

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of February 19, 2002

Members present:

Jim Imamura, Hilary Gerdes, Gail Unruh, Wendy Mitchell, Kathy Roberts, John Nicols, Dave Hubin, Karen Sprague, Herb Chereck, Bob Zimmerman, Anne Leavitt, Kate Kranzush, Stephen Ponder, John Postlethwait, K.J. Park

Members absent:

Scott Pratt, Faye Chadwell, Amanda Stocker, Craig Hickman, Marian Smith

Meeting began at 8:35

Implementation of Online Grade Rosters

Herb Chereck distributed a document describing the conversion to the online grading process that was implemented in Fall 2001. Following the grade processing period, two areas of concern emerged:

1. poor computer response times
2. confusion with Individualized Study courses

Corrective steps are described in the document and are currently underway. Enhancements to the online grade rosters were made based on suggestions and feedback from faculty and staff and will be implemented for Winter 2001 term. The information about system enhancements will be shared with faculty in multiple formats and the entire document is available online at the Undergraduate Council website.

Slight Change in BS Mathematics Requirement

Professor Richard Koch, Mathematics, submitted a document to the Undergraduate Council proposing a small change in the BS Mathematics Requirement. The text of the document follows:

*TO: CAS Curriculum Committee
Committee on Courses
Undergraduate Council*

February 11, 2002

RE: Slight Change in BS Mathematics Requirement

Folks,

The mathematics department proposes a small change in the BS Mathematics Requirement.

The current catalog lists four ways to meet the requirement. The fourth is

4. Satisfactory completion of MATH 111 (or a mathematics course with MATH 111 as a prerequisite) and MATH 211, 212, and 213 (four courses).

We want to change this to

4. Satisfactory completion of the sequence MATH 211, 212, and 213.

We'd like to make this change in the next catalog; please let us know if you object.

Richard Koch

Professor, Mathematics

Explanation:

The BS Mathematics requirement is described on page 17 of the University Catalog, and on page 20 of the Faculty Advising Manual.

The BS Mathematics requirement is slightly complicated. Students who do not know College Algebra (MATH 111) must take three courses in computer science or mathematics. Those who know College Algebra can take two courses provided that one of the courses has 111 as a prerequisite. Those who know College Algebra and Trig can take one course provided that this course has 111 and 112 as prerequisites.

Finally, Elementary Education majors can meet the requirement by taking MATH 211, 212, 213, Fundamentals of Elementary Mathematics. The department has always worried that students not in Elementary Education will take these courses to meet BS math requirements, taking up space and making it impossible for Elementary Education majors to enroll in the class. To prevent this, we required that students using MATH 211, 212, 213 also take MATH 111.

There are several problems with this approach:

a) MATH 111 is a prerequisite for MATH 211. So the current catalog statement doesn't make sense.

b) Three terms of mathematics are required for the BS degree unless the terms are 211, 212, 213. In that one special case, four terms are required. This is confusing.

c) Although 111 is a prerequisite for 211, students are often forced to take it after they have passed 211, 212, 213. Some students met the requirement by taking

MATH 111a at Portland Community College, but MATH 111a is not MATH 111 and doesn't meet the current requirement.

We believe we can police 211, 212, 213 ourselves, making sure that it is taken by appropriate students. The change will make the BS requirement easier to understand.

The council agreed unanimously to the proposed change in the BS Mathematics Requirement.

ASL as a Second Language

Dave Hubin reports that the Chancellor's office interprets the 1995 Oregon legislation as accepting ASL as a second language for entrance purposes. Each institution decides whether ASL or any other language, as taught on that campus, meets its second language graduation requirement. Thus, the ASL discussion can move beyond the function of whether ASL is a second language, and focus instead on the characteristics of ASL courses that would be necessary for them to fulfill the UO second language requirement.

James Boren will summarize the 1994 council's discussion of this issue (as he recalls it), at the March 19 council meeting.

Three hour/four credit Classes

John Nicols distributed the following document:

Notes on coping with the contact/credit problem in lower division classes.

- I. The Council begins with the following assumptions:*
 - A. The norm is four contact hours for four credits. Courses may meet the requirement by scheduling four hours / week in any combination including three hours of lecture + one of discussion section or two hours of lecture twice per week, or any other variant yielding four hours*
 - B. departures from this norm need to be justified;*
 - C. "seat time" is not the only measurement of student effort and learning; when a course departs from this norm, the sponsoring department must explain the nature of the alternative work and explain how it is to be assessed.*
 - D. These notes assume that we will not be returning to the three credit model.*
- II. When the contact hours are less than the credit hours, any one (or more) of the following alternatives may be used to justify the additional hour.*

A. *Limit class size to 40 and expand assignments to include a significant out of class exercise or paper; in larger classes use graders to respond to the additional out-of-class work. The assignments should be qualitatively different from the routine examinations. In any case when the credits exceed the contact hours restrict class size to about 100 students. Example of the former: lower division Writing Classes; example of the latter the set of distinct out-of-class assignments used in ASTR, or the grading procedures used by CLAS).*

B. *Field trips as appropriate to course (as used by Geology and Anthropology)*

C. *Make use of advanced undergraduates to review (under supervision of faculty) the additional student effort (e.g., in Physics 101, etc.).*

D. *Wave the credit/contact requirement in those cases when a lab is attached to the course.*

E. *Develop electronic learning materials and expand the number of electronic classrooms (like 204CON) that allow for student to explore alternate learning paths.*

III. *Departments are asked to prepare a document stating the principles governing their solution. This document should be submitted with the next curricular report.*

John has spoken with many professors whose courses have large enrollments. There is agreement that it is a mistake to focus on seat time and student effort instead of focusing on the quality of contact and feedback on work submitted.

Herb Chereck proposed repealing legislation so that three credit courses would satisfy general education requirements.

Bob Zimmerman proposed keeping general education courses at 4 credits, and distributed examples of Physics 103 assignments that justify the fourth credit hour for a three contact hour class.

Karen Sprague proposed a compromise between Herb's proposal and the practice in Physics:

1. In general, there should be congruence between credit hours and contact hours,
2. But, there may be flexibility in how the fourth contact hour is supplied, if classes are small,
3. If courses are larger than 40 students, and only three contact hours can be provided, only three credits should be given. Such courses should not be barred from satisfying group requirements, however, and these requirements should be modified so that it is the number of courses completed (4) rather than credits earned (16) that counts toward fulfillment.

K.J. Park notes that some incentive would be required for departments to contract from four to three credits. Something would have to make up for the loss of dollars to the department.

There is general agreement that contraction from four to three credits, even on a limited scale, is not possible now. Two factors work against such a change:

1. Budget pressure
2. The effectiveness of some of the methods that faculty have devised to structure student work for the non-contact credit. There is now convincing evidence that the efforts to deal with the fourth credit hour have produced some pedagogical innovations that are sound, and that may be superior to standard contact provided through lecture or discussion section.

Departments need to have some flexibility in how they comply with the three hour/four credit problem but the courses not in compliance need to be monitored. Departments are doing a good job but no one is hearing about it. Departments and or individual professors should write a supplemental curricular report for all lower division three hour/four credit courses to be reviewed by curricular committees. Departments need to articulate the expectations for the courses in question and also give ideas and examples of ways in which to meet these expectations.

John will draft a letter to department heads addressing the three hour/four credit problem to bring to the next council meeting. The next meeting will be on March 5, at 8:30 am in Collier House, meeting room A.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35