

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

January 8, 2007

Johnson Hall Conference Room

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Herb Chereck, Dave Hubin, Dan Keller, Dean Livelybrooks, Dan Patton, Ashley Rees, Ron Severson, Karen Sprague, Pat Bartlein, Lyllye Parker,

Absent:

Hilary Gerdes, Anne Laskaya, Martha Pitts, Steven Pologe, Kathy Roberts (Christopher J. Murray), Bill Ryan, Arkady Vaintrob, Kate Wagle, Malcolm Wilson, Paul Engelking, and Ken Calhoon

The Chair reviewed the Agenda with the Undergraduate Council. (HO #1)

Minutes:

After a minor correction in the attendance record, the motion was made to accept the minutes from the from the November 15 and November 29, 2006 meetings.

Moved: Dean Livelybrooks

Seconded: Lyllye Parker

The motion to accept the minutes of both meetings passed unanimously.

Agenda

Overview of Winter term Undergraduate Council meeting topics and goals (HO #2)

The Chair reviewed seven specific topics which he proposed the Council focus on during the Winter Term meetings. They included:

- Reviewing the multicultural requirement and the courses that count toward it;
- Getting departmental feedback on grade inflation and its potential remedies;
- Developing a proposal for curbing grade inflation to present to the Senate;
- Soliciting UO's feedback on the draft criteria for General Education courses that would be transferable statewide. The Council had earlier recommended that the directors of undergraduate programs in the relevant subject areas be asked to critique the draft statements and encourage additional faculty to do so;
- Working with the library to develop web pages containing expanded descriptions of Group-satisfying courses in preparation for the accreditation group arriving in April;
- Providing recommendations on new program proposals , e.g. the AAA proposal for a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Product Design and the CAS proposal for a Minor in African Studies;
- Continuing discussion of electronic course evaluations, especially concern about response rates and potential loss of qualitative information, with goal of making recommendations to the Course Evaluation Task Force.

Discussion

The Council agreed to several action items related to these topics:

- The Council agreed to hold a special *ad hoc* meeting on April 16th to which the outside Accreditation Team would be invited. David Hubin will arrange the logistics for this meeting.
- Relevant staff in the Library will meet soon with a small group of Council members to preview the online course description webpages that will be designed and constructed.

- The Chair confirmed for the Council that AAA, upon the Council's recommendation, has submitted a synopsis of their proposed degree major in Product Design to the Provost, in accord with Academic Affairs' protocol for new program approval

(<http://academicaffairs.uoregon.edu/newprogram/flowchart.pdf>).
- A new program proposal in African Studies from CAS was distributed to Council members, who briefly discussed the review procedure. Herb Chereck said that Gwen Steigelman in Academic Affairs is in charge and is clarifying the handling of program proposals.
- The Chair reviewed concerns of the Council re. response rates and qualitative evaluations relative to the proposed online course evaluation system. Herb Chereck noted that an RFP has already been issued for the project. He said that Brad Shelton will be addressing the University Senate re. the timeline of the project within the week.

The Chair asked for other topics that the Council wished to address. Several were proposed:

- The Council should look into internships and capstone projects for seniors across the institution;
- Research opportunities for underclassmen should be explored;
- Vice Provost Chunsheng Zhang should be invited to present the opportunities for international studies to the Council.

Andrew Bonamici advised the Council that it needed to select a nominee to work on the Educational Technology Committee. In response to a query about the time commitment required for this service, Herb Chereck observed that it would require as much as or maybe a little more time than is involved with serving on the Undergraduate Council. The Chair was asked to solicit a nominee from among interested members on the Council.

Multicultural Requirement

Karen Sprague opened the discussion on the UO multicultural requirement by presenting a summary of the process used by the Undergraduate Council to review all of the Group-Satisfying Courses offered in AY 2002-2003. (HO #4-01082007) The review sought to answer two fundamental questions:

- 1) Do courses meet the criteria for Group-satisfying status? Most did.
- 2) Are the criteria good (i.e., workable)? Criteria were effective for lower-division courses, but not for 300-level courses. An important outcome of the review was clarification of the distinction between lower-division and upper-division Group-Satisfying courses.

A similar process is proposed for examining courses that satisfy the multicultural requirement. Karen distributed copies of the UO Multicultural Requirement as presented in the 2006-2007 Course Catalog, along with a count of multicultural courses offered in each category, and asked Council members to consider sample syllabi (HO #5-01082007) with these questions in mind:

What do we want in multicultural courses? That is, why do we ask students to take them?

How should the appropriateness of the courses be evaluated?

Is the current categorization appropriate and do the courses fit into these categories?

It was noted that the Committee on Courses has reviewed multicultural courses. One point that has been frequently noted is that upper-level multicultural courses are generally major-specific. Is this desirable or should students be stepping out of their major area to fulfill the multicultural requirement?

Other questions that emerged during discussion included:

- Does our broad offering of multicultural courses “hang together”?

We offer students many choices for fulfilling this requirement, rather than designing a particular course to meet it – a model that is used on some campuses.

- There are fewer courses in one category, American Cultures, than in the other two – probably because each of the other two include a much larger number of academic disciplines.
- Are there recognizable patterns in the way students fulfill the multicultural requirement?
- What is the requirement intended to accomplish?

One member of the Council asked if perhaps having so many multicultural courses available in the curriculum was a disservice to students because it opens up too many possibilities without communicating the relationship of the courses to the General Education curriculum or to the students' majors. Karen asked if all three student representatives could talk with other students on campus to see what their ideas were on the multicultural requirement. It was also noted the multicultural courses actually lie within the liberal arts program, not outside a liberal arts education. We need to be more explicit in making the connections between multicultural courses and liberal arts programs.

The Chair commended the Council on the quality of its discussion, and noted that some questions may remain unanswerable. He suggested that the Council prepare to develop a process for evaluating multicultural courses at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 22, 9:00am at Johnson Hall Conference Room.

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