
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

AY 2015-16

Final Report

May 31, 2016

Prepared by: P. Venkataraman

Membership

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Callie Babbitt (GIS) | Tracy Davis (COS) |
| James (Minseok) Kwon (GCCIS) | Benjamin Lawrance (CLA) |
| Chris Licata (Provost's Delegate, ex officio, voting) | David Long (CIAS) |
| Joseph Miller (SCB) | Robert Osgood (CHST) |
| Linda Tolan (CAST) | P. Venkataraman (KGCOE), Chair |
| Carol DeFilippo (NTID) - At Large | Matthew Fluet (GCCIS) - At Large |
| Joyce Hertzson (CIAS) - At Large | NTID member TBC |

Subcommittee Membership

| Charge | Members |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Christine Licata |
| 2 | Joseph Miller, Matthew Fluet, Tracy Davis, David Long |
| 3 | Joseph Miller, Minseok Kwon, Linda Tolan |
| 4 | Joseph Miller, Carol DeFilippo, Minseok Kwon |
| 5 | Callie Babbitt, Benjamin Lawrance |
| 6 | Robert Osgood, Christine Licata, David Long |
| 7 | Matthew Fluet, P. Venkataraman, Tracy Davis |

AAC Charges for the Academic Year 2015-2016

| No. | Charge | AS Presentation |
|------------|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Review Policy D02.0 and suggest revisions, as deemed necessary, to ensure compliance with MSCHE Accreditation Standards. | Nov 19, 2015 |
| 2 | Examine possible changes to the grading policy, including further refinements of the A and D grades. | Apr 7, 2016 |
| 3 | Re-assess D08.0, D18.0, and D18.1, in consultation with the Division of Student Affairs, regarding further revisions, to reflect needs such as (for D18.0) Title IX compliance on matters of sexual harassment and sexual violence that have become apparent since new processes were implemented as of May 2013. | Dismissed |
| 4 | Investigate the intended nature of the University Appeals Board, its functions and composition in current policy and implications for proposing policy revisions with regard to appeals in academic matters | May 12, 2016 |
| 5 | Evaluate and recommend changes to the stated policy for Research Center creation and review, particularly related to the Center's responsibility to be transparent about requirements and decision making process for faculty affiliation as well as overall operation. Evaluate and recommend changes to the affiliation agreement, particularly where they relate to faculty plan of work, access to Center resources, and academic freedom. | Apr 7, 2016 |
| 6 | Investigate the effectiveness of the RIT Suggestion Box Program and its value-add to RIT. | May 12, 2016 |
| 7 | Continue to work with the Office of Legal Affairs and the Administration on the definitions for academic units. | May 12, 2016 |

Charge 1

Review Policy D02.0 and suggest revisions, as deemed necessary, to ensure compliance with MSCHE Accreditation Standards.

The charge was considered important to resolve quickly because of accreditation implications.

The charge was directed mainly at transfer admissions and transfer credits and arose because the language in Policy D02.0 did not meet with MSCHE standards.

The committee felt that the transfer admissions must make it clear that the final transfer credits will be decided by the appropriate academic unit even if the student is admitted to RIT.

AAC invited Marion Nicoletti, Director of Transfer Admissions at RIT to help the committee to understand the transfer process.

The current Transfer Admissions involve:

1. The admissions office does the admission and preliminary screening of transfer applications. About 70 % of the admissions are based on minimum requirements.

2. The student is offered admission to the program but the transfer credits are pending based on the assessment and decision of the concerned academic department. There are problems associated with this step.

- This process is not consistent across the college

- It may take six weeks for a response.

- There is lots of subjectivity

- There is no formal training for the assignment of transfer credits

- Some departments do not need additional students through transfer

- Decisions at this stage depend on electronic information and is difficult to share/distribute

3. After transfer credits are decided a paper-file is created. The file is then sent to liberal arts for general education credits. There is a problem here (according to David). The liberal art is being made to assess the math credit for general education instead of the math department. The decision is made more difficult by the plethora of Math courses with the same number but with different content. The paper file travels to the concerned academic department for the department credits.

4. A summary set of pages is then created representing all the credits from the various departments and is sent to the student along with a covering letter. The covering letter also indicates the standing (the year) of the student when the student joins the program.

5. If the student feels that he deserves more transfer credit then they are encouraged to pursue it further with the academic department directly.

The significant concern is the application from non-accredited institutions. They can be both domestic and foreign. It is difficult to evaluate their transfer credits. The admission from a student who has only attended a non-accredited institution is not forwarded to the department. The denial of admission is communicated by phone.

The admissions office uses a paid service to determine if an international institution is accredited.

In many cases international students pay for service to check accreditation. There are more International students that claim transfer credits than domestic students when they are from non-accredited institutions.

Current these students number about 24 per year. This number is not expected to increase in the future as non-accredited institutions are closing down.

Marian pointed out that we are only required to evaluate transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions according to the new MSCHE policy. If they are not from these institutions the students should not expect transfer credits.

About 900 other students are admitted to the transfer program every year. The process must be improved for transfer admissions.

Chris then was able to change the wording of one paragraph in the policy that accommodated MSCHE concerns and left intact the requirements used by RIT. The wording change below was passed by motion at the Academic Senate

Recommended Changes to Policy D02.0 ADMISSION

Transfer credit at the undergraduate level will usually be granted for those courses completed with a grade of "C" or better in other regionally accredited colleges or universities and specific armed services course work which parallel courses in the program (including options, if any) for which the student is applying or is currently registered. However, if the program (or option) which the student finally chooses to pursue does not include any or all of the courses evaluated, they will not be credited toward requirements for a degree. [The acceptance or denial of transfer credit, however, is not decided exclusively on the basis of the accreditation of the sending institution or the mode of delivery, but rather considers course equivalencies, including the expected learning outcomes compared with those of the receiving program's curricula and standards.](#)

Degree-seeking RIT students who wish to take courses at other accredited higher education institutions and receive transfer credit towards their RIT degrees need to secure the prior written approval of the dean(s), or their designee, of their home college or, if their program is

housed outside the college structure, the approval of the director or director's designee. In order to assure appropriateness of the course content and course level for Liberal Arts courses, academic units should consult with the College of Liberal Arts as needed. Transfer credit must meet residency requirements as noted in Policy D12.0.2.C-Graduation Requirements.

The motion passed the AS on Nov 17 2016.

Charge 2

Examine possible changes to the grading policy, including further refinements of the A and D grades.

The subcommittee was initially busy collecting, documenting, and looking for the initial report which provided the change to the grading policy. Chris offered to track down the report. The report was presented several years ago and was held in abeyance until the semester conversion took place. It was implemented after the conversion to semesters. The wisdom of dropping A+ was being sought by the subcommittee.

The letter grade system is new and there is not a lot of data because it has been instituted for just over a year. The new grading scheme is also optional.

The subcommittee designed and conducted a survey about the current grading system and the desire for further refinements to the grades (A+ and D+).

Meanwhile the committee invited Fernando Naveda and Michael Long to share their findings with the current grading system.

The Provost has allowed the use of C- grades for students to continue with their course sequence, for those courses that explicitly required a C grade as a pre-requisite for continuation. He had set a limit for two years for this deviation to smooth out any disadvantages due to the adoption of the refined grading system, which was taking place during the transition to semesters.

Fernando and Mike were asked to examine any data to see if there was any effect on student success due to this change. They only had data for one year. They presented data that applied to a few courses from three colleges (CAST, COS, GCIS) that had explicit requirement of C for courses sequences. Many of these courses were from the College of Science.

This examination by Fernando and Mike does not really address the charge to the AAC from the Academic Senate. That charge was to examine the further refinement of the grading system at the extremes of the scale.

The subcommittee conducted the survey on grades. The summary of the results of the survey:

Quantitative Results

Number of Respondents: 462

Do you typically use all of the available whole and +/- letter grades?

yes: 83.33%

no: 16.02%

Which additional +/- letter grades would you use if they were available?

- A+ (4.33): 33.98%
- D+ (1.33): 24.24%
- D- (0.67): 19.05%
- F+ (0.33): 2.16%
- Other: 12.34%
 - A+ (4.00): 0.87%
 - Eliminate +/-: 0.87%
 - None: 10.61%

What effect do you believe that the +/- letter grades have on student GPA?

inflates GPA: 10.61%

no effect on GPA: 53.68%

deflates GPA: 30.74%

Demographic

Tenure-track faculty: 59.74%

Lecturers: 24.68%

Adjuncts: 13.85%

Did not answer: 1.73%

Qualitative Results were collected to the following questions:

- If you answered no to the previous question (Do you typically use all of the available whole and +/- letter grades?), please explain your reasons for not using all of the available whole and +/- letter grades. (E.g., do not use C- because don't want students to get less than 2.0 for passing work.)
- If you selected one or more additional +/- letter grades in the previous question (Which additional +/- letter grades would you use if they were available?), please explain your reasons for wanting the additional +/- letter grades.
- Explain any concerns that you have about the effect that +/- letter grades have on student GPA?
- Please provide any additional feedback on the current RIT Grading Policy.

A brief examination of the text answer responses reveals the following:

A non-trivial number of comments of the form "It's fine." or "Stop refining." Since it is expected that those unsatisfied with the system would take the time to respond to a survey, it is especially enlightening that those satisfied with the system also took the time to respond to a survey.

There appear to be three dominant interpretations of +/- letter grades:

- numerical to letter mapping: $\geq 93\%$ is A, $\geq 90\%$ is A-, $\geq 87\%$ is B+, $\geq 83\%$ is B, $\geq 80\%$ is B-, ...

- numerical to letter mapping: $\geq 90\%$ is A, $\geq 87\%$ is A-, $\geq 83\%$ is B+, $\geq 80\%$ is B, $\geq 77\%$ is B-, ...
- there is and should not be a uniform numerical to letter mapping; final grades are the purview of the instructor

Opinions seem to be greatly influenced by a respondent's interpretation of +/- letter grades and the degree to which he/she assumes that the rest of the institute shares his/her interpretation.

The committee reached the following conclusions:

The survey results do not show majority support for A+, D+, and/or D- grades. Furthermore, given that +/- letter grades have only been implemented recently and given the non-trivial support for not changing the current policy, we recommend that the charge be resolved by concluding that no changes to the grading policy are necessary at this time.

One open question is whether or not some action(s) can and should be taken to ensure consistency in the use of +/- letter grades across the institute. The issue of consistency seems to have been less of a concern with whole letter grades. Furthermore, the implementation of +/- letter grades seems to have come without significant guidance. However, rather than revising Policy D5.0, a best-practices white paper or memorandum might be a better medium for communicating a consistent use of +/- letter grades.

The following recommendations were made to the AS on April 7, 2016.

Recommendation 1: No change to the grading system in Policy D5.0 (Grades) is necessary at this time.

Recommendation 2: Provide resources to analyze the results of the faculty survey in greater detail.

Recommendation 3: Charge the 2016/17AY AAC to develop a best-practices white paper to encourage consistent grading.

The following motion did not pass in AS:

Motion 1: Modify Policy D5.0 II A by deleting the Description column

Charge 3

Re-assess D08.0, D18.0, and D18.1, in consultation with the Division of Student Affairs, regarding further revisions, to reflect needs such as (for D18.0) Title IX compliance on matters of sexual harassment and sexual violence that have become apparent since new processes were implemented as of May 2013.

Charge dismissed by the Chair of Academic Senate - Communication by Hossein Shahmohamad on 11/23/15

For your information since RIT had to be in compliance with Title IX by a looming deadline, President Destler used his executive power to approve the policy before you had a chance to discuss it. This administrative policy is now behind us and you can consider charge 3 resolved.

The committee invited Joe Johnston, Director, Center for Student Conduct and Conflict resolution, to share information about Charge 3 on Nov, 17, 2016.

He mentioned that RIT was under pressure from NY Governor's Campaign "Enough is Enough" to revise policies D08, D18, and D18.1 to educate students on the new law combatting sexual violence on college campuses by Oct. 1, 2015.

RIT has created an interim Policy D19 which has been approved by the President.

Among other things Joe mentioned that a new reporting system is also in place to handle Policy D8 and to help with the process. A similar system is also available for D 18.

Charge 4

Investigate the intended nature of the University Appeals Board, its functions and composition in current policy and implications for proposing policy revisions with regard to appeals in academic matters

The subcommittee gave a presentation to the full committee and indicated that Charge 4 touches 3 RIT policies:

- (1) **D 8 – Student Academic Integrity;**
- (2) **D 17 – Grade Dispute;** and
- (3) **D 18 – Student Conduct**

There have been major changes to RIT policies in recent years:

- **D 17** used to address Academic Conduct and Appeals Procedures but now deals with only Grade Disputes. The personal and professional integrity for faculty that was part of the old **D 17** does not appear in any of the new policies.
- **D 18** has been amended significantly to handle student conduct issues only, influenced by Title IX. Many references to the appeals board have been removed.
- **D 17** identifies an ad hoc Final Course Grade Dispute Committee within the college or academic unit as the body that would hear a grade dispute case. A recommendation might be made to the instructor to change a grade in favor of a student, but final grades can only be decided by the instructor.
- **D 8** is invoked for academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, duplicate submission). **D 8** allows appeals by the students but this is channeled through the "**Academic Appeals Sub Committee of the Institute Appeals Board (see Policy D18.0)** however, all references to the Academic Appeals Subcommittee have been removed from **D18.0** After this process the issue would move on to the Provost. **D 8** is in need of editing to eliminate reference to an Academic Appeals Board. If an appeal process is desired, some other entity must be identified to handle it.

Many members of the committee felt that the charge should address both undergraduate and graduate students.

For student academic integrity issues the student is first suggested to resolve it at the local – department level. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome he can take it to the College Academic Integrity Committee. He can further appeal, but it is ambiguous where the student would go prior to the Provost, who might engage with the instructor.

In current practice, the issues are usually resolved at the college level. There is no uniform RIT policy for resolving these issues in the college. Many actions are based on precedent.

In the case of graduate students there is no serious mechanisms to respond to thesis adviser issues. The advisers provide financial support for the graduate students and they have a significant say in the degree completion. For the student there is no policy for appealing academic disputes, particularly with their adviser.

The AAC made the following recommendation to the senate.

Recommendation: Charge the Academic Affairs Committee of 2016-2017 to draft a university policy that establishes a University Academic Appeals Board (UAAB) with consideration of the following recommended characteristics and functions:

- To consider issues and disputes regarding academic matters that remain unresolved in the opinion of the petitioner (faculty, instructional staff, graduate/undergraduate students), having applied thorough and good-faith efforts, and exhausting all available informal and formal means to resolution
- To stipulate acceptable grounds as the basis for such appeal
- To establish a process for determining which cases have merit for entering the appeal process

- To delineate a clear path that might lead to the appeal process and a definitive end-point for terminating the appeal process and to articulate the relationship between the formal academic appeals process and (a) informal mediation processes; and (b) student conduct cases that involve academic matters.
- To describe composition of the UAAB, to include students and faculty or instructional staff from each college; with consideration of populating the Board, in part, with the existing chairs of the Academic Integrity Committees of the colleges
- To describe the future policy for applying findings for the UAAB in setting “best policy” or juris precedence for the university, based upon the outcome of appeals cases
- Delineate reporting responsibilities and budgetary implications.

At the AS presentation on May 12, 2016 the senators had further recommendations to the list above:

1. Collect information of how many cases will be appealed to the UAAB at RIT every year.
2. Make sure that the development of UAAB is integrated with other policies at RIT.

Charge 5

Evaluate and recommend changes to the stated policy for Research Center creation and review, particularly related to the Center's responsibility to be transparent about requirements and decision making process for faculty affiliation as well as overall operation. Evaluate and recommend changes to the affiliation agreement, particularly where they relate to faculty plan of work, access to Center resources, and academic freedom.

The subcommittee met with Ryne Raffaele to exchange notes about their charge and for the resolution they split the charge into two parts:

1. The first part involved policy changes to the Research center.
2. The second part was to craft an affiliation agreement that addressed faculty issues regarding the Research Centers.

Ryne Raffaele was favorably inclined with their recommendations.

They believe it was essential to come up with an affiliation agreement which will have an impact research center policy review and changes.

They suggest that "Research Centers" be called as "Center for Research Excellence/Major Research Laboratory" identified as CRE/MRL in this document.

They presented two documents for CRE/MRL (which includes the current definition of the research centers under RIT Policy).

- (i) Description of Affiliation Agreement with :
 - A. Preamble
 - B. Purpose

- (ii) The Affiliation agreement itself

The idea being that every CRE/MRL must create a written uniform process for affiliation and disaffiliation. This must be transparent and available to all faculty who would like to explore this opportunity. It is important that there should be a process to de affiliate from a CRE/MRL.

They also recommend that each CRE/MRL must have a written transparent policy and process for their operation. These policy should not violate the overall RIT policy regarding faculty and personnel.

RIT currently lacks policies relating to research administration. At the current time there is no uniform policy for the creation of CRE/MRL. There is no policy for affiliation. The administration of these entities are necessarily ad hoc. It is also not clear how they go out of existence.

There are several entities under this category that have been successful for a long time at RIT and it would appear that the requirement of the affiliation agreement will interfere with their current operation. It would be a challenge to require these entities to develop a policy and procedure for transparency.

The authors suggest that they are really not recommending uniform administration of these centers (it would be nice if that were to happen). They recommend that all CRE/MRL have a transparent written document for policy and affiliation.

The authors also noted that CRE/MRE must be managed through specific policy on research at RIT. They noted because these entities deal with personnel and staff other than faculty, they are mostly engaged in research, may engage in nonacademic activity as part of their mission, engage with F&A for adjustment of funds, addressing Part 1 of the charge must be undertaken by a separate committee (Research Committee) of the Academic Senate and not the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) – which has no jurisdiction in a lot of the areas. All the members present agreed with this assessment.

Below is the reproduction of the Affiliation Agreement (embedded pdf file). *Double click to open in Acrobat.*

Rochester Institute of Technology
Center for Research Excellence / Major Research Laboratory
Description of Affiliation Agreement

A. Preamble

A Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)-designated Center for Research Excellence (CRE) or Major Research Laboratory has a defined focus, involving multiple externally funded projects from multiple principal investigators (PIs) and support and/or research staff. Among other aspects, CREs/MRLs are defined in terms of their research expenditures, as follows: "The minimum amount of annual expenditures recorded on externally funded projects housed within the research center/lab, including capital, must average at least \$1.5M per year in total expenditures for a period of at least the past two consecutive years" (http://www.rit.edu/research/crs/grantmgmt/Accessories_FA_Return.htm)

B. Purpose

i. Each CRE/MRL shall create a process of affiliation and de-affiliation for membership of a CRE/MRL, in order to:

- (i) Provide a documentary record of affiliation and de-affiliation of all affiliates;
- (ii) Clarify a researcher's involvement in context of their Plan of Work (POW) and Annual Review and thus enable a researcher to formally claim affiliation to such a CRE/MRL;
- (iii) Enable a CRE/MRL to officially recognize and utilize researcher affiliations; and,
- (iv) Determine how the facilities and administration (F&A) overhead return to colleges, departments, center/laboratories, and PIs should be distributed.

ii. Each CRE/MRL shall determine membership requirements that RIT recognizes the following *core principles* as fundamental:

- a. An affiliate of a CRE/MRL is someone who:
 - (i) Has an integral role in the core activities of a CRE/MRL; and,
 - (ii) Makes regular use of CRE/MRL resources, (e.g., labs, equipment, project management staff, etc.).
- b. Individual applications for affiliation shall be approved by the CRE/MRL members—subject to the by-laws of the CRE/MRL—described in the affiliate's Plan of Work (POW), and approved by the researcher's department head.
- c. Affiliation and participation fundamentally embraces the concept of academic freedom, which allows for a faculty member to request association with any CRE/MRL.

Recommendation 1: Adopt the proposed Center for Research Excellence / Major Research Laboratory affiliation agreement

Recommendation 2: Form a Standing "Research Committee" of Academic Senate

Charge 6

Investigate the effectiveness of the RIT Suggestion Box Program and its value-add to RIT.

The subcommittee provided the following summary about the Suggestion box program:

RIT's Suggestion Program is about 9 months old and was instituted to provide a vehicle for encouraging students, employees and current alumni to share their ideas about ways RIT might consider reducing costs or generating revenue. Details on the program and criteria are found on the President's website (www.rit.edu/president/suggestions). Suggestions are reviewed by the RIT Suggestion Program Committee and sent to the appropriate evaluating department for possible implementation. If a suggestion is moved to implementation, the proposer (which can be an individual or group of individuals) is eligible for a \$25.00 Dining Services gift card. The Suggestion Program has a Director, appointed by the Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration and a committee chair. The Committee is comprised of the Chair, two volunteer faculty members approved by Faculty Senate; three volunteer staff members approved by Staff Council and a staff member from Facilities Management Services. The Committee meets monthly to review suggestions.

Suggestions are submitted through the RIT Suggestion Program website which provides guidance on the types of suggestions being sought; principally suggestions that will result in:

- Saving time, labor, materials, supplies or money
- Efficiencies
- Avoiding duplication
- Eliminating waste
- Generating additional revenue without increasing fees or tuition

Once a suggestion is submitted, they are vetted with the entire RIT community through the "vetting" portion of the website. An e-mail is sent out to the community from the Suggestion Program Committee Chair inviting comments regarding current eligible suggestion submitted. Examples of ideas that have been vetted recently include: Renovate Gracies to Leave Seating Area Open for Study Space; Create a general RIT poster; Have tiger bucks direct deposit; Ideas to improve campus sidewalks/trail; ideas about directional signage for drivers and building entrance signage and creation of a sidewalk on Royal Farnum Lane. All ideas are archived and can be found on the archive portion of the website.

This program is an example of engaging the community in continuous quality improvement and while new on the 'scene' has the potential to reap solid benefits for RIT.

Suggestion box statistics:

Total of 168 suggestions (at the time of compilation)

Departments that received suggestions:

1. Academic Affairs* (7%)
2. The Controller's Office Purchasing Services Office (12%)
3. Development
4. Enrollment Management
5. Facilities Management (38%)
6. Government & Community Affairs
7. HR* (8%)
8. ITS (8%)
9. Office of the President
10. Public Safety
11. Student Affairs
12. Student Auxiliary Services (including Dining & Housing, University Arenas) (9%)
13. Sustainability Office
14. University News Services

Suggestions that moved forward: 52

23 not implemented

14 were accepted and may be implemented

9 still being reviewed

6 implemented

Outcomes:

Although the program did not necessarily provide the revenue generation or cost savings that were initially intended, the program became an opportunity in so many other ways as an:

- Opportunity/outlet for community members to contribute and be heard
- Opportunity for employee recognition
- Opportunity for collaboration
- Opportunity for continuous improvement
- Opportunity to improve communication

Recommendation:

RIT's Suggestion Program is a new initiative and given its purpose and implementation thus far, we believe the program has merit and should be seen as an open means of allowing anyone the opportunity to exercise creativity in sharing ideas that will lead to improvements at RIT.

Charge 7

Continue to work with the Office of Legal Affairs and the Administration on the definitions for academic units.

The charge was not very clear and the subcommittee approached the AS and RIT Legal affairs to provide further enlightenment.

Academic Senate:

The definition of academic units is not clear. That is why we are asking your committee to suggest something, such as at least 100 students, at least 20 faculty members, at least 50 publications a year.

RIT Legal Affairs:

I can confirm that I am not aware of any one RIT definition of an academic unit, nor could I find a definition of academic unit in any of RIT's policies and procedures. But as you have probably surmised, the term "academic unit" is mentioned in various places on the RIT website.

For example, in the RIT Program Conversion Glossary, academic unit is defined as: "a department, department curriculum committee, or group primarily responsible for administration of an RIT program." In the College of Science Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, an academic unit is mentioned in relation to Head or Director and it seems to suggest that an academic unit is a college department.

The subcommittee found:

There is no universal definition of academic unit from search of our peer and other institutions.

The term is used quite liberally at various institutions without formal definitions.

Currently RIT does not have a formal definition of an academic unit though it appears in various policies of the institute.

Each college at RIT has its own organizational structure. The definitions of schools, departments, and center are not uniform across colleges.

The Provost's office at RIT did not request the definition of an "academic unit".

The word academic unit (together) appears in the following RIT policies:

C22.0, D01.1, D02.0, D02.1, D05.0, D08.0, D09.0, D13.0, D17.0, E08.0, E07.0, E09.0

This does not appear to cause any problems

The subcommittee proposed the following characteristics of the Academic Unit based on the definition at some of the schools surveyed.

- Reflects the existence of a demonstrably coherent field of knowledge which is likely to endure as such (taken from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville)
- It grants degrees.
(does a certificate qualify as a degree? This would only be an issue if an entity grants certificates w/o having any degree)
- Has tenured / tenure track faculty.
- Delivers instruction (primarily?) from faculty contained within the Academic Unit.
- Has a director / chair that reports to the Provost (directly or second-hand)

The committee could not agree on a definition that would exclude any current entity on campus that believes to be an academic unit. In addition there were the following difficulties:

It is difficult to define an '**academic unit**' without a need and a motivation

It is difficult to define an '**academic unit**' without reference to the consequence of the definition on current organizational structure

It is difficult to define an '**academic unit**' without a consistent definition of administrative units across colleges

Recommendation: AAC believes there is no compelling purpose to delineate "academic unit" at this time. For future consideration, the following definition appears to be the least restrictive

Definition*:

"Academic Unit" means a department, center, school, college or other academic division to which University faculty are assigned under the aegis of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

*borrowed from the University of Wyoming