

MINUTES

COMMISSION ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Board Room - 210 Burruss Hall

May 27, 1985 - 3:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Dr. D. P. Roselle, Chairman; Dr. P. L. Hall, Secretary; Deans Bonham, Egger, Ford, Harris Ogliaruso, Padis and Purdy; Dr. Carson, Senator Crittenden; Professors Coartney, Entzminger, Howard, Lovingood; Student Representative Grace Park.

ABSENT: Dr. Phlegar; Senators Cook and Purcell; Professors Cobb, Krebs and Sherman; Student Representatives Driskill, Kepley and Goulson.

VISITORS: Anita Blackburn and Greg Greer, COLLEGIATE TIMES

1. Dr. Roselle called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. There were no announcements.
2. The Agenda was amended to include items 5 and 7 below; then adopted without further change.
3. The Minutes for the meeting of May 13, 1985, were approved without correction or addition.
4. Course Proposals were approved, as submitted. See attached list.

The Course Proposals Subcommittee, convened by Dean Larry Harris, was commended by the chairman for their herculean efforts. The number of course proposals considered this year has been very large, yet each has been carefully reviewed; and any difficulties have been overcome prior to any action on the part of the Commission itself. The debt of gratitude is large.

5. An additional Core Curriculum sequence, in Appalachian Studies, was approved for the Humanities/Arts Area, at the recommendation of the Core Curriculum Subcommittee. See attachment.
6. Entrance Requirements - Dean Purdy, speaking for the Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee, reported to the Commission her committee's recommendation that last year's CUS Resolution on Entrance Requirements be reaffirmed and sent again to University Council, unchanged. The original Resolution, supported by a newly prepared statement of rationale, accompanies these minutes.

Discussion in the Commission centered about the language requirement issue. It seems that among colleges and universities with which Virginia Tech competes for students, about 1/3 require foreign language units for entrance, another 1/3 recommend language study, and the other 1/3 make no reference to language in the context of entrance expectations. The Committee majority feel that for a selective Land Grant university like Virginia Tech, the middle course (recommendation rather than requirement) is appropriate.

Dr. Crittenden, in presenting the minority point of view for the Committee, advocated imposing a foreign language requirement for admission to Virginia Tech, lest long-standing standards for student quality be compromised. He reminded the Commission that the Faculty Senate strongly rejected the original Resolution on the grounds that it failed to require even one year (one "unit") of language for entrance. Dr. Crittenden recalled that over 95% of all current successful applicants to Virginia Tech would satisfy a language requirement, and he wondered what programs, specifically, would be compromised or disadvantaged by such a requirement.

Dean Harris said the negative effects of a language requirement would fall disproportionately upon the College of Education, and upon VTE in particular. Dean Ford said the University's Land Grant mission requires it to meet the needs of all worthy students. It is wrong to disqualify some (however small the number) by being inflexible in imposing admissions requirements of whatever kind.

Dr. Roselle reminded the Commission of the point raised last year by vocational and technical educators around the State, that a number of high schools have 6-period (rather than 7-period) days, and thus can offer students only 20 units total over four years. Students electing vocational and technical subjects in such high schools might not qualify for entrance to college if the academic units required for entrance numbered more than about 14.

Dr. Hall suggested that a way to provide appropriate flexibility yet include language among the other areas cited in the Resolution (English, Math, History, etc.) would be to list them all as "expectations" rather than "requirements." The appropriate exceptions could be made by the Office of Admissions and all students would have their applications considered, even if they failed to meet one or another of the "expectations."

No vote was taken, but the Commission indicated it was comfortable with the approach suggested by Dr. Hall.

The matter will go again before the Faculty Senate next Fall Quarter.

7. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures to Minimize Undergraduate Attrition - Dean Ogliaruso introduced his Committee and thanked them for their good work. He then briefly reviewed the Report's conclusions and recommendations. (See attached Report).

Discussion centered upon the so-called "freshman rule" proposal by the Committee (recommendation 2(a) of the Report), that would allow prior grades earned in up to two courses taken freshman year to be "replaced" for the purposes of QCA calculation (academic eligibility) by grades earned in courses taken later.

The Report will be on the CUS agenda again in the Fall Quarter, after it has been discussed in the colleges and in the Faculty Senate.

8. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip L. Hall
Secretary

PLH:an

Attachments

CUS Meeting 5/27/85
Proposed Courses

The following proposed courses are recommended favorably to the Commission by the Committee on Course Proposals.

Agriculture and Life Sciences

1. HORT 3020 (new) - Retail Nursery and Garden Center Operations (3H,3C) II.
 - a. Prerequisite: AgEc 1003
 - b. Effective Date: Winter 1986
 - c. Graduate credit is not requested for this course.

Arts and Sciences

2. Medical Technology Option for B.S. in Biology
 - a. Effective Date: Fall 1985
3. ENG 0001-0002-0003 (revision) - English as a Foreign Language (1C) each.
4. Proposed changes pertaining to the HST program.
 - a. LASC 3101,3102,3103 (Science and Technology in Modern Society) to count towards satisfying course requirements for the HST concentration.
 - b. Renumber the following courses:
LASC 3100 (Humanities and the Life Sciences) to LASC 2150
LASC 3110 (Humanities and the Social Sciences) to LASC 2250
LASC 3120 (Humanities and the Physical Sciences) to LASC 2350
 - c. Restructuring of the number of courses
 - d. Request that the clause in the description for LASC 4300 (Contemporary Humanitistic Issues), "Repeatable twice with varying content," be dropped.
 - e. Effective Date: Fall 1985
5. SOCIOLOGY - Bachelor of Science in Sociology Graduation Checklist

Education

6. EDVT 4020 (new) - Managing Agricultural Supervised Occupational Experience Programs (3H,3C) II,III
 - a. Graduate credit is not requested for this course.
 - b. Effective Date: Fall 1985

PROPOSED
APPALACHIAN STUDIES CLUSTER
FOR
UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM

- 1) LASC 2400 - Appalachia in American Thought
- 2) one of: HIST 3210 History of Appalachia
ENGL 3210 Appalachian Writers
- 3) LASC 4400 - Appalachian Folk Culture

JUSTIFICATION: A humanities cluster in Appalachian Studies may initially seem too narrow for introducing students to the Western humanistic tradition. But narrowness is only apparent, for these courses, like other humanities courses, are concerned with understanding human values and expressions of the spirit of humankind. These courses focus on key concepts in the humanities such as justice, ethics, tradition, culture, community, individuality, and creativity. Using the approach of other humanities courses, the Appalachian Studies courses reconstruct one of the various forms of human presence on earth and compare it with other cultural presences.

In America and elsewhere in the world, there has long been a fascination for Appalachian culture (at least 200 years) based on perceptions of cultural "otherness," cultural energy and authenticity in mountain life. In these courses, we explore the broad questions of cultural identity and cultural images, cultural assumptions and anxieties, cultural change and manipulation, and cultural survival. We learn to question the validity of our own lives through comparison with the integrity of lives in other cultural contexts.

The proposed vertical cluster, combining both LASC courses and courses in contributing departments, gives the students an interdisciplinary humanities cluster of breadth and depth. The cluster begins with a broad survey course (LASC 2400), which places the study of Appalachia in the context of the Western humanistic tradition. Students may then choose to explore the history or literature of the region in more depth. The final course, another course of interdisciplinary breadth, gives students an opportunity to examine the traditional aesthetic expressions of a cultural group, compare them with other cultural traditions, and learn how expressive behavior reveals values and cultural premises.

There are many strengths of the Appalachian Studies cluster of courses. Students learn what constitutes culture, how cultural concepts develop, and how to compare expressive behavior across cultures. They learn humanistic approaches to the study of cultural artifacts and how the central concerns of the humanities are applicable to a time and place accessible to them. Students from the region learn to value their heritage and non-Appalachian students learn to appreciate the cultural context in which they find themselves at the university. All of the courses stress writing and evaluate students on the quality of their critical thinking and competent expression in the humanities.

Engineering

7. EE 4501-4502-4503 - Digital Systems Design
 - a. EE 4501-4502 (revision) (3H,1L,4C)
 - b. EE 4503 (new) (3H,3C)
 - c. Change in lab hours from 0 to 1
 - d. Change in credit hours from 3 to 4
 - e. Effective Date: Fall 1985
 - f. Graduate credit is requested
8. Request to change ESM and ME prefixes to BME for ESM 1010, 4530 and ME 3100, 3041-3042, 3270, and 4420.

Human Resources

9. FCD 1100 (revision) - Human Development I: Conception Through Middle Childhood (4H, 2L, 5C)
 - a. Change in course title from Human Development I: Infancy through Middle Childhood to Human Development I: Conception through Middle Childhood.
 - b. Change in content of 5%.
 - c. Effective Date: Fall Quarter 1985.
10. FCD 2100 (revision) - Human Development II: Adolescence and Early Adulthood (3H,3C).
 - a. Change in course title from Human Development II: Adolescence to Human Development II: Adolescence & Early Adulthood
 - b. Change in content of 50%
 - c. Effective Date: Fall Quarter 1985.
11. FCD 3110 (revision) - Human Development III: The Second Half of Life (3H, 3C)
 - a. Change in course title from Human Development IV: The Second Half of Life to Human Development III: The Second Half of Life.
 - b. Change in content. Section A of the Syllabus was increased by 5%; Section D was decreased by 5%.
 - c. Effective Date: Fall Quarter 1985.
12. FCD 3200 (revision) - The Individual and Marriage (5H, 5C)
 - a. Change in course number and title from FCD 3100 Human Development III: The Individual and Marriage to FCD 3200 The Individual and Marriage.
13. HIDM 3670 (new) - Residential Housing Management (3H,3C)
 - a. Effective Date: Winter 1986
14. HIDM 4670 (new) - Housing Management for the Elderly (3H,3C)
 - a. Graduate credit requested
 - b. Effective Date: Spring 1986
15. HNF 4230 (revision) - Food Communication Media (1H, 6L, 3C)
 - a. Revision in text: 25%
 - b. Graduate credit is requested for HNF majors.
 - c. Effective Date: Winter 1986

DRAFT

Rationale for the Proposed Entrance Requirements

The proposed entrance requirements were written by the CUS Sub-committee on Admissions and Financial Aid for three reasons:

1. As a response to concerns about the quality of education
2. As a means to influence the high school preparation our students receive
3. As an effort to make our entrance requirements more contemporary and address current problems (e.g., students missing a large portion of their senior year of high school).

We believe the proposed entrance requirements are significantly better than those currently in place. The proposed requirements are different in the following ways from the current requirements:

1. A clear specification of the distribution of 14 of the 18 required units (7 are now specified)
2. A more descriptive specification of math units
3. An increase and specification of social science units
4. An increase in and clear recommendations for laboratory science units
5. A specific recommendation for additional (3) academic units
6. Encourage studies in the fine arts
7. Recommend the study of non-native or classical languages and state specifically that admission preference will be given to applicants who have completed language study units. This recommendation is mentioned three times in the proposed requirements
8. Recommend a "distribution" of the minimum required units and encourages breadth of study and study in honors courses
9. Present better written, more descriptive and educationally relevant entrance requirements.

During the discussion and review process (which has now involved almost two calendar years, many sub-committee meetings, several full Commission meetings, requests for commentary to

deans, department heads and faculty, the University Council and Faculty Senate), several modifications have been made which have improved the original proposal. As the proposal now reads, we believe it to be thoroughly reviewed, well developed and responsive to the needs of the University. We believe the proposal will be a significant improvement over the current catalog copy and policy.

The main debate over the proposal has centered on two issues: the number of required units and the language studies requirement. In response to both issues, the proposal was significantly modified to ensure that Virginia Tech is able to accommodate all its constituencies in Virginia. The issue of the number of required units appears resolved. The language studies issue appears to still have life. Consequently, we address this issue specifically.

The sub-committee recognizes the educational value of language studies. Further, we have investigated language study requirements at over 60 other universities. There appears to be broad agreement at Virginia Tech and our sister institutions that language study has significant intellectual and cultural value. The value of language studies is not being questioned at Virginia Tech, by the sub-committee, by the CUS, or by any college or group of faculty as well as we can tell.

The issue is whether language studies should be required for admission to Virginia Tech. We believe they should not be required for several reasons.

1. The proposed requirements strongly recommend language studies which the current requirements do not. Combined with the statement on the competitive nature of admission, this is likely to have the positive impact of a requirement without the negative effects perceived on some applicants to some curricula.
2. The quality and availability of language studies varies widely in Virginia and throughout the country. Requiring language studies may have the effect of limiting access to Virginia's land grant university to only those students who come from affluent communities with sophisticated school curricula. Clearly, excellent students regularly matriculate in less developed school systems and are now and will continue to be valued members of the Virginia Tech student body.
3. There is insufficient evidence indicating that language studies are associated with academic success. Nonetheless, it is clear we value the intellectual and cultural diversity acquired through language studies. If language studies are perceived to be an essential component of the educational experience of a discipline, we believe it is possible to provide these experiences

as graduation requirements within individual colleges or programs.

4. Admission to Virginia Tech is quite competitive and indications are that this will not change as long as we appear to have open access. Over 95%* of students admitted now have completed language studies. Thus, the impact of requiring language studies will be small.
5. A language requirement is perceived to have serious negative impact in some curricula. The impact is not seen to be a "quality of applicants" issue but rather an artifact of how high school curricula are organized. In some high schools language studies conflict with studies in vocational areas making it difficult for students to complete the course work required in several areas. This problem appears particularly severe in localities with small school systems which nonetheless regularly contribute to the pool of genuinely qualified applicants. We believe it is inappropriate for Virginia Tech as a land grant university to exclude any segment of qualified students due to the size or location of the high schools these applicants attend.
6. A survey of 64 universities indicated that only about one-third required language studies institutionally. About one-third of these institutions recommend or include language studies as units which may be used to meet entrance requirements. The remaining one-third neither require nor recommend language studies. Thus, it appears that considerable differences exist in admission requirements regarding language studies. Our conclusion is that language studies should be recommended or required as is appropriate to the mission of the university. We believe our mission is to serve all qualified students in Virginia and that students who meet the proposed requirements will be both qualified and competitive given that standardized test scores and class rank are also important criteria in the decision to offer admission.

In summary, we believe the proposed entrance requirements improve upon the requirements now in place. We believe the proposed requirements accurately reflect the wishes of the university community regarding academic preparation in the areas of English, math, science, social studies and language studies and fine arts. In addition, we believe the proposed requirements reflect our expectation that applicants be serious, achieving and qualified students. For these reasons, we believe that the proposed admission requirements as presented in CUS Resolution, 83-84-B (Minutes of May 14, 1984) should become the University's policy on entrance requirements.

*Based on Report to CUS on Freshmen admitted in 1982, undated.

Resolution _____
CUS Resolution-Entrance Requirements

Whereas, the Standing Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CUS) was charged to study the University's entrance requirements, and

Whereas, Faculty and administrators at Virginia Tech and others in the educational community of Virginia (e.g., State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, parents, teachers, concerned citizens) have questioned the readiness of high school graduates to master college and university studies, and

Whereas, Virginia Tech has always maintained high standards for both admission and graduation, and

Whereas, the entrance requirements of the University should be reviewed periodically to be responsive to changes in the larger educational community

Therefore, be it resolved that the proposed admissions standards attached to this resolution be approved for students admitted beginning Fall, 1987.

Admission
(Entrance Requirements)

Admission to Virginia Tech will be offered to applicants who show evidence of ability, good character, the proper academic preparation, willingness to study, and a desire for a university education. Qualified out-of-state residents are encouraged to apply; however, special consideration is given to applicants from Virginia.

Virginia Tech does not require a personal interview for admissions. However, prospective students and their parents are encouraged to visit the campus at their convenience. The Admissions Office is open each week day from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1-5 p.m. and on Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to noon, except on holiday weekends. The Admissions Office has an open door policy, and no appointment is necessary.

Information on admissions may be obtained by writing or calling:

Office of Admissions
104 Burruss Hall
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
(703)961-6267

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, sex, handicap, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation. The University is subject to Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Federal Executive Order 11246, Governor Robb's State Executive Order No. 1, and all other rules and regulations that are applicable. Anyone having questions concerning any of those regulations should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Before being formally admitted to the University, the applicant must have graduated from an accredited high school or private preparatory school with a minimum of 18 units. One unit is equal to one academic year of study.

At least 14 of the 18 units must be academic or college preparatory units. Academic or college preparatory units are courses in English, language studies, mathematics, natural science, social science, history and fine arts and must be distributed as indicated below under Distribution of Minimum Required Units.

Distribution of Minimum Required Units

Of the 18 required units, the following minimums must be met for admission to any curriculum.

1. English - four (4) units, one completed each year of high school.
2. Math - three (3) units including Algebra II and geometry. Admissions preference is given to those who complete an additional unit of Math beyond Algebra II. (See Additional Preparation below for students in selected curricula requiring a fourth unit in math for admission.
3. Social Science - two (2) units, one unit must be History.
4. Laboratory Science - (biology, chemistry, physics) two (2) units required and additional units are recommended. Some curricula encourage, others require, additional units for admission as described in Additional Preparation below.
5. Additional Academic Units - three (3) additional academic units must be completed. These may be electively chosen from academic or college preparatory courses offered only in the areas of English, natural science, social science, history, mathematics, language studies and fine arts. These courses must be comparable in content and purpose to other required academic or college preparatory courses. Particular emphasis in selecting elective academic units should be given to developing written communication, analytical reasoning, and research skills.
6. The remaining four (4) units to meet the minimum 18 required for admission may be selected from any offerings for which the high school grants credit toward meeting graduation requirements.
7. Language Studies - Most students who enter Virginia Tech have studied language in high school. Students who complete units of non-native or classical languages will be given special consideration for admission.

Distribution of Minimum Required Units

Academic preparation for Virginia Tech is best achieved by continued formal study of academic or college preparatory subjects. Consequently, it is recommended that required and elective academic units be evenly distributed throughout the high school years. Specifically, it is recommended that a minimum of (7) academic units be completed during the last two years of high school with at least three (3) academic units completed each year.

Virginia Tech encourages applicants to consider developing a broad educational foundation for study at the University. Courses in the fine arts (e.g., music, theater, art) are strongly encouraged as additional academic units. Advanced or honors courses in any academic or college preparatory subject area listed above are given special consideration during admission decisions.

Additional Preparation

MATHEMATICS - In addition to the above basic requirements in mathematics, an applicant for admission to any curriculum in the College of Engineering or to the curricula of building construction, chemistry, computer science, geophysics, mathematics, nuclear science, physics, or statistics must offer a fourth unit in college preparatory mathematics. The fourth unit must include one-half unit of trigonometry and one-half unit of advanced algebra or higher mathematics.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES - Complete units of language study are recommended for all students. Study of foreign or classical languages is a graduation requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences; three years of high school language study will satisfy this requirement (see page ____ for further details).

LABORATORY SCIENCE - Science related curricula in all colleges recommend (and the College of Engineering requires) three units of laboratory science which include chemistry and physics.

PERFORMING ARTS - In the fields of art, music, and theatre arts special consideration for admission will be given to applicants by portfolio or audition.

Applicants who wish to submit a portfolio or request an audition should contact the department head of the appropriate curriculum before January 1 of their senior year.

Entrance Tests

Freshman applicants are required to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and achievement tests in English composition and mathematics (Level I or Level II) of the College Entrance Examination Board.

The SAT should be taken by the December testing date of the senior year in high school or earlier. The achievement tests should be taken before the April testing date of the senior year. Information on these tests may be obtained from high school guidance directors and principals, or by writing directly to the College Entrance Examination Board, Princeton, New Jersey. The tests are given at many centers in Virginia, in all other states, and in many foreign countries. The applicant should arrange to have all test scores sent directly to the Admissions Office.

Advanced Placement

Through Advanced Placement examinations, administered in May of each year by the College Entrance Examination Board, exceptionally qualified high school graduates may be considered for advanced placement in certain subjects in which they show a proficiency.

Students admitted to Virginia Tech who merit advanced placement through these examinations may obtain credit not to exceed 45 quarter hours. Final determination of credit will be made after the test results have been evaluated by the University.

Credits allowed for advanced placement will be shown as transfer hours on the student's grade report and are included as hours passed toward a degree.

Report of the Ad hoc Committee on Measures to Minimize Undergraduate Attrition

Introduction

The CUS ad hoc Committee on Measures to Minimize Undergraduate Attrition was charged with considering "various measures that might be taken in the interests of preventing unnecessary academic attrition."

In fulfilling the charge outlined above, the Committee first sought to quantify the attrition problem at Virginia Tech. The Committee was aided in its acquisition of the statistics needed by Dr. Gerald McLaughlin of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning Analysis. To identify exactly the causes of the undergraduate attrition, two categories were identified for analysis: involuntary or academic attrition and voluntary or non-academic attrition. The statistics obtained for these two categories were further divided by looking at the University as a whole, and at Black students and Other students separately. These data were further subdivided to reflect the attrition which occurred by the student's academic rank - whether Freshman, Sophomore or Junior.

Once the extent of undergraduate attrition at Virginia Tech was established, the Committee then investigated the academic policies and procedures which are in effect at peer institutions and which have a direct bearing on the attrition rate. Such items as course repeat policies, add-drop periods, and Q.C.A. calculations were reviewed. Information about any special retention programs which were in operation at other institutions was also sought, but very few of these programs either exist or have been in effect long enough to permit evaluation of their effectiveness.

Finally, the Committee has proposed several recommendations, for discussion by CUS, which the Committee believes could be adopted here at Virginia Tech to minimize undergraduate attrition.

Statistics

The statistics section includes data representative of the student attrition rate at Virginia Tech and national attrition rates.

Virginia Tech. The data used in the Virginia Tech statistical portions of the report were collected by Dr. McLaughlin based on the Student Census File data base. Full-time students were individually tracked and classified according to their academic rank as of the fall of each year.

Individual students who were not enrolled in successive fall quarters were then classified as either Non-voluntary (academic) or Voluntary (Non-academic) withdrawals. Non-voluntary withdrawals were students enrolled in each rank in the fall of each year who did not return for the following year because their QCA did not meet the eligibility requirements listed below:

| | | | |
|-----------|---|-------------------|------|
| Fall 1979 | - | Fall 1983 | QCA |
| 0 | - | 90 hrs attempted | 1.5 |
| 90 | - | 145 hrs attempted | 1.75 |
| 146 | + | hrs attempted | 2.00 |

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Beginning | Fall 1983 | New eligibility scale |
| 0 | - 54 hrs attempted | 1.5 |
| 55 | - 104 hrs attempted | 1.75 |
| 105 | + hrs attempted | 2.00 |

The statistics obtained for these two categories were further divided by looking at all students, Black students, and Other students separately. The category of "Other" students includes whites (Caucasian Americans), American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Oriental Americans or Asians, etc. The total number of students enrolled in each academic rank is noted (Table I). The totals give the reader a more complete picture of the attrition rate for that academic year.

National. When looking at attrition rates at individual institutions, Bean (1980) found that 25-30% of entering freshmen at California State University Northridge are not enrolled as sophomores the following year. Bennett (1984) reports that 62% of Black undergraduates, 38% of Latins, 30% of Whites and 28% of Asian Americans dropped out of Indiana University, Bloomington. Figure 1 presents a better picture of the retention of undergraduate students by institutional type and selectivity.

Table I

Voluntary and Non-Voluntary Attrition at Virginia Tech
for Those Students Enrolled as Undergraduates in the
Fall of the Years Indicated

| 1979-80 | Freshmen | | Non-Voluntary Sophomores | | Juniors | | Freshmen | | Voluntary Sophomores | | Juniors | | Freshman Attrition Rate | Overall Attrition Rate |
|----------------|--------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------|------|-------------------------|------|---------|------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| All Students | (N=4693)(a) 399 | 8.44 | (N=4579) 387 | 8.12 | (N=4548) 303 | 6.26 | 321 | 6.79 | 325 | 6.82 | 204 | 4.22 | 15% | 14% |
| Black Students | (N=224) 38 | 16.89 | (N=96) 15 | 14.71 | (N=64) 9 | 12.86 | 9 | 4.00 | 2 | 1.96 | 0 | 0 | 20% | 19% |
| Other Students | (N=4469) 361 | 8.02 | (N=4483) 372 | 7.97 | (N=4484) 294 | 6.17 | 312 | 6.93 | 323 | 6.92 | 204 | 4.28 | 15% | 14% |
| 1980-81 | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| All Students | (N=4760) 414 | 8.70 | (N=4819) 346 | 6.92 | (N=4598) 309 | 6.32 | 310 | 6.51 | 318 | 6.36 | 206 | 4.21 | 15% | 13% |
| Black Students | (N=232) 31 | 13.54 | (N=146) 24 | 16.00 | (N=88) 12 | 13.19 | 12 | 5.24 | 6 | 4.00 | 1 | 1.10 | 18% | 19% |
| Other Students | (N=4528) 383 | 8.45 | (N=4673) 322 | 6.64 | (N=4510) 297 | 6.18 | 298 | 6.58 | 312 | 6.43 | 205 | 4.27 | 15% | 13% |
| 1981-82 | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| All Students | (N=4668) 337 | 7.23 | (N=4910) 310 | 6.12 | (N=4785) 284 | 5.57 | 330 | 7.08 | 313 | 6.18 | 227 | 4.45 | 14% | 13% |
| Black Students | (N=284) 41 | 14.59 | (N=177) 22 | 11.89 | (N=113) 18 | 15.00 | 13 | 4.63 | 9 | 4.86 | 4 | 3.33 | 19% | 19% |
| Other Students | (N=4384) 296 | 6.76 | (N=4733) 288 | 5.90 | (N=4672) 266 | 5.34 | 317 | 7.24 | 304 | 6.23 | 223 | 4.48 | 14% | 12% |

Table I

Voluntary and Non-Voluntary Attrition at Virginia Tech
for Those Students Enrolled as Undergraduates in the
Fall of the Years Indicated

| | Freshmen | | Non-Voluntary Sophomores | | Juniors | | Freshmen | | Voluntary Sophomores | | Juniors | | Freshman Attrition Rate | Overall Attrition Rate |
|----------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------|------|-------------------------|------|---------|------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| 1982-83 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Students | (N=4462) 335 | 7.48 | (N=4747) 294 | 6.00 | (N=4853) 282 | 5.40 | 316 | 7.05 | 315 | 6.43 | 221 | 4.23 | 15% | 13% |
| Black Students | (N=275) 55 | 19.93 | (N=214) 24 | 10.91 | (N=136) 14 | 9.59 | 19 | 6.88 | 8 | 3.64 | 5 | 3.42 | 27% | 20% |
| Other Students | (N=4187) 280 | 6.66 | (N=4533) 270 | 5.77 | (N=4717) 268 | 5.27 | 297 | 7.06 | 307 | 6.56 | 216 | 4.25 | 14% | 12% |
| 1983-84 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Students | (N=4484) 328 | 7.29 | (N=4569) 284 | 6.05 | (N=4746) 307 | 6.04 | 316 | 7.02 | 309 | 6.58 | 451 | 8.88 | 14% | 15% |
| Black Students | (N=340) 57 | 16.38 | (N=207) 26 | 12.26 | (N=156) 26 | 14.94 | 30 | 8.62 | 10 | 4.72 | 12 | 6.90 | 26% | 23% |
| Other Students | (N=4144) 271 | 6.53 | (N=4362) 258 | 5.75 | (N=4590) 281 | 5.73 | 286 | 6.89 | 299 | 6.67 | 439 | 8.95 | 13% | 14% |

Note: Data for seniors in each year was omitted because these students (seniors) are not carried over to the lower category in the statistics for the following year.

N = Total number of students in each class shown only in non-voluntary category.

Figure 1

1978 Graduation and Freshman Retention Rates for
Undergraduate Programs by Institutional Type and Selectivity.

| | N _a | Graduation Rate ^b | N _c | Freshman Retention Rate | Freshman Attrition Rate |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Two-Year Public Institutions | | | | | |
| Open Admissions | 206 | 42% | 105 | 54% | 46% |
| Liberal Admissions | 7 | 55% | 5 | 64% | 36% |
| Two-Year Institutions | | | | | |
| Open Admissions | 14 | 54% | 14 | 60% | 40% |
| Liberal Admissions | 31 | 64% | 16 | 63% | 37% |
| Traditional Admissions | 3 | 65% | 1 | 95% | 5% |
| Four-Year Public Institutions | | | | | |
| Open Admissions | 41 | 46% | 24 | 60% | 40% |
| Liberal Admissions | 58 | 56% | 55 | 66% | 34% |
| Traditional Admissions | 26 | 55% | 16 | 64% | 36% |
| Selective Admissions | 19 | 59% | 18 | 76% | 24% |
| Highly Selective Admiss. | 4 | 64% | 2 | 80% | 20% |
| Four-Year Private Institutions | | | | | |
| Open Admissions | 17 | 52% | 18 | 52% | 48% |
| Liberal Admissions | 153 | 57% | 116 | 65% | 35% |
| Traditional Admissions | 71 | 59% | 47 | 71% | 29% |
| Selective Admissions | 67 | 65% | 50 | 79% | 21% |
| Highly Selective Admiss | 19 | 77% | 15 | 90% | 10% |

^a The numbers of each type providing graduation rate percentages as indicated in footnote c below, and upon which the listed graduation percentages are based.

^b For four-year institutions this is the percentage of 1973 entering freshman who had graduated at this college by the Spring of 1978, five years after entrance. For two-year institutions, this is the percentage of 1975 entering freshmen who had graduated with a degree or certificate by the spring of 1978, three years after entrance.

^c The numbers of institutions of each type reporting end-of-freshman year retention percentages for 1977-78 freshmen, and upon which the listed freshman retention percentages are based.

Note. From "Variable - Selection and Measurement Concerns" by Oscar T. Lenning. In Studying Student Attrition (p.45) by E. T. Pascarella, 1982, Washington: Jossey-Bass, Inc. Copyright 1982 by Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers and Jossey-Bass Limited.

Conclusions. 1) Non-voluntary attrition rates for Black students are at least twice that of Other students.

2) The Non-voluntary attrition rate for Black students is similar for all academic ranks, whereas for Other students the attrition rate is higher in the freshman year than for each of the succeeding years.

3) The voluntary attrition rate is relatively comparable for Black and Other students.

The attrition rate for all freshman at Virginia Tech has ranged from 14 percent to 15 percent since 1979-80; and the attrition rate for Black freshmen at Virginia Tech, during the same time period, has ranged from 18 percent to 27 percent.

The data show that the attrition rate for Black freshmen increased notably, from 19 percent in 1981-82 to 27 percent in 1982-83 and slightly down to 26 percent in 1983-84. The over all freshman attrition rate and the attrition rate for Other freshman students have remained relatively constant between 13 and 15 percent.

The observed attrition rate for all freshmen at Virginia Tech over the past five years, is below the 20 percent freshman attrition rate, cited in Figure 1, for highly selective four year public institutions. However, the 24 percent freshman attrition rate cited in Figure 1 for selective four year public institutions is more in line with the range of attrition rates for Black freshmen at Virginia Tech. The data show that even though the attrition rate for Black freshmen is relatively comparable to four year public selective institutions, the Virginia Tech Black freshman attrition rate has grown to almost twice that of all students and Other students.

Academic Policies and Procedures

Perhaps the most direct approach to address academic retention is to establish policies and procedures governing how course grades and credit are used for Q.C.A. calculations and for fulfilling graduation requirements. The Committee was aware that universities vary widely on the content of these policies and procedures. As a result the Committee decided to:

- (1) Conduct a survey of peer institutions to determine the range of policies and procedures used in academic retention;
- (2) Evaluate those policies and procedures in terms of their relative leniency or strictness;
- (3) Rank Virginia Tech's policies and procedures relative to its peer institutions on the basis of the above criteria; and
- (4) Use the results of the survey to provide policy and procedure options for the Committee to consider for recommendation to CUS.

Procedure. The first step of this task was to determine those universities which could be categorized as peer institutions. This was accomplished by each representative submitting to the Committee a list of institutions which his or her college considered as a peer. These were then brought together into a master list of 40 peer institutions for further work.

The following criteria were used to classify peer institutions into three categories;

- LENIENT - Allows student to repeat any course anytime regardless of grade earned; most recent or highest grade in course is used in Q.C.A.
- MODERATE - Allows a limited number of repeats and/or new grade replaces old grade in Q.C.A. calculation.
- STRICT - Allows student to repeat only those courses with a C- or lower. All grades stay on transcript and are used in Q.C.A. calculation. No "freshman rule" or "forgiveness policy" exists.

Results. Table II represents an alphabetical listing of peer institutions classified as either strict, moderate, or lenient by the Committee.

The specific characteristics of the peer institutions by classification are shown in Table III.

Table II

Alphabetical Listing of Forty Peer Institutions
as Classified by the Committee

| <u>SCHOOL</u> | <u>COMMITTEE CLASSIFICATION</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY | LENIENT |
| BALL STATE UNIVERSITY | STRICT |
| CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK | STRICT |
| CLEMSON UNIVERSITY | STRICT |
| DUKE UNIVERSITY | STRICT |
| EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| FLORIDA STATE | MODERATE |
| GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY | STRICT |
| GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY | LENIENT |
| GEORGIA TECH | MODERATE |
| INDIANA UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| IOWA STATE | MODERATE |
| JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY | LENIENT |
| KENT STATE UNIVERSITY | STRICT |
| LONGWOOD COLLEGE | MODERATE |
| LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| MARY WASHINGTON COLLEGE | LENIENT |
| MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY | STRICT |
| PENN STATE UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| PURDUE UNIVERSITY | LENIENT |
| RADFORD UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| RUTGERS UNIVERSITY - COOK COLLEGE | LENIENT |
| TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |
| UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA | STRICT |
| UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA | STRICT |
| UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS - URBANA | MODERATE |
| UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY | LENIENT |
| UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND | LENIENT |
| UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN | STRICT |
| UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - ROLLA | MODERATE |
| UNIVERSITY OF NC - GREENSBORO | STRICT |
| UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA | MODERATE |
| UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE | MODERATE |
| UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - ARLINGTON | STRICT |
| UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA | STRICT |
| VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY | LENIENT |
| WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY | MODERATE |

 VIRGINIA TECH

STRICT

LENIENT SCHOOLS
N = 9

| SCHOOL | P U B L I C | P R I V A T E | S E M E S T E R | Q U A R T E R | COURSE REPEAT POLICY | | | | Q.C.A. CALCULATION | | | ADD/DROP POLICY | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| | | | | | Any Course | Only F's | Only D's & F's | Limited To | Only The Repeated Course Grade | Only The Highest Course Grade | All Course Grades | Add | Drop |
| APPALACHIAN ST. UNIV. | X | | X | | X | | | | X | | | ---- | 5 wks |
| GEORGIA ST. UNIV. | X | | | X | X | | | | X | | | ---- | 6 wks |
| JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY | X | | X | | X | | | | X | | | 1 wk | 4 wks |
| MARY WASHINGTON COL. | X | | X | | X | | | 7 courses- 2 per sem. | X | | | 1 wk | 4 wks |
| PURDUE UNIV. | X | | X | | X | | | | X | | | ---- | 3 wks |
| RUTGERS UNIV. - COOK COL. | X | | X | | | | | | | X | After the 1st 24 creds. | 5 Class Days | 2 wks |
| UNIV. OF KENTUCKY (1) | X | | X | | X | | | 3 courses | X | | | 1 wks | 3 wks |
| UNIV. OF MARYLAND | X | | X | | X | | | | | X | | 10 dys | 10 wks |
| VIRGINIA (2) COMMONWEALTH UNIV. | X | | X | | X | | | | | | X | 1 wk | 8 wks |
| Current VPI Policy (Strict) | X | | | X | | | | | | | X | 5 dys | 20 dys |

23.

- (1) At the University of Kentucky an undergraduate student who has been readmitted through the usual channels after an interruption of two or more years, and who has completed at least one semester (12 credit hours) with a grade-point average of 2.0 or better after readmission may choose to have none of his or her previous U of K course work counted toward graduation and toward the computation of the grade-point standing. (This option is not available to a student who transfers in more than 24 credit hours taken at another institution during the first two years after leaving the University of Kentucky.

In addition, the dean of the student's college may permit such a readmitted student who has elected not to count past work, to receive credit for selected courses without including those grades in the computation of the grade-point standing.

- (2) All courses at VCU may be repeated and all attempts and grade points earned are included in the Q.C.A. calculation. However, if a student repeats a course in which a D or F grades has been received, then the better grade will be used in the Q.C.A. calculation.

MODERATE SCHOOLS

N = 17

| SCHOOL | P U B L I C | P R I V A T E | S E M E S T E R | Q U A R T E R | COURSE REPEAT POLICY | | | | O.C.A. CALCULATION | | | ADD/DROP POLICY | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | | | | | Any Course | Only F's | Only D's & F's | Limited To | Only The Repeated Course Grade | Only The Highest Course Grade | All Course Grades | Add | Drop |
| EAST CAROLINA UNIV. | X | | | X | X | | | | | | X | 1 dy | 30 Class Days |
| FLORIDA ST. | X | | | X | | | X | 2 courses only | X | | After 1st 2 courses | 1 wk | 4 wks |
| GEORGIA TECH | X | | | X | X | | | With approval of adv. | | | X | ---- | 5 wks |
| INDIANA UNIV. | X | | X | | | X | | | X | | | 2 wks | 8 wks |
| IOWA ST. | X | | X | | X | | | 15 credits | X | | After 15 credits | ---- | Limit 7 drops |
| LONGWOOD COL. | X | | X | | X | | | 5 courses | X | | After 1st 5 courses | 1 wk | 4 wks |
| LOUISIANA ST. UNIV. | X | | X | | | | X | | X | | | 1 wk | 3 wks |
| Current VPI Policy (Strict) | X | | | X | | | X | | | | X | 5 dys | 20 dys |

MODEPATE SCHOOLS continued

| SCHOOL | P U B L I C | P R I V A T E | S E M E S T E R | Q U A R T E R | COURSE REPEAT POLICY | | | | Q.C.A. CALCULATION | | | ADD/DROP POLICY | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | Any Course | Only F's | Only D's & F's | Limited To | Only The Repeated Course Grade | Only The Highest Course Grade | All Course Grades | Add | Drop |
| MICHIGAN ST. UNIV. | X | | | X | | | X | 30 credits | X | | | 5 Class Dys | 5 wks |
| NC ST. UNIV. | X | | X | | | | X | 4 Selected Freshman Courses | X | | | 1 wk | 4 wks |
| PENN ST. UNIV. | X | | X | | X | | | | | | X | 2 wks | 5 wks |
| RADFORD UNIV. | X | | X | | X | | | 10 hours | | | X | 5 dys | 20 dys |
| TEXAS A&M UNIV. | X | | X | | X | | | | | | X | 2 wks | 12 Class Dys |
| UNIV. OF ILLINOIS - URBANA (3) | X | | X | | X | | | | | | X | 13 dys | 21 dys |
| UNIV. OF MISSOURI - ROLLA | X | | X | | X | | | | Prior to Fall 83 | | After Fall 83 | 13 dys | 28 dys |
| Current VPI Policy (Strict) | X | | | X | | | X | | | | X | 5 dys | 20 dys |

(3) The University of Illinois is on a 5.0 Q.C.A. scale, and students need a 3.0 to graduate, but if a student does not have a 3.0 or his/her regular Q.C.A. calculation, they may opt to have their minimum Q.C.A. calculated by either of the following alternative methods: (a) exclude D or F courses up to 10 semester hours which were completed before the last 30 hours or (b) calculation of the Q.C.A. for the last 60 hours of work which must be a 3.1 or greater for graduation.

MODERATE SCHOOLS continued

| SCHOOL | P U B L I C | P R I V A T E | S E M E S T E R | Q U A R T E R | COURSE REPEAT POLICY | | | | O.C.A. CALCULATION | | | ADD/DROP POLICY | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | | | Any Course | Only F's | Only D's & F's | Limited To | Only The Repeated Course Grade | Only The Highest Course Grade | All Course Grades | Add | Drop |
| UNIV. OF SC | X | | X | | X | | | | | | X | 4 dys | 6 wks |
| UNIV. OF TENNESSEE | X | | | X | X | | | | For the 1st 45 hours | | After the 1st 45 hrs. | 7 dys | 35 dys |
| WEST VA UNIV. (4) | X | | X | | | | X | Courses taken after 58 hrs. and before 78 hours | | X | | 1 wk | 5 wks |
| Current VPI Policy (Strict) | X | | | X | | | X | | | | X | 5 dys | 20 dys |

- (4) At West Virginia University is an undergraduate student earns a grade of D or F in any course taken no later than the semester or summer session registration when a cumulative total of 58 hours has been attempted, and if this course is repeated in residence at WVU, one time only, the lower grade shall be disregarded for the purpose of determine the student's grade point average, hours passed, and hours attempted. The first grade recorded shall not be deleted from the student's record and the second grade will be entered marked 'repeat' in the semester when taken. The repeat shall be completed no later than the semester or summer session registration when a cumulative total of 78 hours has been attempted.

Recommendations.

These recommendations are based on an assessment of undergraduate attrition at Virginia Tech and a comparative study of relevant policies and procedures at a number of peer institutions. The committee has formulated several recommendations which would strengthen student retention.

At Virginia Tech, overall undergraduate attrition is not high when compared to other highly selective four year public institutions. The committee is convinced that a strong focus on the quality of the Freshman year is fundamental to strengthening effective progress toward graduation for groups which are at risk. Central to this effort is an active recognition of how we create significant relationships for the student and faculty among interdependent sectors of the University. An atmosphere of decentralized identity should be developed among these sectors. Toward this end, the committee has formulated recommendations to advising, university policies and the University community.

1. Advising. The recent CUS committee report on Academic Advising recognizes the on-going importance of advising and emphasizes the significance of student perceptions as a measure of advising effectiveness. The committee offers the following ideas toward strengthening the advising network:

- a. The present "Learning to Learn" program, a course within the Virginia Tech Academic Survival Program (V-TASP), should be expanded to accommodate 40 students per quarter and to include white students whose QCA's indicate that they are potentially at risk. At least one more faculty position should be provided and the present GTA support should be maintained for this effective program;
- b. Several colleges have effectively utilized the minority "Peer-Advising Program" sponsored by University Counseling Services. The committee suggests that student professional and honor organizations should assume a stronger and broader advising role within colleges and departments;
- c. In view of the implementation of the University Core Curriculum, and the conversion to the semester system, the role of advising should be more actively supported by university and college resources;
- d. Correspondence from the University Academic System to the student should identify that student's advisor. Grade reports, degree check sheets, registration forms and orientation materials should all remind the students of their primary source of counsel.

- e. Remedial course offerings and the English placement procedures should be maintained at the present level. In order to strengthen the Freshman position, the committee strongly recommends that the Mathematics Department give a placement exam either before or during the first week of classes for the entering students.

2. University Policies and Procedures. As the University moves toward broadening the educational experiences at Virginia Tech, an equal effort should be made to facilitate a student's accessibility to alternatives.

- a. The committee recommends that the present course repeat policy be supplemented by the following provision designed for Freshmen:

A student may replace any two courses taken before completion of the first 54 credits in which any grade below a C⁺ is earned. All grades would remain on the transcript but credit toward graduation from the courses replaced would not be earned. The students must enroll in replacement courses before completion of 90 credits. The course that is replaced is designated by an R on the transcript.

Only the grades earned in the replacement courses would be used in computing the QCA.

- b. The present add-drop deadlines are perceived by the committee as appropriate. With respect to the importance of the drop deadline, the committee recommends that a pre-drop evaluation be given to all Freshmen. The results should then be made available to both the student and the student's advisor prior to the final date to drop a course.
- c. The committee recognizes that the presentation of academic rules and policies poses a difficult communications problem for the university community. A serious review should be made of the various publications currently used to present these policies.

3. Community Structure. As many reports indicate, student retention and active progress toward graduation is, in large part, a function of the student's perception of a program's quality. Every effort should be made by the University to support a student's identity with the qualitative substance of a chosen field. The freshman year of study, while intent on general education, should not be reduced to a prescribed list of topics isolated from the challenge of ideas in a student's chosen field of study.

As additional steps to reduce undergraduate attrition, the committee recommends the following measures which focus on the sustaining presence of individual colleges within the larger academic community.

a. Parent/student orientation should concentrate more on the colleges - or the places where individuals will develop colleague relationships.

b. Courses for Freshmen should encourage a substantive engagement of the student and faculty with the habits of thinking and working inspired by a particular discipline. The contribution of the University's best teachers should be focused in the early years, as a model to both students and faculty of the necessary educational skills and attitudes inherent to a "body of knowledge."

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