May 12, 2003

To: Bruce Sorte
   President, Faculty Senate

From: Academic Requirements Committee
   Sarah Ann Hones, Chair

Re: Standing Rules, Other Concerns
   2002-2003 Academic Year

The Academic Requirements Committee has reviewed our Standing Rules as listed on the OSU website. For the most part, the rules accurately reflect our work. We are concerned about the following line, “Each year, the committee reviews the academic standing of candidates for baccalaureate degrees who are recommended ...” Actually, we do no such review.

We have also taken this opportunity to review the ARC guidelines for student petitions. You and I spoke about this review when we met in November. We have reviewed and redrafted our guidelines (attached) to summarize more exactly how the committee reviews petitions based on OSU’s regulations and rules. During our review process we came up with some concerns regarding petitions we see weekly. These are delineated below.

1. Audits
   Students are permitted to do an audit ONLY in Week 2 of the term. Why is that? We cannot see why audits do not follow the same time line as S/U grading. There is no difference in finances. We find this a difficult rule to enforce because we don’t understand the reasoning behind it and the rule is so limiting.

2. Distance Education/Online Course Work
   We see many petitions from students asking to drop these courses. They argue that they have not attended the course(s). If the instructor does not have a check-in system to note when a student has “begun” the work, the instructor often says, “The student has done no work.” Our guidelines will then allow a student to drop the course. We would like to see a system established for classes that includes a check-in to the course so that the instructor has a record that the student has, indeed, “begun” the course. We want the instructor to determine attendance. Otherwise, we will continue to see students opt out of online courses they have not completed.

   Distance Education Course Work versus WWW OSU Course Work
   We receive petitions from students who have registered for web courses who later realize, when they receive the distance education tuition bill, that they have registered for a distance education course instead of their intended web course at OSU. At one time, there was a
pop-up box that warned students about the distance education course work. Some sort of distinction is needed so students clearly understand the commitments they are making when they register.

3. Withdrawals

In November, we discussed the problems ARC has faced this year with students asking to receive a late withdrawal from more than one term. The ones we have seen so far have been based on a medical depression and/or physical illness. As a committee, we are concerned with how to handle this “cleaning of student transcripts” over a period of successive terms. So far, we have granted single term withdrawals, but feel this is an area that needs to be addressed.

4. Summer Term

The summer term dates for add/drop and withdrawals are very confusing. Every year we see several students who have missed the deadlines. As a committee, we constantly refer back to the summer term catalog for reference, because we find these dates very confusing, too. We don’t have a better suggestion, but this continues as a concern.

5. Phone Registration

Phone registration continues to cause a few students problems. We recognize the need to have this back up system, particularly for students with disabilities, but want to see student use of the online system as much as possible because of its accuracy and clarity in recording transactions.

6. Slash Courses

The Academic Requirements Committee sees many petitions for change of level from 400 to 500 graduate level. Along with these petitions, we would like to see that the course work accurately reflects the assumed additional work required for a graduate level course. On occasion, instructors have noted that there is no additional work. We would like to see instructors verify the additional work earned for graduate level credit.

Another decision we would like to see is the establishment of a time line/deadline for changing from one level to another. For example, for students who have registered for 400-level course work—At what point can they change that work to 500-level. We have had requests for changes, supported by faculty, after the course is completed and graded. We question that time line. We believe there should be an understanding, before grading takes place, about what level of course work the student is being graded in.
In addition, we note that some 400/500 level course work does not share the same numbering system. For example, 499 and 571. This is very confusing and suggests that the course work may be different for each.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns and committee notes.

cc: Bruce Rettig, Graduate School  
    Distance Education Office  
    Barbara Balz, Registrar