

Minutes & Agendas

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UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

February 19, 2007

Johnson Hall Conference Room

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Hilary Gerdes, Dave Hubin, Dan Keller, Dean Livelybrooks, Dan Patton, Steven Pologe, Kathy Roberts, Ron Severson, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Pat Bartlein, and Lyllye Parker,

Absent:

Herb Chereck, Anne Laskaya, Martha Pitts, Ashley Rees, Bill Ryan, Kate Wagle, Malcolm Wilson, Paul Engelking, and Ken Calhoon

The Chair distributed the agenda for the meeting and updated the Council on the status of ongoing work. (HO#1)

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Agenda

Report on testing of query on grading trends in departments

1. Departmental feedback on grade distribution – the Council is asking departments to comment on the usefulness of the distributed data for the initiation of departmental discussions. The query is easy to run; there are some problems with running the query on Macs, but information is coming to address this.
2. Requests for more specific data have been received, e.g. grading trends for different types of instructors in the department.

The Chair will inquire of the test departments as to whether or not this is a good start.

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Discussion:

Council members discussed the project in greater detail:

- a. Data on individual courses would be immediately helpful.
- b. Data on the grading practices of different types of instructors would be useful.

- c. There is a need to be sensitive with the data on individuals. [Departments need data on individuals to be able to act locally].
- d. The goal is to learn whether departments want distribution of grade distributions to be used as a means of curbing grade inflation. Departmental feedback will suggest how the Council should proceed on this point.
- e. The Council is leading at a campus-wide level in promoting the idea that grades are an important form of assessment, whose usefulness depends on minimizing grade inflation.

Review Committees

The Chair presented a request from Marian Friestadt for representation from the Undergraduate Council on the Program Review Committees. Pat Bartlein noted that the time commitment for a representative is about 3-4 hours total, spread out during the space of one month.

There are four departments or programs slated for review: Geography, History, International Studies, and Journalism and Communication. Dean Livelybrooks volunteered to serve on the Geography review committee. The Chair will send out e-mails to solicit more volunteers from the Council.

Expanded Course Descriptions

Andrew Bonamici reported on the history and the current status of the Expanded Course Description project being developed by Undergraduate Studies, the Registrar's Office and the Library Tech Center. (HO #2 & #3) The immediate goal of the project is to develop a pilot site with 36 course descriptions. The long term goal of the project is to have all Group-satisfying courses (~300) on-line. Librarians are currently working on finding images for the course descriptions.

Discussion:

- Council members noted that it is more important that these description pages link to more detail on each course, e.g., the syllabus. It's not clear that this feature will be part of the pilot. The Council emphasized that it would be part of the fully functional site.

- Will a prototype of this project be available for the Council to review prior to the March 31 launch date?
- A dedicated computer site for this prototype might be set up in the Susan Pape room of the museum for accreditors to view.

Proposal for Minor in African Studies

The Chair reviewed the proposal from the African Studies Committee, noting that the committee had submitted the changes recommended by the Council (HO #4):

- a major/minor breadth requirement had been submitted;
- temporary courses had been eliminated from the minor program;
- a catalog copy had been created.

It was noted the request for an AFR prefix for the program courses was not in the purview of the Council.

Discussion:

- There was concern, from the Library's perspective, that resource costs were underestimated, particularly for growth in the language areas and the bolstering of a meager library collection in the research area.
- Generally, the Council found the proposal to be very thorough and complete. Resources appeared adequate to most Council members..

The Chair called for a motion.

The motion was made that the Undergraduate Council endorse the proposal for the establishment of a Minor in African Studies.

Moved: Kathy Roberts

Seconded: Steven Pologe

The motion passed unanimously.

Criteria for Multicultural Requirement Course Review

The criteria and questionnaire used in the Survey of Group-Satisfying Courses conducted by the Council in 2003 were distributed as samples of how a survey of Multicultural Courses might be shaped. (HO #5a) Copies of the University's

multicultural requirement (as presented in the Course Catalog) were distributed to Council members. (HO #5b)

The Council began discussing the three categories of the multicultural requirement:

Category A: American Cultures

- What does it mean to compare/contrast two ethnic American cultures?
- What kind of comparison is intended? Many Native American literatures are oral traditions, transcribed by anthropologists, linguists, historians, etc. A comparison could be the examination of these different approaches.
- Does the requirement for “comparison” of two cultures limit the goal of multiculturalism? Category A addresses the “multi-“ in multiculturalism.

Category B: Identity, Pluralism & Tolerance and & C: International Cultures

The Chair asked the Council to examine these two categories carefully—

- Are they discrete? Do they overlap? Are there courses that qualify for both categories?

The Chair appointed a small group to suggest questions with which the multicultural categories could be examined – analogous to those on the Group-Satisfying course questionnaire. Group members included Karen Sprague and Ron Severson; other Council members were encouraged to volunteer.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 5, 2007, 9:00am at Johnson Hall Conference Room.