

## Student Affairs and Admissions Committee

**Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday, August 16, 2005, 1:30 pm, CPH 1108**

**Last Meeting: Thursday, June 16, 2005, 1:30 pm, CPH 1108**

### Meeting Minutes for May 16, 2005

The COPH Student Affairs and Admissions Committee met on May 16, 2005, in CPH 1108. In attendance were Drs. Ann Abbott, Donna Haiduven, Charles Mahan, Noreen Poor and Aurora Sanchez-Anguiano.

The agenda items were to establish for Fall 2006 the GRE requirements for the USF College of Public Health (COPH), to propose departmental GRE scores for review by each Department, and to develop a point or weighting scheme for admission criteria.

Committee members unanimously voted that GRE scores should be required by COPH as admission criteria, and recommended that the minimum scores be 450 (verbal) and 550 (quantitative), "or" an entry grade point average of 3.0 for MPH students but "and" an entry grade point average of 3.0 for MSPH and PhD students.

No correlation between GRE scores and GGPA or graduation from COPH was found in a USF Graduate Studies student database (see above plot for example). One interpretation of these results is that the current GRE minimum requirement of 1000 results in successful grades and thus graduation. The two strong grade modes at 4.0 and 3.0 are a likely consequence of several factors including a bimodal grading system still in use (ie, either A or B), grade inflation, easy coursework, and loss of students with GPAs below 3.0. In the below table, we show the average GRE combined scores for three levels of GGPAs; ttest1 compares the middle and lower GPA category and ttest2 compares the middle and upper GPA category. The results for ttest1 are not significant (ie, no difference) but significant for ttest2. GRE developers recommend that scores not be combined: the below data are evidence that students with 450 verbal and a 550 quantitative GRE scores can be successful in our program. A recent analysis of the pass/failure record of COPH students on their first attempt on the comprehensive core exam showed a significant positive correlation between the quantitative GRE score and performance on the biostatistics section of the exam; performance of the epidemiological and health, policy & management sections had a weaker but positive correlation with GRE verbal and combined scores. The mean GRE scores for students passing the biostatistics section were 1100 combined, 500 verbal, and 600 quantitative.

(Note: the below table represents only those records where both GGPA and GRE scores were reported.)

	V	Q	Q+V	n
GGPA<3.0	472	514	986	129
3.0<=GGPA<3.5	478	524	1003	867
GGPA>=3.5	514	573	1087	1527
ttest1	0.429	0.280	0.228	
ttest2	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Committee members discussed the continued need to use GPA and GRE scores in combination as admission criteria, with most of the discussion on the weight of GPA and whether the grade criterion should be an "or" versus an "and" with the accompanying GRE scores. GPAs are subject

to the institutional expectations and extent of grade inflation (ie, a 3.0 GPA from Harvard may carry more weight than a 3.0 GPA from Outback U), while the GREs represent the same level of difficulty to all takers, thus both are important as selection factors. Using the “or” criterion for MPH students allows flexibility for institutional and/or reporting differences and for (changes in) student maturity and experience with time.

All but one department want to continue with the use of GPA, GRE scores and judgment to assess student applications for admissions. The Global Health Department has proposed an algorithm for evaluating their student applications. The algorithm includes a multiplicative factor of 1, 2, 3, or 4 for GPAs based on national rankings of colleges; weights for each of the GRE scores: verbal, quantitative and analytical writing (the latter TBD when data become available from Graduate Studies); a maximum score of 6 for a standardized recommendation form; and scores of either 0, 1 or 2 for both experience and goals.

Each Department will need to review their admission standards with respect to the proposed COPH minimum requirements. Moreover, the Committee is interested in reviewing the GRE analytical writing and percentile data for possible trends when it becomes available.

Noreen Poor  
Chair, Student Affairs and Admissions Committee