

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

March 19, 2002

Members present:

John Nicols, Anne Leavitt, Herb Chereck, Dave Hubin, Faye Chadwell, K. J. Parks, Bob Zimmerman, Paul Engelking, Karen Sprague, Kate Kranzush, Kathy Roberts, Hilary Gerdes, Gail Unruh, Scott Pratt, Stephen Ponder

Members Absent:

Wendy Mitchell, John Postlethwait, Amanda Stocker, Craig Hickman, Marian Smith, Jim Imamura

Guests:

Jim Boren, Hilary Evonuk, Nilda Brooklyn, Sallie Kong

Meeting began at 8:35

Review of the previous discussion of American Sign Language by the Council

Jim Boren, chair of the Undergraduate Council when the ASL issue was first discussed in 1994, reviewed that discussion. There were three questions the council considered:

1. Is ASL a language? Testimony from Russ Tomlin and the Department of Linguistics affirmed that ASL meets the linguistic standard of a foreign language.
2. What function does study of a foreign language provide in undergraduate education? Testimony from Francoise Calin, former Romance Languages Department Head, showed that a major goal of foreign language study at the undergraduate level is introduction to an unfamiliar culture.
3. Are there departments that view ASL as complementary to their studies? Departments would have to consider this question individually.

The 1994 Council decided that ASL would not fulfill the foreign language requirement for a BA degree. Jim Boren recalls that the following were the principal reasons for this decision:

1. The Council was persuaded that cultural study is a key part of the rationale for college language study.
2. ASL does not have the same depth of culture, traditions and art as do other foreign languages.

3. The first year of the two-year foreign language requirement stresses linguistic skills, whereas the second year offers more intense cultural study. The second year ASL courses, as presented by Elsa Shores at the Council meeting in 1994, did not offer a comparable cultural component.

How do these principles apply to ASL as presently taught at the UO?

Second year ASL is not taught on this campus. Therefore, students can't complete the second year component. Moreover, the first year of ASL, as presently taught at UO, is not the equivalent of standard first year ASL. If ASL were taught as a language program at the UO, even the first year courses would need substantial revision.

Are foreign language requirements uniform across U.S. campuses?

Herb Chereck stated that requirements vary, and that he will provide a complete AAU survey for the council.

The level of proficiency expected at the end of the second year varies according to the nature of the language. For example, second year Chinese assumes a different level of proficiency than does second year Spanish because of the difficulty of mastering the linguistic aspects of Chinese. Proficiency at the second year level can be established via several different tests: The Final Exam of the third term course, an AP test, a CLEP test, or an ad hoc test recommended by the Associate Dean of the Humanities. It is generally believed that the AP test includes a cultural component, whereas, the CLEP test does not. The council should keep this in mind when considering the purpose of the language requirement. If a cultural component is important, the CLEP test may not be adequate to determine proficiency.

The Council's job is:

- ❑ To decide if ASL would meet the standards of the UO foreign language BA requirement, if an ASL language program existed.
- ❑ To decide whether transfer students with ASL credit may meet the foreign language BA requirement with ASL.

The Council's job is not:

- ❑ To take responsibility for creating a program.

Kathy Roberts, Hilary Gerdes and Kate Kranzush distributed information about the current practices, history and other relevant information regarding ASL to the council. Three language faculty members, Gina Psaki (Romance Languages), Steven Brown (East

Asian Languages), and Mary Jaeger (Classics), will present information in a future council meeting.

Final draft of the document dealing with courses that meet for fewer hours than the credits they award.

A final draft of the memorandum to Deans and Department Heads prepared by John Nicols, Scott Pratt, Herb Chereck and Karen Sprague was distributed to the council. The council discussed changes to be made to the document. It was agreed that Karen, Herb, Scott, John and Paul Engelking would prepare another revision after this meeting.

Meeting Times for Spring Term

The council meetings for Spring Term will change to Monday at 8:30 am and will begin on April 15. The meetings will be in Collier House, upstairs in meeting room A, on the following dates: April 15, April 29, May 13 and June 10.

Meeting adjourned at 9:34