

**GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 31, 2005**

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Bates, Chair, Biology; Bettye Ann Case, Mathematics; Wendy Crook, Social Work; Joseph Dodge, Law; Eliza Dresang, Information; Peter Easton, Education; Kathleen Erndl, Religion; Flip Froelich, Oceanography; John Geringer, Music; David Johnson, Humanities/English; Gary Kleck, Criminology; Nancy Marcus, Dean of Graduate Studies; Colleen Muscha, Theatre; Jim Orcutt, Social Sciences; Srinivas Palanki, Engineering; Valliere Richard Auzenne, Film; Randy Rill, Medicine; Anne Rowe, Dean of the Faculties; Lee Stepina, Business

ALSO PRESENT: Lisa Beverly, Graduate Studies; Rebecca Bichel, University Libraries; Judith Devine, Graduate Studies; Ross Ellington, Academic Affairs; Max Gunzburger, School of Computational Science; Sam Huckaba, College of Arts and Sciences; Althea Jenkins, University Libraries; Janet Peterson, School of Computational Science

Internet-Based TOEFL (IBTOEFL) – Dr. Bates informed the committee that the Faculty Senate Steering Committee rejected the original GPC recommendation on a minimum score on the IBTOEFL for FSU admissions requirements. Dr. Bates explained that he will meet with the Steering Committee at their next meeting and he would like to have a fallback position to present to them on the speaking component of the IBTOEFL. A handout was provided, explaining the Steering Committee's position, which read:

The Steering Committee had a long discussion on this. While we are always reluctant to second guess our standing committees, we do not feel willing to send this on to the full Faculty Senate, which has a fairly long and consistent history of favoring stringent standards with respect to graduate admission standards. We would like the GPC to reconsider this. We agree that the standard for admission for IBTOEFL should be revisited next year on the basis of initial experience, but in the interim we believe the University should be requiring a specific minimum performance standard for the Speaking subsection. The Steering Committee actually favored the original motion not voted on at the GPC meeting, calling for Speaking subscores of 23 for all admissions and 26 for candidates offered Teaching Assistantships, but what the GPC forwards to us is up to you; we just remind you (a) presumably departments could still request waivers if they had outstanding candidates for admission who did not meet the Speaking subsection score, and (b) the full Senate has tended to want stringent requirements with respect to English language entry standards.

Dr. Easton noted that the concern of the Steering Committee is that the FSU minimum score standards should be higher, an issue that was not addressed by the Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) representatives. Dr. Rill expressed concern that setting a higher standard on the speaking component on a test that is new is not appropriate. He suggested that departments should set their own recommended score for the speaking component of the IBTOEFL.

Dr. Richard explained that the Steering Committee discussed the issue and they were adamant about setting the speaking component score higher.

Dean Marcus noted that she had learned that Humanities-area faculty members on the Steering Committee were more adamant about setting a higher speaking component

standard. This contrasts with the perspective voiced particularly by Science-area faculty at the GPC. She added that the ETS TOEFL web site shows a better comparison chart. Across the board, none of the schools listed in the ETS chart are recommending a score higher than 24 on the speaking component of the new test. She further added that ETS also recommends that the minimum scores should be provisional because the speaking component is so new. ETS also recommends that each university should set up an evaluation committee to review the speaking component score.

Dr. Case asked how this new test affects the Speak test scores. Dean Marcus explained that FSU graduate teaching assistants who are instructors of record must take the Speak test. She wondered if it was reasonable to send all international teaching assistants at FSU to CIES to take Speak test. Dr. Crook added that the Speak test is a known evaluation for FSU international students and that the ETS IBTOEFL speaking test is so new that it is not a useful standard at this time.

Dr. Erndl remarked that the issue is the extent of how the speaking component scores will be evaluated in the first year until there is a reasonable expectation established. She added that she expects that students will be intimidated by the new speaking component. Dr. Kleck responded that the Steering Committee will not accept a recommendation from the GPC in which there is no set standard for the speaking component.

Dr. Easton commented that setting a standard at this time is not advisable. Dean Marcus noted that setting a high standard on the speaking component score may discourage some students from applying to FSU, while also increasing the quality of accepted students. Dr. Kleck remarked that the science areas are concerned that excellent students will go to other universities if the FSU standard is set too high.

Melanie Booker, from the Office of Admissions, informed the committee that Janice Finney and she will meet with Dean Marcus next week to address concerns about the IBTOEFL. She added that a score of 213 on the current computer test equates to a score of 550 on the paper test. She remarked that the GPC is trying to set a criteria but not considering the students who are taking the other forms of the test. She noted that ETS has suggested that scores from students who have taken the other versions of the test would equate to a score of 79-80 overall IBTOEFL score, which is lower than the admission standard set by other schools so far. She continued that ETS suggests that schools use total IBTOEFL score for the admissions standard, not the component scores. ETS has recently added the fourth component and it will likely take at least one year for a standard to be set by ETS. She added that when the new test is rolled out in a country, the paper and computer versions will no longer be offered there. The majority of FSU international students come from Korea, India and China and the new IBTOEFL test will not be available in those countries until April/May 2006.

Dean Marcus commented that she agrees with ETS that some standard-setting committee should be formed at the universities to evaluate the new test scores.

Dr. Kleck suggested that Dr. Bates inform the Steering Committee that a standard will be set in a year, when there is an opportunity to review the minimum, as no scoring percentiles are currently available.

Dr. Crook explained that there is a rationale for using 80 as a standard total score noted in the ETS IBTOEFL brochure, as it is comparable to 213 on the computer test and 550 in the paper test.

Dr. Bates expressed concern that a student may earn a score of 25 on three components of the test and zero on speaking. Dr. Erndl added that the speaking exam component has never been evaluated before and she expressed concern that students taking the IBTOEFL test in the first year could be discriminated against.

Dr. Crook noted that each academic unit can set a higher standard score. Dr. Johnson asked how many students who take the Speak test fail. Dr. Bates answered that in Biology every Chinese student fails the Speak test the first time it is taken, approximately five students per year. It was also noted that international students cannot become teaching assistants with instructional responsibility until they pass the Speak test.

Dr. Froelich suggested setting the standard score at 80 until scores can be evaluated.

A **motion** was made by Dr. Geringer and **seconded** by Dr. Palanki that reads:

We recommend that the minimum standard be a total score of 80 for the IBTOEFL, equivalent to the current standards at FSU.

The motion passed with 3 opposed and 14 in favor.

Dr. Bates will recommend to the Steering committee that the standard scores for the IBTOEFL be reevaluated in one year.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on November 7, 2005.