The specific charges of the Academic Excellence Committee for the year were as follows. I will comment on the progress made toward each:

1. Complete the study of +/- grading and bring a recommendation to Senate concerning the adoption of such a system. If approved, guide the recommendation through the curricular approval process, gathering appropriate input from faculty, students, and administrators.

Accomplished. The Senate at its March meeting approved the AEC’s motion recommending that the University adopt plus/minus grading for undergraduates. Meetings were held with faculty (a faculty forum), students (a student forum), and administrators (Provost’s Council)—as well as the Registrar and the Director of Financial Aid--to gather appropriate input. The recommendation has been forwarded to the Provost, who will coordinate the deans’ examining college requirements as to any modifications that might be necessary after adopting plus/minus grading. The Senate Executive Committee will then shepherd the proposal through the curricular approval process (Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, and University Council).

2. Study the university’s current policy for retaking courses and replacing grades.

This charge was not fulfilled. The examination and promotion of plus/minus grading was more time consuming than anticipate. This should remain a high priority for next year’s committee.

3. Make recommendations for enhancing the academic usefulness of the current web-format catalog.

The university is currently in the process of choosing a new software package for the online catalog. The chair of AEC expressed to the Registrar the Senate’s concerns about the usefulness of the current catalog and the Registrar has appointed the current chair to be on the selection committee.

4. Seek ways to increase student awareness of the TCU academic mission by increasing faculty involvement in the First-Year Experience.

Again, the committee did not devote much time to this charge and this should be made a part of the continuing work of the committee next year.
5. Act as a consultative body for the Senate representative to the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics.
The AEC has made itself available to the TCU COIA representative for consultation.

With regard to the standing charges of the Senate, the AEC this year worked closely with members of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Student House, chaired by Mandy Velasquez. Committee members made a presentation in early fall to the Student House concerning the plus/minus grading proposal and joined with the Academic Affairs Committee in sponsoring the student forum on the plus/minus grading.

Respectfully submitted,

C. David Grant
Chair