Admissions Committee Report

Senator and Admission Committee Chair Clint Richards first provided a brief description of what the committee does for new senators unfamiliar with the committee’s work. Chair Richards said the committee could be called the Alternative or Alternate Admissions Committee because the committee’s role is to review the applications of applicants who don’t meet the university’s grade requirements (B average in core courses) through an alternative process that considers both cognitive and non-cognitive factors. The factors considered are described in a general way by the Board of Regents as:

a) A combination of test scores and grade point average that indicate potential for success
b) Special talents and/or abilities such as, but not limited to, the visual or performing arts or athletic abilities
c) Other evidence of potential for success
d) Improvement in the high school record
e) Overcoming adversity or special hardship
f) Other special circumstances.

The committee has performed its role for a long time by judging the above factors through an examination of transcripts, test scores, personal statement explaining the circumstances surrounding the applicant’s academic performance, and two letters of recommendation, preferably from teachers, counselors, or officials who can address their academic abilities. The result has been reasonably high retention rates, and as the Provost noted in the Senate’s last meeting, the process resulted in the admission of alternate admits (AAs) in the fall of 2008 who had a higher retention rate for spring 2009 than the rest of the fall freshman class.

Chair Richards explained that in the fall of 2007 the Admissions Committee identified some objective standards that were based on the Board of Regent’s criteria and that the committee thought could reasonably be used to automatically admit students meeting the standards without the committee’s full review. This move was designed to increase the efficiency of the committee’s work after the Board of Regents decided in the summer of 2007 to more than double the target number of alternate admits in order to maintain diversity as grade standards rose and to allow more admissions based on factors other than just grades. The committee still does full reviews for 100s of alternate admission applicants, but over half are now admitted under the following “automatic criteria”:

**AA1** = Applicant has completed high school and is fully admissible (BOR) per HS record with 6 or fewer college credits less than a 2.5
**AA2** = Applicant has earned at least a 2.3 on 24 or more transferable college credits & at least a 2.5 for the most recent semester
**AA3** = Applicant has a 1040 SAT or 22 ACT

**AA4** = Applicant has at least a 2.5 overall GPA & a 400 Verbal SAT or 17 English ACT

**AA4A** = (this category is independent of AA4). Applicant is registered with a CAEO program and applies with a 2.5 Core GPA in the minimum Core i.e., has at least 10 Core credits at a 2.5 at the time of application.

**AU** = Applicant meets BOR GPA but is deficient 1/2 to 1 core credit

In the committee’s fall report to the Senate, Committee Chair Richards promised data on the success of AAs by category in early spring, and said that the committee would decide based on that data whether to continue with the categories. Data on retention have now been analyzed and a report provided to the committee by Angelina Hill, Ph.D., Director of Assessment and Policy Analysis for Enrollment and Student Services. According to the report, 97.2% of all fall 2008 freshman admits were enrolled in spring 2009. Alternate admits, by comparison, had an overall retention rate of 92.9%. While that rate is lower than the rate for all freshman students, the two groups are under different rules governing their admission status in their second semester. Only alternate admits lose their admission status when their first semester GPA is less than 2.0. Retention rates by the automatic categories and by full committee review (AC) are described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA1</td>
<td>95.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA3</td>
<td>94.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA4</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA4A</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>93.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>97.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The committee was pleased with those retention rates that were above 90%, but was about the retention rate of only 81% for category AA4A. However, it decided to continue using AA4A for now since the sample size of only 21 was considered too small to be reliable.

In addition to continuing its review of applicants, the committee this spring has been discussing ways to improve the process, what it does, and what others do in the process. Many are involved. This spring, we have

1) suggested changes in the composition of the committee which were adopted by the Senate;
2) addressed how to make information more accessible to prospective applicants without discouraging or delaying those who meet the automatic alternative criteria and therefore don’t need to go through a full committee review; and
3) looked at the Admissions website as it relates to Alternate Admissions, and made some suggestions for changes that were in fact made.
After discussion, the committee also approved the following:

a) Eng 101E will be accepted as part of the required load for alternate admits if the committee is provided the student’s first semester grade. That grade will then be included in calculating the student’s GPA.

b) The committee approved two new automatic AA categories:
   1. Students who meet one of the other automatic AA high school categories and have more than 6 but fewer than 24 college credits with a 2.5 transfer GPA;
   2. Students who have an undergraduate degree from an NSHE institution with less than a 2.5 transfer GPA.

c) New AA admits will continue to enter on probation and thus must earn 6 UNLV credits or more at a 2.0 cumulative GPA the first semester in order to maintain their admission status. The committee believes that mandatory advising should assure that AA students are fully aware of this probationary status.

d) If an AA admit does not meet the 2.0 cumulative GPA requirement or does not earn 6 credits, then the student may appeal. The student will need to prepare a personal statement explaining the circumstances of the GPA or credit deficiencies and the committee will need to see the transcript from the first semester. These documents are to be given to the Appeal Committee Liaison.

e) If a student is admitted by the Admissions Committee for one semester and does not attend that semester, he/she may update their file for a future semester as long as the student does not have any new work. If the student has new work, then he/she will have to go through committee again.

f) A student who is denied by the committee may not reapply to the committee for the same semester. However, the student may update his or her file for the next semester and go through committee again, preferably with a new personal statement and new work.