

The APRC has reviewed the Student Government Association's "An Act to Reform Academic Honorary Awards" requesting that full-time students who take twelve or more credit hours may be eligible to receive the Dean's List and President's Award. After discussion, the committee voted five in favor of supporting the SGA's request and one member abstaining.

Committee Remarks:

The committee recognizes the SGA's argument that university considers students who take 12 hours to be full time students and thus the awards should be available to all fulltime students, not just those exceeding the minimum hours required for full time status.

The committee would like to add that it is not clear to students or faculty members why UTSA requires that students be registered for 15 hours to be eligible for the awards. We considered that the 15 hour requirement be a tactic to encourage students to graduate in a timely manner. However we recognize that students who do take fewer than 15 hours may have compelling reasons to so – financial, familial obligations, work demands/inflexible schedules, etc. If the university's policy on a 15-hour requirement for academic awards relates to completion and retention, then it behooves the university to make clear the rationale for the requirement.

We do suggest that policies impacting student decisions about how many courses are required for award eligibility careful consideration. We have no data regarding the relationship between course load and academic achievement although in general the higher the load, the higher the achievement. Because other local universities award course load requirements of 12 hours, we don't want to miss an opportunity to retain students, particularly those intending to seek higher degrees or highly competitive jobs for which awards may be an important selection criteria.

One member of the committee suggests that UTSA consider a tiered system similar to other universities (e.g., <http://as.cornell.edu/academics/advising/deans-list-req.cfm>). Such systems allow students to be eligible for the Dean's List and other awards with a minimum of 12 credit hours but requires that the GPA be higher for those individuals who elect to carry fewer credits. This approach seeks to strike a balance between academic performance in class and course load.