Year-end Report of Activity 2015-2016

Committee on Undergraduate Admissions Standards

1. The major focus of the committee this year continued to be the ongoing study of the success of transfer students that come to UM-Flint. While we were prepared to give a recommendation last year, the then pending strategic enrollment management work caused us to pause and wait for those results. The committee is now again close to making a recommendation.

2. Another topic arising towards the end of the year was the English language requirements for incoming international students.

3. The committee met twice this year – January 8, 2016 and March 24, 2016.

4. At the January meeting, Brad Maki reported the findings of the SEM recruitment team. Aimi Moss presented the goals of the SEM retention team. There were two questions on the table at the end of the meeting: Did this new information changed our thoughts about the recommendation we wanted to make? Do we wanted to make specific recommendations for those students transferring in less than 25 credits as their success is more similar to FTIAC (first time in any college) students than other transfer students?

5. After the January meeting, Jessica Kelts and Fawn Skarsten discussed the need to have rules about student member participation with potentially sensitive data. Students do not have the same confidentiality training as faculty and it was a potential security risk. The issue was escalated to Chris Waters and Provost Knerr.

6. In February, Dan Adams contacted Jessica Kelts about the need for faculty input about standards for English proficiency for incoming international students.
   a. A meeting was not scheduled until March 24 due to numerous conflict of both standing committee members and ex officio members and invited guests.
   b. There were three proposals to be deliberated.
      i. Update the English Language Proficiency requirements for Admission using the SAT or ACT (proposed SAT 480 in critical reading or ACT 30 in combined English writing to count as proficient).
      ii. Revision of the minimum level accepted from ILSC Education Language Schools from level A2 to level I4.
      iii. Revision of the minimum level accepted from VGC Language School from level 8 to level 6.

7. There were several invited guests for the March 24th meeting and much discussion of the proposed changes.
   a. Beth Manning (HR) spoke first about our confidentiality concerns with student members. We still had this discussion for future use even though neither of the student members showed up for this meeting. It was determined that this committee only examines aggregate data so there should be no security risk as long as the students are not allowed to take the data to review later.
   b. Patrice Campbell and Anna Eddy (both from the International Center) were present to explain the proposals. They explained that the SAT and ACT tests were a good way to gauge English language skills in International students. They also explained that the scales for the ILSC and VGC scales had recently changed and thus we needed to adjust our admissions requirements.
c. Emily Feuerherm (CAS, Linguistics, Bridge program) was there to speak about the bridge program that helps International students with language skills upon arrival here.

d. There was much discussion among the faculty present about the difficulties they had teaching international students, mostly because of the inability of the students to communicate, understand instructions, and write in English. Emily Feuerherm spoke to some of the linguistics courses to help these students, but they aren’t required of all incoming students.

e. The faculty members in general seemed skeptical about lowering the standards for English language proficiency for the second two proposals. A comparison of all of these measures to scores on the more widely recognized TOEFL and IELTS tests was provided, but Brian Blume requested a comparison of TOEFL scores accepted at the Michigan public institutions be provided as well before we voted on these measures.

f. The meeting adjourned with the provision that a survey would be sent out by Jessica Kelts after the TOEFL comparisons were received.

8. After receiving the TOEFL score comparison, a survey ballot was sent to the faculty members.

   a. Four of the five faculty members voted. The first measure concerning the ACT and SAT scores passed by a margin of three to one. For the other two measures, two faculty abstained, one voted for, and one voted against, so we didn’t have majority.

   b. Faculty members were particularly uncomfortable with the fact that our TOEFL acceptance scores were so much lower than UM-Dearborn, our sister institution. They were unwilling to vote for a proposal that lowered our standards on the ILSC and VGC scales to a level as low as proposed.

   c. Brian Blume proposed a revision of both of the second measures to the level in between (level A1 for ILSC and level 7 for VGC). Another survey ballot was circulated, four out of the five faculty members voted, and they passed these two revised proposals unanimously.

9. Jessica Kelts and Darryl Baird finished their terms of service for this committee at the end of April 2016. Jie Song was elected to the vacant CAS position and Margie Murray-Wright was elected to the At-Large position in the yearly election.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Kelts, Chair