

University Senate Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Annual Report for 1996-97
Overview

The members of the committee decided to concentrate their initial efforts on determining a university policy toward home schooled students. After researching policies adopted by other colleges and universities, the committee advocated an admissions policy that was designed to facilitate the admission of home school students. The primary consideration for this decision was the generally high academic performance of home schooled students. The guidelines adopted are detailed in the longer version of this report, and are designed to provide a rough similarity in academic standards for home school and their contemporaries in the FTIAC population.

It is the sense of the Director of Admissions and the members of the committee that the number of home schooled students will increase. It will be important to monitor the performance of home schooled students at Oakland University, particularly since the regulations concerning home schooling in Michigan are quite lax.

As part of the discussion of home schooled students, the committee discussed the creation of a policy regarding applicants who do not pass mandated state competency exams. The committee did not adopt a formal set of recommendations concerning the admission of students who had not passed such texts. However, it was the sense of the committee that those students should not be admitted until some community college courses were successfully completed.

The problems of enrollment management and retention are tightly linked and will inevitably be addressed simultaneously. However, some fundamental difficulties exist in dealing with these areas. First is the absence of clear data concerning the student body of Oakland University. We have had no means of gathering student information in a systematic fashion. Recent adaptations to the student information system may alleviate this problem. Still, we have no means of determining why students leave the university. As a result, enrollment management plans must be based on conjecture. Administrators are extremely reluctant to fund programs if data analyses are not available. Second is the tendency of the university to see enrollment management/retention issues as concerning only FTIACs. Our student body also includes large numbers of transfer and returning students, who face barriers quite different from those of FTIACs.

Once recruited, students can be held to the university only through the combined efforts of student services and academic programs. Analyses of successful retention efforts at institutions similar to Oakland indicate that successful retention programs are based on faculty involvement. If students have high levels of contact with faculty outside the classroom, they are more likely to complete undergraduate degrees. Groups of faculty should discuss mechanisms for improving faculty-student interaction. Pilot programs should be supported by the university to implement faculty ideas in this area. In addition, members of the faculty should be encouraged to utilize their professional expertise in evaluating the problem of student retention.

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At the beginning of the academic year the members determined that the committee should provide a forum for discussion of critical problems facing the Directors of Admissions and Financial Aid. It was hoped that the committee would foster improved communications among administrators, faculty, and students.

The members of the committee defined three basic areas of concern for the academic year. They were as follows:

Establish guidelines for the admission of those applicants who have received home schooling as well as those applicants who have not passed state standard examinations

Develop a policy of enrollment management

Develop a policy of recruitment for retention

It was determined that the issue of home schooling applicants would be addressed first. After researching policies adopted by other colleges and universities, the committee advocated an admissions policy that was designed to facilitate the admission of home school students. The primary consideration for this decision was the generally high academic performance of home schooled students. The guidelines adopted were:

No student should be admitted to the university before he/she is sixteen years old.

Students who score 20 or higher on the ACT should be admitted. (The national average ACT score is normally between 20 and 21.)

Students who do not receive sufficiently high scores on the ACT have one of the following options:

They may take one semester at a community college, carrying at least twelve credits in courses which would transfer as university general education requirements. Then they may reapply to the university, using their performance in those courses as a credible demonstration of college-level ability. (Applicants with high school degrees who are not admitted have a similar option, with a requirement of twenty-four credits at a community college.)

They may apply to the university's AOP program. Those admitted to the ALP may enter the university under that program's guidelines. (ALP requires that applicants fall in at least two of the following categories--low income, handicapped, or first generation college student.

If at some future time the university can find an accurate table of equivalencies for GED and ACT scores, the Director of Admissions would be able to use GED scores in lieu of ACT scores.

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