

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes of May 31, 2001

Members present: Hilary Gerdes, Craig Hickman, Dick Koch, Kate Kranzush, Anne Leavitt, Wendy Mitchell, John Nicols, K. J. Park, Stephen Ponder, Scott Pratt, Kathy Roberts, Karen Sprague, Glenda Utsey, Bob Zimmerman

Members absent: Herb Chereck, Paul Engelking, Faye Chadwell, Mark Daniel, Wayne Gottshall, Serene Khader, Marian Smith

Meeting began at 8:40 a.m.

Classroom Scheduling Protocol

Wendy believes that the closure of Gilbert Hall for renovation could be delayed.

Foreign Language and Math Requirements

John recommends postponing discussion until fall term. Karen asks to discuss foreign languages briefly today, following other business.

Agenda Items for Fall Term

Karen requests 3 agenda items to be considered for fall.

1. Reconsider the criteria for making the deans list. The way it is currently stated is confusing with regard to the number of credit hours and the load that must be carried in order to be eligible.
2. Scott Pratt's prior suggestion that a sub-group of the Undergraduate Council serve in an advisory capacity for academic content in UO recruiting publications.
3. Clarification of who should march in graduation. There is a large number of students who aren't really graduating but who participate in the ceremony anyway. In some cases this is ok, but there is an increasing number of abuses of the system.

Kate requests discussion of American Sign Language as a foreign language option.

Anne would like to discuss to what extent opportunities for distance education/distance learning should be a part of our curriculum. The new term for this is Flexible Learning Environments and it may encapsulate more in its definition than the former term. To what extent do we want to encourage multiple learning environments in our thinking about undergraduate education?

Selection of Chairperson

John's continued service as chair is proposed and enthusiastically endorsed by the council. He accepts the nomination and asks for someone to serve in an assistant capacity. Wendy Mitchell offers to be assistant chair for academic year 2001/2002.

Other Business

John reminds members that submissions of proposals must be made in .pdf format in the future.

Foreign Language Placement

Karen explained how the system is operating now. The information in Banner tells us that students have met the admission requirement of 2 years of foreign language, but doesn't detail which specific language. This summer, for the first time, we'll have additional (self-reported) information about which language was studied and when. From an advising perspective this will be very helpful to advisors. Useful advice will be given. Students will be counseled by advisors as to the next step to take - either continue the same language, but in the 111 series (not the very beginning sequence), or start with a new language. The 111 series is available in both Spanish and French. Currently being developed is a more efficient placement test. This will be an electronic test and will be used during IntroDUCKtion. The test estimates a starting point to begin college coursework in a language.

Kathy Roberts shares information broadcasted this morning on television news. The current requirement for high school students to take two years of foreign language will be put to a vote. Presumably, proficiency, rather than a particular number of courses, will be required.

Karen has been working with Carl Falsgraf, a specialist in test design, who is developing better proficiency tests. Undergraduate Studies is helping to subsidize his efforts and to connect him with the appropriate specialists in the particular languages, especially French and German.

John is concerned about the difference between students who complete an AP language and receive college credit versus students who take a placement test and test out of the requirement, but don't receive credit toward graduation. He worries that there is little incentive for doing well on the placement test.

Anne points out that the AP courses teach culture and not just the language, so there may be a reason that AP carries college credit whereas basic language proficiency does not.

Hilary points out that many students fulfill their two years of high school foreign language during the first half of their high school career. These students need something to compensate for the two years of no foreign language study between fulfilling their requirement and beginning college coursework.

Karen explains that what will happen this summer is that we'll be providing better advising but will not bar students with previous language training from starting at the entry level (101). There is a concern that we may currently not have an adequate number of 111 courses for all of the students who should be in them. Once we determine the relative need for 101 vs 111 courses fine-tuning may be necessary.

John inquires with Dick Koch as to math placement.

Karen explains that Ken Ross has worked to revise the math placement procedure. The initial placement will be based on the SAT score. This score will be used to determine whether a student is ready for college level math, or needs more work. For the vast majority of students, this amount of placement should be sufficient. However, there will be students who need to take the placement test - either because they want to start at a level above Math 111, or because they believe that the SAT-based placement is incorrect. The use of the SAT score for appropriate placement, however, will eliminate the mad rush to show up and take a mandatory math placement test - which is irrelevant for many students, and which has not been anticipated by students who do need to take it.

Kate asks for an explanation as to how the B.S. math requirement applies to students who begin their university math at different levels.

Dick explains that if you were to test into an advanced level course you would be able to satisfy the requirement with fewer courses than the norm. You would not have to take additional courses as substitutes for the ones you had skipped over.

Wendy brings up the issue of California, where they're considering not using SAT scores.

Dick interjects that people in California actually want to retain SAT achievement tests, and were concerned about the verbal SAT, not the math SAT.

Kate offers her experience with language placement and the system not serving her best interest.

John wants to know if the information that we're providing students is accurate and helpful.

Kate has mixed feelings.

Meeting Arrangements for Next Term

Members will receive an email from John regarding the meeting time for fall. John inquires as to whether or not this time is good for members? Steve indicates that Tuesdays and Thursdays are the best for him. KJ, Wendy, Bob, and Karen indicate that the current arrangement is fine.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.