make broader recommendations. In fact, according to the current student manual a death of an immediate family member (parents and siblings) would grant a student a University excused absence. The committee discussed the possibility of adding grandparents to the list of immediate family members. Newhard pointed out that the committee would need to decide where the line has to be drawn between immediate and not immediate family members.

Action Taken: Newhard tabled the issue for a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

NEXT MEETING: December 4, 2017