

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

February 7, 2003

Members Present: Deborah Baumgold, Colleen Bell, John Nicols, Sherri Barr, Lowell Bowditch, Jim Imamura, Herb Chereck, Wendy Mitchell, Mark Thoma, Kathy Roberts, Hilary Gerdes, Steve Ponder, Karen Sprague, Dave Hubin, Malcolm Wilson

Members Absent: Paul Engelking, John Postlethwait

Update on Writing Requirement

Hilary Gerdes presented an update on the writing requirement. A handout described the writing requirement status as of Fall 2002 for the 2,998 freshmen admitted in Fall 2001. Hilary reports that approximately 90% of these students have started the writing requirement. There are 248 students who had not yet registered for WR 121 as of Fall 2002. In November 2002, Academic Advising mailed postcards to these students reminding them of the UO writing requirement and referring them to the Advising Office for questions.

Hilary also reported on the writing requirement status in fall 2002 for all active juniors/seniors (90+ credits). There were 461 students at this level who had not met the UO writing requirement and were not registered for WR 122 in Fall 2002. A random sample of 52 DARS reports was analyzed to identify potential patterns in this group. Nearly half (21 of 52) were transfer students. The complete analysis is posted.

The data suggest that recent efforts through advising channels (Student Handbook, general advising during IntroDUCKtion and Week of Welcome) are effective in increasing the proportion of students who complete their writing requirement in a timely fashion. A significant number of those who do not are transfer students. Hilary and Karen Sprague will talk to Martha Pitts about implementing a writing requirement for transfer students. Hilary will continue to monitor completion of the writing requirement through the academic year. We will then be in position to consider whether or not it is necessary to impose a deadline for incoming freshman to complete the writing requirement. The writing requirement will be an agenda item again next Fall (2003) to review Hilary's findings.

SAT Writing Exam and PASS Program

Karen distributed two documents describing the CIM, CAM and PASS systems. The purpose of the PASS system is to base university admission and advanced placement on demonstrated proficiency, rather than simply high school courses and grades. PASS establishes proficiency by using either the CIM, SAT II writing test, IB English test or PASS teacher verification. Not many students use the PASS standards currently, although this could change in the future.

The UO PASS Implications Committee is asking for an objective demonstration of PASS effectiveness before PASS can be used as the basis for admission. The committee also wants to ensure that faculty in the appropriate disciplines are directly involved in decisions about whether and how to use PASS.

The council discussed the PASS system and had these ideas:

- Dave Hubin will keep an eye on the UC system's position with regard to the College Board SAT and SAT II.
- UO Writing faculty could calibrate the SAT II Writing Test by independently reviewing writing samples from students who have taken the SAT II; and
- The SAT II student performance could then be compared with PASS proficiency scores.

Survey Sheets and New Packets

The survey sheets for the first 50 syllabi were collected. The second packet of 50 syllabi was distributed to council members, and the corresponding survey sheets will be collected at the next Undergraduate Council meeting on February 21, 2003, at 11:00 in 109 Friendly.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05