

## UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of January 8, 2002

Members present:

John Nicols, Dave Hubin, Kate Kranzush, Kathy Roberts, Karen Sprague, Herb Chereck, Stephen Ponder, Paul Engelking, Anne Leavitt, Scott Pratt, Bob Zimmerman, Gail Unruh, Hilary Gerdes, Wendy Mitchell

Members absent:

K.J. Park, John Postlethwaite, Faye Chadwell, Jim Imamura, Wayne Gottshall, Craig Hickman, Marian Smith, Amanda Stocker

Meeting began at 8:35

### **New Members**

As Chair of the College Curriculum Committee, Jim Imamura will replace Priscilla Southwell, who has been filling in temporarily. Additional replacement council members are needed for Wayne Gottshall, Craig Hickman, Marian Smith and Amanda Stocker.

### **Three contact hour/Four credit hour courses**

The principal topic for this meeting was how to deal with courses that are offered for four credits, but meet only three hours per week. Two different proposals emerged:

1. To establish guidelines for structuring the fourth credit hour without faculty/student contact; 2. To adhere to the principle that in lower division courses, credit hours should correspond to contact hours. The discussion of each of these proposals is summarized as follows:

#### 1. Guidelines for structuring the non-contact credit hour

John Nicols presented a revised one-page document which summarized the issue. The following questions were discussed:

#### **Could this document justify a fourth non-contact credit hour to an accreditation team?**

The present document would not be adequate because it does not address the issue of monitoring or measuring the student effort that earns the fourth credit. The council's document should provide a method for recording the specific extra activities required in each course of this kind.

#### **Who would monitor these activities?**

Neither the Committee on Courses nor the Senate addresses this level of detail and could be called upon to monitor the fourth hour. It would be difficult (perhaps impossible) to monitor every course taught, but some members think that departments can be counted upon to do the right thing when asked to monitor their own courses and uphold standards according to general guidelines. Other members doubted the possibility of specifying appropriate work for a non-contact credit hour, and of monitoring actual student effort. Dave Hubin noted that accreditation teams are grappling with what is considered student work. If an accreditation team feels that the UO is in agreement on the standards, and on what assessment is, it is unlikely to object to deviations from exact correspondence between credit hours and contact hours. In contrast, the team would be concerned if it were to find a lack of faith that standards were maintained uniformly throughout the campus.

## 2. Credit hours should correspond to contact hours

The ideal is to have credit hours match contact hours. This could be achieved if:

a. Three credit courses were permitted. To do this, the General Education requirements would have to be redefined in terms of number of courses, rather than number of credits.

b. The impediments to a direct correspondence between credit hours and contact hours were identified and overcome. What are they?

1. Room capacity

2. Lab equipment availability

3. Lack of funds for TAs to staff the fourth hour

A. Faculty are willing to have the contact hours, but there is lack of funds to staff the extra hour.

B. Are students (especially freshman) able to sit through a two-hour course successfully?

Possible ways to simplify the problem:

1. Focus on lower division courses. Existing faculty legislation requires a one to one correspondence between credit hours and contact hours only for lower division courses.

2. Within the lower division, focus on group-satisfying courses as a priority.

3. Take advantage of two-hour time block scheduling to add contact time in the form of additional discussion and unhurried lectures.

### **Scott Pratt's proposal:**

A simple, direct relationship between credit hours and contact hours is what is needed to maintain the quality of undergraduate education at the UO. Therefore, we need to:

1. Determine what would be needed to supply the fourth contact hour for all existing courses that now lack it.
  - a. Determine funds required to staff the additional hour of seat time.
  - b. Determine class space and lab equipment required to provide the additional hour of seat time.
2. Make the case that this is what quality undergraduate education costs, and adopt strategies to meet the cost.

There was enthusiasm for this proposal in the council.

### **Summary**

#### **The immediate tasks of the council are to:**

1. Uphold the principle that high quality undergraduate education depends on direct interaction between faculty and student. Thus, for lower division group-satisfying courses, credit hours should correspond to contact hours.
2. Use the current list of four-credit courses that have only three contact hours (list prepared by Priscilla Southwell) to begin estimating the cost of providing four hours of contact time for the lower division, group-satisfying subset of this list. John Nicols will direct the work needed to arrive at this estimate.
3. Table the revised three contact hour/four credit document that was discussed today until data on the cost of providing the fourth contact hour (point 2 above) have been obtained and analyzed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40