

Committee on Admission and Financial Aid Minutes - December 1, 2008

Present: Seth Allen, Sig Barber, Gayatri Jayal '11, Charity Porotesano '12, Vida Praitis, Mark Schneider, Aki Shibuya '11, and Paula Smith.

Update on Admission

Allen reported that the economy may be affecting applications. As of December 1, submitted applications are down by 30% and have been tracking downward all fall. The downward trend is being reported by nearly all big name institutions and private liberal arts colleges as well.

The number of applications *started* is about 30% ahead of last year. Early Decision applications are up 10%.

Role of the Admission Board

This discussion topic has been on the committee's agenda for the past two years. The primary question is whether or not this is an appropriate use of faculty time. The board reviewed 100 files for Fall 2008. Five to ten years ago, the board reviewed 200-300 files.

Files going to the board:

- have not yet received a decision (admit, deny, wait list)
- All have been reviewed by staff at least once, but more likely, twice.
- Ratings typically fall in the 23-29 range.

What should be the role of the board?

- Great learning experience for faculty but do they think their input makes a difference?
- Is the role to educate staff readers on other criteria (the faculty perspective)?
- Is the value in making admission decisions? Is there data to support this?
- What is the difference between the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid and do they ever meet together?
- Student membership consideration (would have to be senior)

Which files should the board review?

- strong candidates but where there are questions regarding the application
- files that help create an awareness of issues from the faculty perspective

Suggestions:

- Put together a couple of scenarios/proposals on how we proceed with the board and present to previous board members.
- Board and Committee should meet as a group.
- Board members should serve on the Committee prior to their membership on the board.
- Combine the Board and the Committee
 - policy work during the fall semester
 - application review during the early spring

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- sub-committee of the Admission/Financial Aid committee is created and charged with reading applications
- Consider asking former tutorial professors to serve on Board.
- Reduce the number of hours in the short term and gather statistical information to drive future discussions.
- Wrap-up conversation with board regarding which files were valuable (or not) to read.
- Invite staff member(s) from admission or committee to sit in on board meeting
- Regarding students on the board: upperclassmen (seniors only)
 - consulting role only
 - possibly only those cases that are most disputed

Noted:

Current structure (board and committee) gives more faculty a view of the application process.

Resolution:

1. Gather data this year on the number of decisions the board changes.
2. Draft a document proposing alternatives roles/scope of work for the board and poll former board members about the ideas.
 - a. send ideas to Allen
 - b. submit idea document to committee first for comment
3. Hold a joint meeting with committee and board this spring (or previous year's board with incoming committee)

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted: C. Newport