



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

**To:** Robert Kyr, President, University Senate and Professor of Music  
**From:** G. Q. Unruh, Chair, Academic Requirements Committee and Director, McNair Scholars Program  
**Subject:** Academic Requirements Committee, 2010-2011 Annual Report to the University Senate  
**Date:** September 15, 2011  
**CC:** Christopher Prosser, Executive Coordinator to the University Senate

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The Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) generally holds eighteen meetings during the year. Five meetings occur each term of the regular academic year (during weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11). The remaining three meetings occur in the summer (mid-July, mid-August, and mid-September). Additional meetings may occur if the number of student petitions justifies convening them. In general, ARC is charged with reviewing the petitions of undergraduate students seeking exceptions to graduation requirements or permission to:

- register for more than twenty-four credits in a given academic term;
- drop courses after the deadline but before the end of an academic term;
- change grading options after the deadline but before the end of an academic term;
- delete courses from the transcript.

During the academic year just ended, ARC considered a total of 159 petitions with an average of about nine petitions each meeting. The actual number of petitions fluctuated from a low of one to a high of twenty-five. Of the total number of petitions, ARC approved 76 (48%), denied 82 (52%), and referred one petition to the Scholastic Review Committee.

Beyond the broad brush of the summary statistics cited above, a few details and observations may be in order. First, more than half of all petitions (58%) concerned the group requirements and more than half of those (30% of total petitions) focused on the social science group requirement. The most common issue cited in social science petitions concerned a lack of two courses with the same subject code even as the total number of credits in the social science group reached 24 or more. Members of ARC discussed that anomaly but were unable to reach a general conclusion about why it might have occurred. Except in cases involving advising errors, members of ARC tended to

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approve petitions related to the groups if a close examination of the student's academic record suggested that the student had met the spirit of the requirement.

Second, ARC members were in a quandary as they considered requests to register for more than 24 credits in a single term. Each member was sensitive to the image of the institution and did not wish to suggest that courses at the UO have so little rigor that completing many credits in a single term is a relatively simple task. Members could generally agree that attempting more than 24 credits was unwise, but they could not always agree that students should be blocked from doing so rather than given the freedom to dig their own academic holes. Although ARC approved 11 of 16 petitions to register for more than 24 credits, we restricted our approval to students requesting to register for 25 or 26 credits as each case dictated. Moreover, we asked the Office of the Registrar to prepare statistics so that future members of ARC would be able to see the success rates for students who requested to register for more than 24 credits in a single term. We hope the availability of those statistics may lead to better decision making.

Third, ARC tended to be much more rigid as it considered other requests. Although the Committee approved seven of twelve petitions relating to the BA/BS requirement, those seven were genuine exceptions involving misadvising, accommodations for disabilities, or strong statements of support from the Department of Mathematics. The Committee denied all six requests to reduce the upper-division credit requirement. Also, ARC denied all five requests to change the grading option for a course after the deadline, and it denied ten of thirteen petitions to drop a course without a recorded "W."

In their deliberations, members of ARC sought to be consistent over time as they considered each petition and each student's entire academic record in light of faculty legislation and institutional integrity. I doubt that we were wholly successful, but ARC members acquitted themselves well. As a testament to the diligence of each committee member and in compliance with faculty legislation, I respectfully submit this summary report to the University Senate.