Petitions: During the period covering May 1, 2008 to September 4, 2008 (the previous year-end report did not present petitions information for summer 2008) there were 81 petitions, of which 3 were approved by the registrar and 14 by the petitions preview team. Of the 64 petitions that went before the Petitions Subcommittee, 51 were approved while 13 were denied. Of the 81 petitions, 19 were for readmission after suspension or dismissal, 9 were waivers of the last 8 units in residence requirement, and 9 were for drop with a “W” grade after the automatic “W” period.

During the period covering September 5, 2008 to April 30, 2009, there were 171 petitions, of which 28 were approved by the registrar and 46 by the petitions preview team. Of the 94 petitions that went before the Petitions Subcommittee, 71 were approved and 23 were denied (no action was taken on 3). Of the 171 petitions, 33 were registrations for classes with time conflicts, 32 were for late adds within the automatic “W” period, 18 were for readmission after suspension or dismissal, and 14 were waivers of the last 8 units in residence requirement.

Hearing Boards: There was only one hearing board convened in 2008-09 for an instance of the second violation of the university’s academic integrity policies. The student in question was a senior. The hearing board handed down a sanction including an “F” grade for the course in which the plagiarism occurred, a notation indicating the reason for the grade placed on the student’s transcript, and a requirement that the student finish his graduation requirements at Puget Sound.

While one hearing board represents a dramatic decline from the ten that were held in 2007-08, the registrar notes that the number of hearing boards seems to vary markedly from year-to-year and is not confident that the decline represents anything other than normal fluctuation.

Withdrawal Policy: The ASC considered a charge from the Senate to discuss whether students should continue to be required to obtain drop codes from their professors during the automatic “W” period. After a debate considering the desire for student responsibility against the desire to keep advisors and professors on top of their students’ decisions, a motion to do away with drop codes was soundly defeated.

The ASC also conducted a comprehensive look at the W/WF policy, examining data on withdrawals for each week of the term, and judged that the new withdrawal policy was working well.

Course Abandonment: The ASC spent some time considering the university’s policy on course abandonment; specifically, what grading options were available to the professor in the event a student simply stopped coming to class. The existing language read “When a student abandons a course without completing official withdrawal procedures, the instructor assigns an appropriate grade, normally the WF. If the instructor does not assign a grade, a grade of WF will be entered by the Registrar.” However, the discussion was prompted by an instance in which a professor wanted to award a W, arguing that the student had abandoned the course during the automatic “W” period, making the W, rather than the WF, the appropriate grade. The committee felt that, while it wished to respect the autonomy of the professor, such a grade was not appropriate. Thus, the ASC passed a motion to change the abandonment language so students abandoning classes after the 6th week will automatically receive grades of WF regardless of when the abandonment “occurred”. The ASC also specified the withdrawal policy for the summer sessions.
**Excess Courses:** A concern was raised before the ASC about the nature of excess courses which may not apply directly to the major of a student but, if the course is in the same department as a student’s major, do count towards the student’s major GPA. This can make it very difficult for a student to “fix” her GPA. While there was no resolution on what should be done, this issue should, perhaps, be addressed next year.

**Reading Period:** The ASC has spent much time on the question of the purpose and intent of reading period. The language governing reading period states that “no activities” shall be held; this has been interpreted to include formally scheduled review sessions. The ASC’s understanding of reading period is that is to be a time during which students are free from any and all formal or mandatory obligations, and that even a review session can be seen by students as required. Furthermore, there are concerns that faculty could introduce new material during reading period. However, as students often request review sessions and as reading period is, to some degree, intended for students to prepare for their exams, an informal arrangement has emerged in which professors will sit in rooms to review material with any students who happen to attend. After considerable discussion, the ASC requested that that the Faculty take up the issue of the purpose of reading period and decide whether review sessions should be allowed. The ASC’s concerns on this issue were presented to the Senate on April 13, 2009.

**Pass/Fail Grades:** The ASC moved to do away with the option for Pass/Fail grades in academic courses. Several factors motivated this change: That certain classes seemed to attract a large number of P/F students that detracted from the class and that students were not using the P/F option in a manner consistent with the spirit of trying classes outside of a student’s comfort zone (examples include freshmen taking P/F courses and seniors taking P/F courses within their major department). After (admittedly non-scientific) research revealed Puget Sound’s policy to be among the most lenient, the ASC unanimously voted to abolish the option, recognizing that such a action would most likely provoke debate in the Senate and the Faculty. The chair of the ASC is scheduled to appear before the Faculty on May 5 to solicit opinions on the P/F grade option.

**Class Disruption Policy:** The ASC considered the class disruption policy, which allows an instructor to have a disruptive student removed from class until an agreement on acceptable behavior can be reached between the student, instructor, and Academic Advising. After considering the responsibility the university owes to its students and the need to preserve faculty autonomy, the ASC passed new language that reads as follows (changes in *italics*):

Disruptive class behavior is unacceptable. Disruptive class behavior is behavior which, in the judgment of the instructor, impedes the other students’ opportunity to learn and which directly and significantly interferes with class objectives. Should such behavior occur, *the instructor is expected to inform the student and the Director of Academic Advising of the behavior deemed to be problematic and to attempt to work out a solution to the problem. If a solution cannot be reached, the instructor will direct the student to leave class and will refer the matter to the Director of Academic Advising. Permission to return to class will be granted only after the student meets with the Director of Academic Advising and signs a contract agreeing to appropriate ameliorative action. If the disruptive behavior continues, the instructor may direct the Registrar to drop the student from the course. Students wishing to appeal an administrative drop for class disruption may do so by petition to the Academic Standards Committee. In such cases, students will continue to be barred from class until the Committee renders its decision.*
The language was passed with the understanding that any appeal would take place in a timely manner so as to not make impossible for a student to return to class.

**Advisors in the Major:** It was brought to the attention of the committee that several departments have very large numbers of majors which leads to faculty having very large numbers of advisees, creating an advising burden on certain members of the faculty. The ASC considered various options, including training members of “under-advised” departments to act as advisors in an over-burdened department, but no successful resolution was reached. The discussion was ended by tasking Associate Dean Sarah Moore and Director of Academic Advising Jack Roundy with talking with department chairs to see if there was interest in developing a solution.

**Medical Withdrawal Policy:** The Office of the Dean of Students raised concerns over the language of the university’s medical withdrawal policy as the existing language seemed to obviate a student’s ability to obtain multiple medical withdrawals for a recurring psychological condition. The withdrawal policy was changed as follows:

**Medical Withdrawal Policy**

Medical withdrawal may be an appropriate response to a medical or psychological condition that prevents a student from completing the semester’s work.

The Academic Standards Committee may permit medical withdrawal when the following steps are taken:

1. The student must withdraw from all courses. Withdrawal must be initiated on or before the last day of classes of the current term.
2. The student must submit to the Registrar a personal statement and a health care provider's statement describing the medical or psychological conditions that prevent the student from completing the semester’s work. The Registrar or the Academic Standards Committee may wish to consult with the student before acting on the petition.
3. The Registrar makes a recommendation to the Academic Standards Committee, which then makes the final decision.
4. If the medical withdrawal is approved, the student will receive grades of “W” (passing withdrawal) in all courses.

A student may return from a medical withdrawal with the permission of the Academic Standards Committee. Permission may be granted with an approved re-enrollment petition to the Committee that includes the student’s personal statement, a health care provider's statement, and any other statement or documentation required by the Committee. Health care providers may also stipulate conditions under which re-enrollment will be permitted; the student must meet such conditions and any continuing conditions set by a health care provider.

Medical withdrawal petition forms, health care provider forms, and medical withdrawal re-enrollment forms may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

**Involuntary Withdrawal:** The committee considered the need for a policy allowing the university to involuntarily withdraw students who, in the opinion of the university, need to be withdrawn from classes but who refuse to do so. Much of the discussion focused around legal issues and the potential for abuse. While no policy was passed, the ASC did task Assistant Dean of Students Debbie Chee to look more into the policies extant at other universities as well as the possibilities of getting a medical
professional to evaluate a student in the case of the university desiring to implement an involuntary withdrawal.

**Independent Study:** The question of the nature and purpose of independent study was also considered by the committee. It was brought to the attention of the ASC that several students were doing independent studies of very similar natures with one instructor leading the committee to question whether that was truly independent or simply an off-the-books course. This raised questions of teaching loads for instructors, questions of equity (would instructors feel required to offer multiple independent studies in departments in which there is a norm of doing so?), and curricular integrity (are courses being offered that are not being approved by the Curriculum Committee?). Ultimately, the ASC decided that the question of the nature and purpose of independent study was beyond the scope of the committee, and decided to seek the advice of the Senate and Faculty. The ASC’s concerns on this issue were presented to the Senate on April 13, 2009. The ASC also decided to add some questions to the Independent Study Request form in order to gather information on the extent and nature of the problem.

**Honor Code:** The ASC has been considering for some time the implementation of an honor code. After much discussion of language, the ASC voted to pass the following language and to add it to the Academic Handbook:

I am a member of the community of the University of Puget Sound, which is dedicated to developing its members’ academic abilities and personal integrity. I accept the responsibilities of my membership in this community and acknowledge that the purpose of this community demands that I conduct myself in accordance with Puget Sound’s policies of Academic and Student Integrity. As a student at the University of Puget Sound, I hereby pledge to conduct myself responsibly and honorably in my academic activities, to be fair, civil, and honest with all members of the Puget Sound community, and to respect their safety, rights, privileges, and property.

This language incorporates the existing Student Integrity pledge that students take at matriculation. Dean Kris Bartanen will present this language at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees; the language has also be approved by ASUPS. The ASC also moved to implement the policy (pending approval by the Board of Trustees) by substituting this combined language for the language pledged at the matriculation ceremony as well as by requiring students to affirm their commitment to the Honor Code prior to registration each semester. The ASC also adopted a short version of the pledge (which follows) and recommends that instructors require students to sign this short version on all work handed in and to be included on, if possible, blue books

**Short version:** I hereby pledge that this is my work, completed in accordance with the University of Puget Sound’s Academic Integrity policy.

Finally, a summer sub-committee was formed to evaluate the existing on-line materials concerning academic integrity.

**Recommendations for 2009-10:**
1. Hearing board: Oftentimes, a violation of academic integrity will occur towards the end of one semester, but the hearing board will not be convened until the following semester. When this happens, it is not clear to the board whether it is fair to dismiss the student (if dismissal is deemed to be warranted) for the current semester when the violation occurred in the last and
the student was permitted to return to campus (and paid fees). This issue was raised several times during hearing boards in the 2007-08 academic year and needs to be resolved.

2. Reading period (see above).

3. Independent study (see above).

4. Academic climate/intensity: Following the Fall Faculty Conversation, the chair of the ASC met with George Mills, the Vice President for enrollment, to discuss ways of improving the academic climate and intensity on campus. Alas, time did not permit consideration of these issues by the full ASC. It is recommended that next year, the ASC consider the following:
   a. Increasing faculty involvement in the admissions process
      i. Faculty attendance at admitted student yield events
      ii. Creating a faculty-admissions committee
      iii. Improving the admissions essays on the application
      iv. Increasing faculty interaction with prospective students on campus
   b. The requirement of the SAT/ACT
   c. Grade inflation
   d. Standardized Assessment tests within departments

5. Excess courses (see above).

Respectfully submitted,

Seth Weinberger
Chair, Academic Standards Committee, 2008-09