

## Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

3:30 PM, 501 Main Library

11.28.00

A discussion of academic forgiveness policy ensued:

Roughly 20% of all undergraduates have had courses forgiven in the last year.

Apparently Dr. Taaffe was instrumental in putting the forgiveness policy in place, though the Council of Deans.

Don DeSmet notes that in his estimation these numbers and the numbers noted in the Student Involvement Survey are symptoms of a larger problem. Students working outside the university and social obligations all compete with academic obligations.

HES 100 = "Academic Skills" —where a student is acclimatized to study skills. If we take steps to improve what undergraduates learn, it will increase the validity of a University of Alabama degree.

The idea of mid-term grades comes up every now and then. One problem is that grade reports do not go to parents any longer.

We, the faculty, are caught between wanting to serve the people of Alabama, and upgrading academic standards. We need to make a stand for a higher quality academic experience. In this two-tier higher educational system, The University of Alabama is the flagship institution, and the goal is to make UA a better place.

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2.6.01

Dr. Hank Lazer accepted our invitation to present to the committee, and brought with him a draft of proposed changes in academic regulations, including the troublesome forgiveness policy with which we have been wrestling.

A discussion ensued about the short period students have before officially withdrawing from a class. Students say they need more time to decide whether a class is working for them or not. Of course the deeper a student is in the

class, the

more commitment of faculty time has been made, and the spot a student has occupied cannot then be taken by another.

The forgiveness policy seems abused.

The goal here is to improve student retention, particularly during and at the end of the freshman year. The university is at

an all-time six year student graduation rate — 61%. We lose most students between their freshman and sophomore years.

The procedure in reviewing the academic regulations involve the following steps:

A review, to occur now and in the near future, by both the Undergraduate Programs and Services Committee

and its academic affairs subcommittee, and the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee;

A review by assistant and associate deans;

A review by the Council of Dean;

A decision, after review, by the Provost.

Dr. Lazer would like these proposals to be communicated to the Faculty Senate, and for this process to be done within

two months.

The Academic Affairs Committee then made a number of suggestions after reviewing the document. These suggestions

were added to a web file of the original draft version of proposed changes to academic regulations, and posted to the

committee's website for further committee review, before it will be distributed electronically to the Faculty Senate. This

draft with our suggested revisions will be presented to the Steering Committee at its next meeting. The committee

believes there should be a vote at the next Faculty Senate meeting to record the Senate's reaction, in principle, to the

proposals.