

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of February 22, 2001

Members present: Faye Chadwell, Hilary Gerdes, Dick Koch, Wendy Mitchell, John Nicols, K. J. Park, Stephen Ponder, Scott Pratt, Kathy Roberts, Marian Smith, Karen Sprague, Glenda Utsey, Bob Zimmerman

Members absent: Herb Chereck, Paul Engelking, Wayne Gottshall, Craig Hickman,
Anne Leavitt

Meeting began at 8:35 a.m.

Independent Study Program for Students in Terminated Degree Programs

Some degree programs were terminated as a result of Measure 5. Students part way through these were allowed to complete their work through the Independent Study Program. Since Measure 5 was passed in 1990, it is time to bring this temporary arrangement to an end. Spring 2001 will be the last term. With your consent we'd like to end it.

Hilary mentions that as long as students were accepted into the I.S.P. prior to summer, they could still finish.

Consent was granted, termination effective at the end of Spring 2001.

Karen asks if we still have the independent study program.

John confirms that we do.

Motions before the Council

John directs members to what Herb provided him with, the frequency with which group-satisfying courses are offered. Since most courses are offered at the required frequency, few departments would be affected in a dramatic way by the new legislation.

KJ indicates that there is a mistake in the physics courses listed. He states that they've been offered every year.

John says that the other issue is the tendency of students to use more than one course in their major to satisfy General Education requirements. He explains that Herb did a survey of 100 students and it suggests that if the new rule were in place, approximately

half of these students would be affected. Shows there's a tendency for students to use courses in their major departments to meet group requirements. We want to avoid this.

Dick asks whether 100 students is a large enough sample to draw conclusions. The numbers of students in each major is small.

John notes that Herb could not be here and that he should be consulted on the reliability of the data.

Finalizing the Motions

John addresses the full motion. He says that the variance relates primarily to the definition of group satisfying status. We will lose the formatting in the senate minutes.

Karen says that while she does not want to take up time discussing formatting issues, it is nevertheless unacceptable that the output is so unclear. For purposes of gathering reaction, it is important to have things written out clearly and we shouldn't be limited to HTML format. She doesn't see why the senate can't use a clearer format.

John says that we will need to speak to Peter Gilkey.

Karen says that since we're trying to offer a complete document to the senate, she felt that she should sit down and read the whole thing. When she did, she realized that some things did not make sense. She has offered suggestions for your consideration. With regard to point 4, she is not suggesting the meaning be changed, but that it could be made clearer. She suggests trying for completeness and clarity.

Glenda and Marian voiced agreement.

John moved to use Karen's language as long as there's consensus.

Karen explained that the change in the arts and letters criteria was a reaction to considering the non-university population and their reaction to the word "liberal" and equating it with politics. Karen explained that she was attempting to amplify what "liberal" meant. She looked for alternate words but the dictionary's definition of liberal encapsulated it so well that staying with "liberal" is preferred.

Scott recommends leaving the word liberal in.

General discussion of the meaning of "liberal" – concluding with a decision to add a parenthetical explanation of liberal, as suggested by Marian Smith. Scott Pratt will provide the explanation.

John directs attention to the sciences.

Karen explains that with regard to the criteria for group-satisfying science courses, she is trying to change the meaning. Too much of a loophole exists for courses that do not teach science but focus primarily on social problems with a science flavor. The emphasis has to be on science. Her intention was to make that explicit.

KJ explains that the original criteria were meant to be inclusive. The wording synthesized the view of a group of National Academy members in science and they, surprisingly, took a very liberal view of what constitutes General Education. It is very inclusive. They couldn't imagine science departments abusing the freedom implied by the language.

Dick asks if it is a question of whether there is a problem existing right now that would be solved by a change. He says that he can see how it *could* be abused.

Glenda says that the change sounds more negative, and it would be better to sound inviting.

KJ remarks that very different views come from the social science and natural science people with regard to the appropriateness of laboratory courses.

Karen agrees that laboratory courses would be acceptable. For General Education purposes, however, it is imperative that a lab course introduce students to scientific reasoning and not just the function of machines.

Bob offers a computer science example. He feels that the current statement allows computer courses to fit the criteria, even when they should not. The new wording would exclude CIS courses that do not contain math or scientific reasoning. He thinks this is appropriate.

Marian offers the testimonial, as a non-scientist and former bachelor of arts student, that she was glad she was forced to take a solid science course and glad that she couldn't substitute something else (watered down science) for it.

Dick suggests running the new wording by the committee that wrote the current statement and doesn't anticipate them being against it. It is agreed that he will do this.

John suggests that by stopping at "scientific reasoning," Karen's statement would sound more positive.

Scott asks that the word "primarily" be appended in the laboratory statement.

Karen agrees.

Review Procedure for General Education Status

Put together proposal after discussing issues in AAA that would allow the registrar at the end of each term to meet with those involved in reviewing courses, and to consider all of the courses seeking group status together. Standards could be discussed in a group all at one time. Representatives of both CAS and the professional schools would be included. This does not involve the formation of a new committee.

Glenda explains that the issue arose because a new head in landscape architecture was unfamiliar with the process and could not find a clear, accessible description of it. She first went to the university curriculum committee and they said they could not look at the proposal until after CAS had looked at it. Her proposal ended up getting lost in a dark hole.

John says that the procedure for requesting General Education status is available, but notes that it might not be easy to find.

Glenda notes the frustration of the landscape architecture head. She says that any time the professional schools can be a part of the College of Arts and Sciences, it's an opportunity to share information and make our programs better. Often students misunderstand why they need to take courses in other departments. The more faculty can participate in this decision-making process the better. She implores us to be informed. She suggests that an improved application form for requesting General Education status is needed.

Karen says that maybe this is something the Office of the Vice Provost could do.

<Consensus>

Glenda indicates that she agrees and says that it is better to have a permanent member represent the school.

John indicates his support.

Bob says that he is able to speak to how John Nicols' proposal might work in practice. He says he doesn't like separate consideration of General Education status. He explains that when the curriculum committee receives the paperwork for a course, the whole committee identifies specific issues that need to be examined. One person then tackles those issues, and finally the whole committee considers the course again. He thinks it would be impractical to take the issue of General Education status out of the discussion of each course as a whole.

John says that his concern with the group satisfying courses is that we look at the question of group status department-by-department and course-by-course and struggle with what is “group satisfying” in different settings. If we consider all the courses requesting group status side-by-side, it will be easier to apply standards uniformly. The last UCC provided an example of what can happen when the piecemeal approach is used: Courses at the 600-level were proposed for General Education status – and they were approved! People tend to be on autopilot in granting General Education status and we need to make the process more deliberate and uniform.

Glenda emphasizes the point that we are a liberal arts school and General Education is very important.

John would like to explore how we might procedurally make application for group status more effective.

Bob believes that there should be one electronic standard form.

John and Glenda agree.

Karen suggests that this summer she will come up with a standard procedure that will facilitate evaluation of course proposals from all schools and colleges.

John asks if a decision can be made on the group requirements. The members offer no response. John offers to write up more information and circulate it.

Hilary inquires as to what implementation date John is looking at.

John responds with Fall 2002.

John brings up one additional issue: The relationship between credit hours and contact hours in lower division courses. He indicates that we need to look at this next term.

Bob believes this is a very big task, but fine-tuning can be done.

John says that he will work on getting the motion on the Review Procedure for General Education status re-written.

Dick suggests not going to the senate until the UGC is satisfied with the entire motion.

John asks if we can meet next Thursday instead of waiting for the next regular meeting.

There is agreement.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.