

On The Relative Importance of Undergraduate Transcripts in The Faculty Hiring Decision at Truman

Except from a letter to Prof. David Robinson from VPAA Garry Gordon
March 23, 2000

- In regard to the specific concerns you raise about transcripts, the University has a longstanding practice of requiring and using undergraduate (and graduate) transcripts as elements for review in making decisions about the hiring of candidates. Transcripts are one of several criteria that are considered; other consideration is given to evidence of teaching, scholarship, prior experience, statements of philosophy and intent, and recommendations. All of this evidence is used to determine the appropriateness of a candidate for a faculty position here. Although there are not grade “quotas” or detailed prescriptive requirements established for the review of transcripts, they are an important element in the review of applications. I, for example, examine undergraduate records to give some indication of breadth in a candidate’s curriculum and to serve as some indication of the potential for that candidate to understand and support our liberal arts mission. If grades are inconsistent and there is little coursework outside of the major, I consider that to be a weakness in the candidate’s application. Mitigating circumstances or significant strength in other areas can create a more positive image of that candidate. Have we interviewed and hired candidates whose grades were inconsistent? Yes, I know of cases from throughout the 20 years that I have been at this institution. Have we rejected candidates who have had inconsistent grades? Again, the answer would be yes, but I believe that other factors and criteria entered into the decision; at least I can say that for the cases in which I was involved. We would not hire a candidate based solely on an undergraduate or graduate record, nor would we not interview and not hire one who indicated great strength and suitability for a position for the same isolated criterion. In the end, a candidate’s educational record is important and is viewed as such, but in the context of the overall application.