

Minutes & Agendas

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UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

February 11, 2007

Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Gavin Bruce, Herb Chereck, Hilary Gerdes, Andrew Leavitt, Dean Livelybrooks, Alexandra Marcus, Steven Pologe, Karen McLaughlin, Ron Severson, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Kate Wagle, Alan Kimball, Paul Engelking, and Jim Imamura

Absent:

Dave Hubin, Elizabeth Jarvis, Anne Laskaya, Malcolm Wilson, Bill Rossi, and Elizabeth Reis,

Minutes:

The motion was made to accept the minutes from the January 14, 2008 meeting.

Moved: Arkady Vaintrob

Seconded: Alan Kimball

The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

Updates:

The Chair reviewed the revised process for the Undergraduate Council's participation in departmental program reviews. He reported that this process was acceptable to the Graduate School (which currently oversees program reviews) and will be implemented with upcoming reviews in 2008.

Cathy Kraus gave the Council a brief description of the progress being made in the redesign of the Undergraduate Council website.

Karen Sprague announced a molecular biology seminar on research into suspended animation to be given on February 12 by Mark Roth, from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Mark was an undergraduate student at the University of Oregon. The Undergraduate Council members were invited to attend the seminar.

Agenda

Add/Drop Proposal from Office of the Registrar

Herb Chereck presented a brief recap of the development of the University's current policies on adding / dropping classes after the close of open enrollment. As technology (specifically Banner) became increasingly utilized in the online enrollment process, the extended time periods of several weeks required to manually process add/drop requests were moved back to the current deadlines of the Monday of Week 2 of the term for "Last Day to Drop Classes without a "W"" mark on the transcript and Wednesday of Week 2 of the term for "Last Day to Register/Add Class". Now, faculty are expressing concern about "in-out" activity in their classes that impedes the formation of study groups and leads to a significant loss of course time for students who add classes at the deadline..

Anecdotal evidence shows:

- graduate students have a difficult time with the Add/Drop policy;
- first-year students have a hard time finding openings in classes they need.

Herb explained that the proposed policy revision would change all drop/add deadlines to midnight Sunday after the first week of classes. Classes dropped by midnight Sunday after Week 1 would not incur a "W" mark on the transcript nor a tuition penalty. Classes added by midnight Sunday would not require a petition with the instructor's signature. Beginning Monday of Week 2, students would incur a "W" and tuition penalties as currently in place for classes dropped after Monday of Week 2; a petition to the ARC (requiring instructor approval and signature) would be required to add classes after Monday of Week 2.

The proposal attempts to address pedagogical concerns, not just course management.

Discussion

The Council raised several concerns and questions about the proposal:

- is the ARC petition process still available to students desiring to add classes under this new proposal?

- students regard the "W" mark on their transcripts as punitive and try to avoid it if at all possible; advisors in departments also actively discourage students from getting this mark;

- the proposal seems to raise three distinct issues:
 - 1.) the difference between dropping without incurring "W" mark and dropping without incurring a tuition penalty;
 - 2.) the loss of significant class time by adding late in a term;

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by
2;
- 3.) the time differential between the drop deadline and add deadline;
- there should be a "wait" between the drop and add deadlines; maybe drop by midnight Friday of Week 1 and add midnight Sunday after Week 1 and before Week 2;
 - wouldn't a simultaneous Drop/add deadline have the effect of penalizing students who sit in on a class waiting for a "logistical" opening?
 - how about setting up an electronic waiting list that students could sign up on when they are enrolling online for particular classes that may be full?

A letter submitted from the Journalism School, and endorsed by the dean of the school, also presented feedback to the proposal:

From: Greg Kerber
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2008 10:47 AM
To: Ron Severson

Dear Ron,
Thank you for your message.

I'm an academic advisor in the School of Journalism and Communication, and I'd like to comment on the upcoming proposal that would (if I understand correctly) make the drop and add deadlines the same day.

I hope the proposal will not pass.

The SOJC's accrediting body requires that we maintain a limited faculty:student ratio in our professional classes, which (obviously) makes them very expensive to teach. Because we're operating beyond capacity, many of our faculty allow an extra student or two to sit in until after the drop deadline to see whether seats open up at the drop deadline. (This is in addition to listing all of these classes as "Mandatory Attendance" in the schedule and dropping students who fail to attend the first class.) Students are willing to do this because, in more than a few cases, not getting into the course can mean paying for an extra term in school.

I suppose that, if the proposal passes, our faculty could continue to allow students the same opportunity and then support ARC petitions to add after the deadline, which strikes me as a situation that would add unnecessarily to ARC's workload. However, I don't think this would impact only SOJC students negatively.

If I recall correctly, the current drop and add deadlines were set at the recommendation of the Banner Implementation Committee, on which I served. I remember arguing all those years ago against a proposal at that time to make the drop and add deadlines the same day. I asked at the time: What's the point in an earlier drop deadline unless it's to give other students the opportunity to take advantage of the seats that open up? I would ask the same question now.

Thank you for your time.

Greg Kerber
Assistant Dean for Student Services
School of Journalism and Communication

Herb commented that the Council's input was very important and he would consult again with his department and return with a revised proposal. The Chair tabled further discussion on the proposal until a revision was brought to the Council for consideration, probably at the next meeting.

COLT Proposal for revision in major

The Chair reminded the Council that a previous proposal for a minor in COLT had been endorsed by the Council on April 24, 2006. This proposal was a separate matter.

It was pointed out by member representatives from the University Committee on Courses (UOCC) that although the CAS Committee on Courses had approved the proposal and moved it forward, the UOCC was just beginning its review of the proposal and has some questions about the new courses that are included. These courses have not yet been approved by the UOCC. The Chair and the Council concurred that the UGC should delay consideration of the proposal until the UOCC has completed its review. Since the program for the major already exists, it does not need to go to state review; however, this proposal is a significant shift in focus for the program. The UOCC plans to finish their course review by end of Winter term; the UGC will take up its review in Spring term at the first meeting and will ask department representatives to present the proposal.

Multicultural Course Review - Recommendations

The Chair of the Undergraduate Council and the Chair of the University Committee on Courses have agreed that general recommendations concerning the multicultural requirement will be endorsed by both groups and presented jointly to the University Senate. The Chair said that discussion of the recommendations could be summed up under three questions:

- 1) How can Multicultural Course syllabi be made more informative for students?
- 2) Should Study Abroad satisfy part of the Multicultural requirement?
- 3) Should the criteria for the three multicultural categories be clarified?

One of the first questions that should be asked is What is the purpose of the Multicultural Courses? Do students understand this purpose?

- having the requirement on the degree audit has helped raise student awareness of the Multicultural requirement;
- the *intent* of the Multicultural requirement should be on all Multicultural course

syllabi;

- is the goal or intent of the requirement listed in the University catalog?
- there should be clear and consistent communication of the purpose of the Multicultural requirement to students, to faculty, and to

department

administrators.

After discussion on this point, the Council formulated the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

Descriptions of multicultural courses are not restricted by the 25-word limit on catalog copy and should be full enough to give students and advisors, who are not experts in the field, a clear understanding of the course content. Moreover, these descriptions should show how the course is related to the general purpose of the multicultural requirement and how it fits the particular multicultural category in which it is offered. These informative descriptions should be posted online in the Class Schedule and included in course syllabi, both online and in hard copy (if hard copies exist).

Further recommendations will be taken up and discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 25, 2008 in the Rowe Conference Room of the Knight Library.