Admissions & Academic Policy Committee
Proposal

Proposed Change: To establish standards for a reduced course load accommodation for students with disabilities.

Submitted: October 27, 2010
Submitted by: Testing and Disability Services

RATIONALE: On a semester-by-semester basis, individuals with disabilities may require a reduced course load (as a direct result of a disability), while requiring the same access to campus events, activities and programming. The courts and the Department of Education have ruled that institutions must be able to provide evidence of a deliberative process that reflects and supports the legitimacy of the essential nature of the standard/requirement and its application. This deliberative process includes thoughtful consideration of essential requirements and a rational review of the academic program and its requirements (Appalachian State University, 34 NDLR 176 (August, 2006). The Reduced Course Load Accommodation will protect the essential standards and requirements of a degree program, while providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities.

CURRENT POLICY: No current policy.

PROPOSED POLICY: Reduced Course Load Accommodation

On a semester-by-semester and individual student-request basis, Disability Services (in consultation with other appropriate professionals for expert input) will determine eligibility and recommend full-time enrollment equivalency (i.e., full-time student status with less than the required full-time hours for qualified students).

While it is typically preferable for a student with a disability to be accommodated through methods such as academic advising, priority enrollment, and academic accommodations, it may be necessary for a student to request a reduced course load because of a more severe academic impact of a significant disability. Factors unrelated to the disability such as employment, curricular activities, family/personal obligations, inadequate academic preparation, failure to use appropriate academic accommodations, or poor class attendance cannot be the primary reason(s) for a reduced course load. Students who are approved for reduced course loads should work closely with their academic advisers on a coursework plan, particularly with respect to university and college degree completion time limitations. Approval under this policy does not automatically grant extended time for degree completion or acceptance of out-of-date credits. Students must continue to make satisfactory progress toward their degree.
The student must provide adequate, up-to-date documentation to Disability Services and request accommodation on a semester-by-semester basis. Disability Services will determine eligibility and recommend the full-time enrollment equivalency. The appropriate offices will receive a written correspondence verifying full-time enrollment equivalency for the student.

**IMPLEMENTATION**: To go into effect in Fall 2011

Students will be strongly encouraged to request full-time equivalency as an accommodation prior to the first week of any semester to facilitate campus services that would be significantly affected otherwise (Student Financial Assistance, Housing, etc.). Requests for reduced course load status will not be considered after the drop/add deadlines.