New York University
Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee

Advisory on the Creation of an Undergraduate Commission
February 27, 2007

Based on a report by a subcommittee that met on February 13, 2007, and on subsequent discussion by the full UAAC, we make the following recommendations to the Provost regarding an Undergraduate Commission (UC):

The charge of the UC should be to bring a University-wide perspective to bear on broad undergraduate academic initiatives. Its chief responsibility should be to advise the Provost on any new undergraduate programs requiring State Education Department approval (e.g., degrees, majors) and also on new cross- and inter-school minors. In reviewing such initiatives, the UC should provide a necessary due-diligence oversight by asking whether the program is redundant or complementary to what already exists on campus, and by ensuring that the school’s procedures for approval have been followed.

We advise that the UC be a standing committee, although it could call in on-campus experts as needed. With one exception (see below), members should serve three-year staggered terms. While we do not specify an exact size for the UC, it should be significantly smaller than that of the Graduate Commission. The UC should be chaired by the Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and University Life. Owing to the difficulty associated with all-University balloting, other members should be appointed by the Provost. Most of the members should come from the faculty (tenured). To be responsive to governance concerns, a significant portion of them should come from elected committees (e.g., Senate Academic Affairs or Educational Policy committee; members of the undergraduate curriculum committees or educational policy committees of the individual schools). At least one or two should come from the UAAC. In addition, one appointee should be an undergraduate, selected from the Student Senators Council and serving a one-year term, renewable once. Finally, we recognize that school deans will have an interest in this process, and recommend that two of them, or their representatives, also serve on the UC on a rotating basis; other undergraduate deans could be invited to attend meetings at which initiatives involving their schools are being considered.