

University Senate Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Summary--1997-98

Members: Lee Anderson (*ex officio*; Director of Financial Aid); Catarina Barajas (Student Congress); Brian Connery (Committee Chair, Department of English); Robert Filer (Student Congress); Lynn Hockenberger (Director of Learning Resources); Robert E. Johnson (*ex officio*; Associate Vice-President of Enrollment Management); Mary E. Mittelstaed (School of Nursing); Barbara A. Theisen (Department of Accounting); Satish Walia (Department of Biology)

At the beginning of the year, the committee identified three goals for the academic year, as follows: 1.) Obtain Senate approval for policies on admission and financial aid for home-schooled students, as developed by the previous year's Committee. 2.) Review and, if desirable, amend the current requirement for international students of a score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language. 3.) Begin consideration of issues of enrollment management, particularly as detailed in the Student Success Plan.

The Senate approved the Committee's proposal on admission of home-schooled students at its final meeting of the academic year, April 30, 1998. The Committee's proposal regarding financial aid for home-schooled students has been re-submitted to the Senate Steering Committee with the hope that it will appear on the Senate agenda as soon as possible during the next academic year.

In January, 1998, the Committee reviewed the current requirement that international students score a 550 or better on the TOEFL. While it was clear that lowering the TOEFL requirement might allow Oakland to recruit international students more competitively and thus help foster diversity in the student body, it was also clear that Oakland does not currently have available the resources for language training that would be necessary in order to support these students. The Committee consequently decided to leave the requirement as it is.

In its subsequent meetings, the Committee considered issues of recruitment and retention. These discussions were largely stymied by a lack of information. Oakland does not currently have the necessary information necessary to assess why our retention rate is a below-average 41%. Are we recruiting the wrong students? Are we failing to provide appropriate support services for those students we admit? Or do students leave Oakland for reasons beyond our control (e.g., job transfers, transfers to schools for programs unavailable here)? The Committee would like to see a study done of those students who leave Oakland without graduating.

As the Committee considered this issue, it could not decide what body would be appropriate to undertake such a study and considered proposing an *ad hoc* Senate Committee. Issues of enrollment management--and particularly the issue of retention--involve all members of the University community. Because retention efforts may have curricular implications, because efforts aimed at growth and retention need to be balanced with efforts to maintain academic rigor, and because faculty are crucial to retention, dialogue between representatives from the faculty and from student services regarding issues of retention is essential. At its penultimate meeting, the Committee considered that its own charge had not been updated when the Office of Admissions had been changed to the Office of Admissions and Enrollment Management. Considering whether or not to propose amending its own charge, in order to expand its purview to matters of enrollment management, will be one of the first orders of business for next year.

In the course of the Committee's dialogue with the Senate this year, two other issues were raised that might be considered next year: 1.) The proposal for admission of home-schooled students originally contained a provision for a minimum age of 16. This provision was eliminated because of issues of equity, i.e., it imposed a requirement on home-schooled students that was not imposed on traditionally schooled students. The Senate, however, indicated that it might be receptive to a policy that established a minimum age for *all* applicants. 2.) In considering the possibility of admitting a home-schooled student primarily on the basis of a single (ACT) test score, the Senate wondered whether our admission requirements for traditionally schooled students might be similarly one-dimensional. It was suggested that the Committee might look into our admission requirements with an eye to assuring that Oakland can be reasonably confident of a student's success before admitting that student. Such considerations would be consonant with the current Committee's concern that a more thorough policy of enrollment management be developed.