



MEMORANDUM

TO: President Edward T. Foote II

FROM: Kamal Yacoub *Kamal Yacoub*  
Chair, Faculty Senate

DATE: June 1, 1995

SUBJECT: Faculty Senate Legislation #94011(D) -  
Resolution on Report of the Academic Standards Committee  
re Retention

The Faculty Senate, at its meeting on May 8, 1995, voted to approve Faculty Senate Legislation #94011(D) - Resolution on Report of the Academic Standards Committee re Retention. The resolution text is attached.

This legislation is forwarded to you for your information. We hope you find these recommendations constructive and helpful.

KY/b

Attachment

cc: Provost Luis Glaser

### University Services

University services received most of the Subcommittee's discussion and attention. Many students face insurmountable problems dealing with their enrollment in classes, their payment of tuition, and their almost daily transactions with University administration. The Committee recommends that the President and the Provost:

1. make the billing process used by the Student Accounts Office more client-friendly. Every charge, credit, and payment should be clearly identified, with the date of charge and credit indicated.

2. stop the purging or cancelling of students from class rolls. Registration cancellation gives unjustified precedence to budget management over the academic program. It is a negative and distracting action. Students are forced to deal inopportunely with situations that are often not entirely their fault. All financial arrangements should be established by the end of the first full week of classes, or sooner. Faculty should check class rolls early and report those not attending on a special form to be developed by the Registrar.

3. review the accountability systems used by Financial Assistance Services and Student Accounts Services. Presently, these agencies report to separate arms of the University. The Committee recommends that both agencies be brought under the aegis of Academic Affairs.

4. find a way to fold the numerous fees that are added to a student's tuition into one total charge. Parking fees, wellness fees, late fees, activities fees, transcript fees, and reinstatement fees all add to the financial burden of retaining a student at the University. Students are unaware of some of these fees until they are assessed. The Committee recommends that there be one comprehensive fee that students are made aware of before registration.

6. promote a truly collegiate atmosphere that helps bring students together and maintains their interest in academic activities. A special area should be set aside in the new Richter Library addition as a Faculty Club. In addition, other areas should be set aside for informal meetings with faculty and students with facilities for providing lunches and snacks; and present food service should be improved. The University Book Store should be upgraded, and additional commercial establishments should be allowed on campus; e.g., *Books & Books*, or *Borders*. Concerts at Gusman Concert Hall, films at the Cosford Theatre, and plays at the Ring Theatre should be scheduled and promoted.

7. instruct the Development Office to identify funds for scholarships. As the cost of tuition rises, funds should be allocated so that there is no unmet need. Increased support is especially crucial for seniors, 10% of whom are currently not continuing.

### Advising and Mentoring

Academic advising is a function that is best spread selectively through the faculty. It is a somewhat technical task, and it is not necessary for every faculty member to learn its complexities. Only those who are enthusiastic about advising should do it. Deans should be instructed to support the following procedures:

1. The adviser of record for a student should be made known to that student throughout his or her undergraduate career.
2. A listing of academic advisers for each department in each school and college should be included in the University Telephone Directory and published in *The Miami Hurricane* and the Student Handbook.
3. Departments should be encouraged to improve mentoring and "bonding" with students. As an example, food cards could be made available for use by faculty to invite students to lunch.
4. A University-wide freshman orientation course should be established. (The feasibility of such a course, taught mainly by student advisers, is presently being explored by the Orientation Course Subcommittee chaired by Professor Kenneth Smith.)

### Instruction

The 94/2 Enrolled Student Survey revealed that students gave low ratings on the topic of "availability of classes" (i.e., no sections in desired classes, sections available only at undesirable times, desired instructors unavailable). With better coordination between the Enrollment Services Office and the departments, many of these problems could be resolved. The Office of the Registrar should conduct focus groups to ascertain the nature of such problems. The Committee further recommends the following to deans and department chairs:

1. An all-out effort should be made to raise the quality of instruction. This effort has numerous components: students should be encouraged to take reading assignments seriously, attendance should be taken, cancellation of classes should be kept to a minimum, classes should run for the entire time allotted (or makeup sessions scheduled for time lost), and no tests should be given during the last week of classes.
2. If a faculty member receives consistently poor student evaluations, the chair of the faculty member's department should recommend appropriate measures to improve teaching performance. This emphasis on good teaching should include encouraging **all** faculty members to take advantage of the services offered by the Instructional Advancement Center.
3. Good teaching should be rewarded. If teaching is as important as research, then it should be given equal and careful consideration in tenure and promotion reviews.

### Public Relations

One may argue that the academic reputation of an institution needs time to grow and mature, but one also must not overlook the fact that academic reputation is in part based on impressions, on what other educators think of an institution. Careful public relations work can do much in this regard, especially if its effort is backed up by real amelioration. The quality of our faculty has undergone substantial improvement over the past decade. This should justifiably be reflected in the promotion of the University. The Committee recommends that the President and the Provost should:

1. promote more participation of parents in academic life. In particular, the annual outstanding faculty awards ceremony should be combined with the Honors Day ceremony. The academic focus should also be increased during orientation.
2. encourage each department to hold a "faculty mixer" to introduce its faculty to new majors. The mixers should be advertised in *The Miami Hurricane*, and they could all be held on the same evening.
3. urge department chairs to write well-qualified prospects who have expressed interest in their disciplines, advertising their faculty's achievements and providing information about the degree programs offered.
4. take steps to improve faculty morale. A designated administrator in each school or college should be assigned to meet with faculty on an individual basis to resolve or discuss their concerns and to generate enthusiasm about the University community. A survey of faculty and staff concerns and opinions should be conducted by the Director of Planning and Informational Resources.

### Conclusion

In formulating these recommendations it has been presupposed that retention is a function of quality. This means that our admission policies for undergraduates should conform to the recommendations of the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee in its 1994 Undergraduate Admissions Report. The Committee urges the President and the Provost to take this report seriously and enroll only those students who have a reasonable chance of succeeding in college work. If this presupposition is not met, then all of our retention efforts will go for naught.