

Academic Standards Committee

Faculty Senate Annual Report: AY 2024-2025

Committee Charge

The Academic Standards Committee is charged with reviewing the policies and procedures utilized to maintain its academic standards, and to collaborate with Office of Academic Integrity and other relevant institutional groups to make revisions as appropriate. The committee will provide recommendations for educational information/efforts about academic standards for students and faculty, with particular attention given to education for students of differing cultural backgrounds. Finally, they will review historical case data and gauge faculty and student understanding of and thoughts about the Academic Standards case resolution processes to inform efforts listed above.

Composition:

- Six members of the faculty, at least one of whom is a Faculty Senator, from at least four different colleges or schools
- Two representatives from the Provost's Office
- One student government representative
- One GAPSAs representative

Committee Chair

Alexandria Zylstra (Costello College of Business)

Committee Members

James De Marco (School of Nursing)

Eric Auld (College of Humanities and Social Science)

Valerie Olmo (College of Science and **faculty senator**)

Michael Hurley (College of Humanities and Social Science)

Courtney Wooten (College of Humanities and Social Science)

Timothy Leslie (College of Science, Provost's Office representative)

LaShonda Anthony (Director, Academic Standards Office, Provost's Office representative)

Carolyn Hoffman (GAPSAs representative)

Timeline and Meeting Schedule

The Academic Standards Committee is a new university standing committee that held its first meeting on October 31, 2024. Beginning in Spring 2025, the committee began meeting every three weeks. In total, the ASC held five meetings in AY 2024-2025.

Committee Initiatives & Updates

- Our initial meeting addressed our charge and organized tasks as emergent or long-term.
- The committee addressed the need to update George Mason’s student application as it contained the old honor code language. The new application language was agreed upon and the Admissions Office implemented the changes.
- The ASO sanctions matrix raises a case from Level 1 to Level 2 for undergraduates that have been at Mason for at least a year and have more than 90 credits of completed coursework. After discussion, the committee voted to lower this number from 90 credits to 59 credits and to reduce the term of attendance from one year to one semester.
- The committee addressed the issue of faculty who leave George Mason before a case is resolved by the ASO, leaving the student’s final grade as HC/NR. The referral form now includes language asking all referring faculty to identify to ASO the faculty member (or Dean) who will have access to the faculty member’s gradebook and grading policies should this occur. This will allow the ASO to follow-up with the appropriate individual once the case is resolved.
- The committee addressed concerns about potentially vague language found in the Removal from Studies sanctions matrix. After discussion, the matrix language was amended do:

	REMOVAL SANCTIONS	
	Undergraduate students	
	Suspension	Dismissal from university
First Offense	Possible	Possible
Second Offense	Automatic (one semester)	Possible
Third Offense	Automatic (one year)	Possible
Fourth Offense		Automatic
	Graduate students	
	Suspension	Program termination
First Offense	Possible	Possible
Second Offense	Automatic (one semester)	Possible
Third Offense		Automatic

- The committee addressed the issue of how to treat multiple referrals of the same student in one semester. **The new policy:** Each letter (notice of alleged violation) from Academic Standards Office counts as a new referral. Once a student is referred to ASO and then receives notice of that referral from ASO, any subsequent referral (from the same course or different) in the same semester will be considered subsequent violations.
 - Exception: If a student is referred multiple times in the same semester, but the first case resolves as "not in violation" or the faculty member dismisses it, then the subsequent referral is then treated as a first referral.

Action Plan (to be addressed in AY 25-26)

- ASC plans to continue monitoring the implementation of the ASO training for students and faculty.
- Additionally, the committee plans to assist the ASO in how best to educate faculty about the ASO process, beyond the mandatory training that should be implemented by then. This topic was not addressed this academic year, as the ASO Associate Director tasked with faculty outreach was on leave during the spring semester.
- The committee will continue discussions with relevant university partners regarding graduate versus undergraduate university dismissals for ASO violations.
- The committee will continue monitoring process and outcomes data regarding the new ASO process, making recommendations and revisions as needed.

APPENDIX A

1. During the past calendar year has the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President (or their respective offices) announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?

Two members of our committee represent the Provost's Office. As such, the Provost's office was responsive and engaged with the work of the committee.

2. Did your Committee seek information or input from the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?

Two members of our committee represent the Provost's Office. As such, the Provost's office was responsive and engaged with the work of the committee, including providing guidance regarding implementation of faculty and student ASO training as well as data gathering and analysis of ASO cases and outcomes.

3. Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost, Senior Vice President and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.

The committee does not have suggestions regarding more effective interactions from these offices.

4. Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President, Provost, Senior Vice President, or their staff.

N/A