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Office of the Provost

DATE: May 10, 1993

TO: Ronald Horwitz, Acting Vice-President for Academic Affairs

FROM: Charles B. Lindemann, Senate Standing Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid.
Charles B. Lindemann

CONCERNING: The Yearly Report for 1992-1993 on the activities of the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee.

The Committee roster for winter semester included:

Jerry W. Rose, Admissions
Lee Anderson, Financial Aid
Darisha Davis, University Student Congress
Janice Fries, School of Nursing
Sheila Jacobs, School of Business Administration
Charles Lindemann, Department of Biological Sciences
Ann Sandoval, Admissions
Omari Thomas, University Student Congress
Kourtney Thomas, Special Programs

As you know, Jerry Rose was chairperson for most of the academic year, but resigned in March. I assumed the Chair for the last month, and Ann Sandoval took Jerry's place as the representative from the Admissions Office.

The following is a synopsis of the 7 recommendations to the Senate from the Standing Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid.

1. We recommend the appointment of an additional faculty member to the Standing Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid.

I held a final meeting in April to formulate the report with the Committee. Janice Fries could not participate because she was on medical leave for the winter semester. The student representatives were not active participants (one attended one meeting in the fall, and no students attended the winter meetings). Consequently, the actual Committee composition is not accurately reflected by the Committee roster. The representatives from Admissions and Financial Aid are ex-officio, non-voting members, and therefore only 2 or 3 voting members were present at most of the meetings throughout the 92-93 academic year. It is for this reason that the Committee is requesting that an additional faculty member be added. This would increase the odds that at least 3 voting members would attend each meeting, in spite of occasional, unavoidable absences.

2. We recommend that the University authorize the making of a recruiting video for the use of Oakland's recruiters.
3. We recommend that the Admissions Office budget be expanded specifically to fund recruiting trips to the Cleveland and Toledo metropolitan areas.
4. We additionally recommend that the differential scholarship program be expanded for out-of-state students.

These recommendations address the needs of our recruiting effort. In President Sandra Packard's vision statement for the University, she expressed an interest in expanding Oakland's appeal to out-state and out-of-state students. These are the students who live on-campus and contribute to the resident student atmosphere. While a major overhauling of our recruiting and financial aid direction should await the outcome of the University planning process, some modest efforts should be undertaken immediately to improve out-state and out-of-state recruitment. Production of an up-to-date recruiting video for use in high schools should be authorized. This reasonable, modest request is necessary to remain competitive in the current higher education market. Recruiting trips to the Toledo and Cleveland areas will serve as a pilot program to test the feasibility of attracting out-of-state students to Oakland. Additionally, to optimize the chances of a successful program, the differential scholarship program should be expanded to defray tuition expenses for qualified out-of-state students.

5. We recommend that Oakland University use the unadjusted average high school G.P.A. when reporting the average high school G.P.A. of Oakland students to outside agencies.
6. We recommend retaining the current standards for regular admission to Oakland University.

At the request of the University Senate, the Committee has spent most of its time assessing the performance of students who have recently been admitted to Oakland with high school G.P.A.s at the low end of the range (2.5 - 2.9). We have examined data both on retention of these students, and the G.P.A.s they maintain as students at Oakland. We have also looked at student retention and performance in correlation with composite A.C.T. scores. We have interviewed Monifa Jumanne, Director of Special Programs, to inquire into any services provided for students by that office. Finally, we have examined the correlation between the particular school systems where regularly admitted students originate, and the students' performance (and retention) at Oakland.

The students who are admitted through General admission with high school G.P.A.s in the range of 2.5 to 2.7 appear to do quite well after two semesters at O.U. Their attrition rate (10%) is only slightly higher than the 7.5% rate for all O.U. freshmen students. Their mean G.P.A. is a respectable 2.4, and only 18% are below a 2.0 Oakland G.P.A. following completion of two semesters. These are not disturbing numbers for the very bottom of the regular admissions range (sample size = 202).

Looking at composite A.C.T. scores, and the correlation to performance at O.U. actually revealed a slightly negative (not significant) correlation for the 2.5 to 2.9 students. This

provides little hope for using these scores as an additional discriminator when evaluating students with low G.P.A.s.

On the basis of the information we have obtained from the Admissions Office, we conclude that there is no serious problem with general admission of students with a high school G.P.A. in the 2.5 - 2.9 range, indicating that the criteria for general admission should be maintained as they now stand.

We did observe a correlation between the number of O.U. students in academic difficulty (G.P.A. < 2.0) upon the completion of two semesters, and their high school background. The following schools (or districts) had 30% or more of their graduates with a G.P.A. below 2.0 at O.U. following two semesters: Detroit Public Schools (16 of 32 total), Royal Oak Public Schools (7 of 13 total), Milford Lakeland (3 of 10 total) and Warren Cousino (4 of 10 total). While the sample size from each of the individual schools is too small to be significant, the overall pattern does support the argument that major differences in preparedness do exist between students coming from different schools (or districts).

7. We recommend that Oakland initiate a program to screen the reading proficiency level of newly admitted students.

Implementation of a testing program to assess the reading level of incoming freshmen may be valuable in determining whether students who will experience future scholastic difficulty can be initially identified by their reading proficiency level. Students with A.C.T. reading scores below 18, or those who do not have an A.C.T. reading score, could be notified through the placement testing office that they need to take a reading proficiency test when they come in for placement testing. Currently, the Academic Opportunity Program (run by Special Programs) uses the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (forms F and E) to assess reading skill. Perhaps adoption of this test as a standardized vehicle for reading assessment would be a wise course of action. After a trial period (possibly two years), O.U. could determine whether there is a direct correlation between reading preparedness and academic performance. If a strong correlation is identified, Oakland could use the placement assessment to offer (or even require) remedial reading instruction for students at risk. This might aid in attaining the long term goal of retaining students whose high school education had not adequately prepared them to handle the reading demands of a college curriculum.

We anticipate that next year will be an important year for the University as we embark on the new course emerging from President Packard's planning initiative. Undoubtedly, the Senate and its standing committees will be called upon to implement the recommendations resulting from this planning process. The members of the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee look forward to the challenges the coming year will bring.

cc: Gary Russi, Vice-President of Academic Affairs
Jane Eberwein, Secretary of the University Senate