
Response to the Report of the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention

Recommendations by the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, May 13, 1997

Endorsed by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, May 20, 1997

The Academic Affairs Committee reviewed the Report of the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention and met with Task Force chair, Dr. Randall Dahl. We focused our attention primarily on Section 6 of the report, "Revise Key Academic Policies." Our report reflects only the responses of the Academic Affairs Committee and has not been presented to the Faculty Senate.

Our Committee feels that the Task Force has done a good job in identifying out-dated policies and suggesting modifications which encourage student retention. Some of these academic policies, however, directly affect faculty and should, therefore, have substantive faculty input before implementation. We suggest that potential changes involving academic issues require a rigorous evaluation from committees composed primarily of faculty, not administrators. Our specific concerns and/or suggestions are as follows:

1. **Plus/minus grading system** - Any changes in the plus/minus grading system must follow the same process that initially put the process in place; a) faculty initiation, b) student and faculty deliberative discussion, and c) vote by the entire faculty. We recommend that any revisiting of this policy be based only on academic concerns not recruitment and retention issues.
2. **Probation and Suspension Policies and Procedures** - The suspension policy put into effect fall of 1996 does not address second suspensions nor the starting GPA of a student returning from a second suspension. We recommend that an appropriate academic committee should standardize university policy on this issue.
3. **Incomplete ("I") grades** - After receiving a written request by a student, the report does not state that the decision to give an "I" is left in the hands of the instructor. We recommend that it be clearly stated as an individual faculty decision with three possible time period for removing the "I" (3 weeks, 1 semester, 12 months) decided by the instructor at the time the "I" is given.
4. **Forgiveness Policy** - The suggestion from the Task Force Report for an institutional course repeat policy

to replace the current Forgiveness policy does not adequately address many of the potential consequences involved in changing this policy. For example, in order to remove an F under the suggested new policy, a student would need to retake the course even though the course might no longer be required if the student had changed majors and/or colleges. We recommend that this issue be more thoroughly investigated by an appropriate faculty committee.

5. **Course and University Withdrawal** - The granting of a "W" rather than a "WP" and/or "WF" is a positive change. However, the specific time periods for withdrawal with no record of the course on the student's transcript need to be evaluated by an appropriate faculty committee.
6. **Recruitment Issues** - The bulk of the Task Force Report was focused on retention issues rather than recruitment. We feel recruitment is a vital concern for the university community and positive steps toward encouraging students to choose The University of Alabama should be an on-going issue with faculty involvement whenever possible.

cc: Dr. Randall Dahl, Chair of the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention

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