During the 2008-2009 academic year, members of the Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) continued working with Pam Spence and admissions staff to review and take action on special admission cases. In the fall, three cases were reviewed (two international/student athletes and one case involving foreign language requirements). In the spring, seven special cases were reviewed (all students with SAT scores lower than established cut off in one or more area), and, members of the committee worked with admissions staff to have substantive and holistic evaluation of these students. In addition to standard review criteria (e.g., coursework, GPA, rank, standardized testing), we also paid close attention to sets of non-cognitive variables (positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, success in handling the system, preference for long term goals, availability of strong support person, leadership experience, community involvement, and knowledge acquired in a field). The discussions took into account a more complete and fair assessment of these students and their potential for success at Richmond. Members of the committee expressed favor for retaining practices that require a deeper evaluation of admission candidates falling into these categories.

Additionally, individual members of the committee worked on several projects initiated by Nanci Tessier, Vice President for Enrollment Management. One member of the committee worked on the CollegeKeys Compact Inventory, a call to action by the College Board and signed by President Ayers to signify Richmond’s dedication to increasing access and affordability for students from low-income backgrounds. Other members worked with the sounding board for admissions publications group and our new publications firm. Some members met with the Posse Foundation, a group that “identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes” and shared our opinions about a potential partnership with this organization. One member is attending a conference on SAT optional schools and will report on what is known at other institutions regarding these practices. He will serve on a committee asked to assess the possibility of the University of Richmond implementing a test-optional admission policy for undergraduate admission.

Finally, it is with great respect and thankfulness that we say good-bye to Pam Spence who has served Richmond in the Office of Admission for more than thirty years. As Dean of Admission, Pam has worked closely with our committee, helping us understand the complex world of admissions and serving as a role model for professional dedication to this institution. We also really like the fact that she buys us breakfast at our 7:30am meetings! Two members of the UAC are serving on the search committee for a new Dean of Admissions.

Respectfully submitted,

April Hill, Chair
April 16, 2009