

Undergraduate Council Meeting

Minutes of January 22, 2002

Members present: John Nicols, Kathy Roberts, Karen Sprague, Stephen Ponder, Paul Engelking, Anne Leavitt, Scott Pratt, Bob Zimmerman, Gail Unruh, Hilary Gerdes, Wendy Mitchell, Jim Imamura, John Postlethwaite, Kate Kranzush, Herb Chereck, Colleen Bell (substituting for Faye Chadwell)

Members absent: K.J. Park, Faye Chadwell, Amanda Stocker, Craig Hickman, Marian Smith, Wayne Gottshall

Meeting began at 8:35

Agenda:

1. **Discussion of attached motion from Herb Chereck on commencement procedures.**
2. **Update on the funding of GTF positions to help meet the 4th credit.**

New member: Jim Imamura, Chair of the College Course Committee and the Scholastic Review Committee (winter term) is now a member of the Council.

Presentation by Larry Smith: The Career Center's Student Services

Larry presented information on the activities of the Career Center and asked for suggestions for improvement.

Services:

- Provide links with employers
- Help students choose majors
- Help students identify interests and skills
- Mentorship course (1 credit)
- Information on internships, PLEs, etc.
- Help with resume preparation
- Career Fair/employer interviews (these are now connected)
- Links across campus

- Business School
- Journalism School
- College of Education
- CAS – biggest challenge. New Career Liaisons should help.
- Reference letter file service
- Staff member in Portland to develop links with business community – raise profile of UO graduates.

How can the Career Center further support undergraduate students? Wants to help students transfer their education into their resume. Businesses are looking for problem-solvers, communicators, team players . . . What can the Career Center do to help students articulate this?

Suggestions and questions:

1. The Career Center's position between the academic and outside worlds allows it to help translate what students learn in class to the business community. For instance, introduce the business community to students who already interface between the UO and the outside world. The Career Center could also give specific examples to faculty of things the business community thinks could be improved.
2. Can the quality and quantity of the employers who come to campus be increased?

Response: The economy is down and companies often recruit near their corporate head quarters. Students should do informational interviews at the job sites and/or internships. Two-thirds of all interns get job offers.

Proposal by Herb Chereck, Registrar.

Proposal is to eliminate the "Ceremony only" status for spring and summer term commencements.

Specific elements of the proposal

- Eliminate the ceremony only application status.
- Review the records of bachelor's degree applicants at the end of the term prior to graduation.
- Identify students (based on academic history and registration) who will fall short of meeting total credit requirements at the end of the graduation term.

- Notify students who fall short that their degree applications will be pulled if they do not identify how they are to complete the total hours by the date on which they've applied to graduate.
- Remove the names of students who will not graduate from the commencement program.

Points raised in the discussion

- “Ceremony only” status was established administratively (by the Registrar’s Office) and can be eliminated by the same process. Senate approval not required.
- The principal effect of removing the “Ceremony only” option would be to reduce the number of students listed as graduates on the commencement program who have not actually met graduation requirements at the time of the ceremony.
- Problem now: Approximately 400 students (19%) who were listed as graduates in spring term 2001 did not graduate that term. They graduated the following term, or later. In addition, these students were included in the group eligible for Latin Honors (top 10% of graduating class).
- How new proposal will affect students and families wishing to attend graduation ceremonies: Students and their families make graduation plans in advance of completing the work. If students fall short, should they and their families be disappointed by being kept out of the ceremony?
- “Commencement only” students may reduce the significance of the ceremony for the students who have finished all of their requirements and earned the right to walk.
- How would the proposal affect departmental versus university-wide ceremonies?
- Should “Ceremony only” students be listed in the program, but specially designated?
- Could seniors be graded early (ala OSU) so that their status would be unambiguous?
- Are there different standards for receiving diploma, name in program, walking in ceremony?

- Do we need a mechanism to reduce the number of students whose application to graduate is unrealistic (too far short of meeting the requirements)?

Conclusion: Is there consensus? It is not clear. Herb Chereck will write up his understanding of the Council's position – for a decision at the next Council meeting.

The credit hour/contact hour discrepancy

John Nicols had discussed this issue with various faculty and found variation in how different departments handle this issue. He noted that the uncertainties of hiring GTFs, potential enrollment figures, and fall class sizes complicate the issue and concluded that it is probably too complex to deal with.

Karen pointed out that the Undergraduate Council shouldn't get mired in budget and procedure at this point. The goal is to figure out the scope of the problem. The first job is to get an accurate list of the courses that meet for only 3 hours but are worth 4 credits. The council needs concrete information.

John raised idea of writing a letter to departments concerning this issue and asking them to justify their method of delivery of the non-contact credit hour.

Karen emphasized caution-- wanting first to gather simple, objective data (from the Registrar's Office, for example). The place to start is with lower-division courses that are group satisfying, as the Council had agreed at its previous meeting.

Meeting ended at: 9:35

Minutes prepared by: Leanne Bowden

Document distributed to the council by Herb Chereck

PROPOSAL TO THE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

Eliminate the "ceremony only" status for spring and summer term commencements.

Implement new procedures which ensure that only students who meet the minimum requirements for graduation will be included in the commencement ceremony.

Background

Prior to 1998, students paid a \$25 processing fee when they applied to graduate. This processing fee was adopted, in part, as a way to limit the number of students who did not intend to complete their degree requirements spring or summer term, but who applied so they could "walk" in the spring or summer commencement ceremonies and have their names appear in the commencement programs.

The graduation fee was folded into the matriculation fee when the University implemented the latter in 1998. The Office of the Registrar anticipated that the number of students applying to “walk” would increase significantly due to the elimination of the graduation fee. As a result, staff in the Office of the Registrar and elsewhere on campus would be processing a greater number of applications for students who were not actually graduating.

To address this issue, the Office of the Registrar created a degree application category termed “Ceremony Only.” Students in this category file two applications for degree, one for the term in which they actually expect to complete their degrees and the other for the term in which they wish to attend commencement ceremonies. The names of students in this category are printed in the commencement program, but no degree clearance processing is required for these applications, other than entering the names in the student information system. The commencement program does not differentiate between those who actually are degree candidates and those who are applying for the ceremony only.

The ceremony only option has been popular with students. In spring, 1999, 331 students applied in this category; in spring, 2000, 375; and in spring, 2001, 419.

Considerations

The ceremony only category may have cut down on the number of degree applications submitted by and processed for students who have no intention of actually graduating. However, a more important consideration is that the commencement program and ceremony now include a large number (19%) of students who are not minimally eligible to graduate. Some students feel that the ceremony only status cheapens the experience of those who have worked hard to complete their requirements and plan to graduate in the term of the ceremony. Although the commencement program lists spring and summer degree applicants as “candidates,” it is widely assumed (by parents and others) that participation in graduation indicates that the student has indeed completed his or her requirements for the degree. The Office of the Registrar would like to make some changes to degree processing which would help to ensure that this assumption is closer to reality. Specifically,

- Eliminate the ceremony only application status.
- Review the records of bachelor’s degree applicants at the end of the term prior to graduation.
- Identify students (based on academic history and registration) who will fall short of meeting total credit requirements at the end of the graduation term.
- Notify students who fall short that their degree applications will be pulled if they do not identify how they are to complete the total hours by a specific date.
- Remove the names of students who will not graduate from the commencement program.

1/22/02

