

# UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

March 7, 2003

Members present: Wendy Mitchell, John Nicols, Steve Ponder, Herb Chereck, Malcolm Wilson, Jim Imamura, Dave Hubin, Mark Thoma, Karen Sprague, Kathy Roberts, Deborah Baumgold, Sherri Barr

Members absent: John Postlethwait, Paul Engelking, Hilary Gerdes, Lowell Bowditch, Colleen Bell, Anne Leavitt

Substituting for Hilary Gerdes: Jack Bennett

## **Incompletes**

Malcolm Wilson, co-chair of the Academic Requirements Committee, described to the council the inconsistencies in the standing rules and committee review of petitions for Incompletes. At this time, UO undergraduate policy states:

“An incomplete may be issued when the quality of work is satisfactory, but some minor yet essential requirement has not been completed, for reasons acceptable to the instructor. You should not register for the class a second time unless you are advised by the instructor to repeat the class. If you re-register and repeat the entire course, the Incomplete remains on your academic record permanently.”

“If a degree has not been awarded and you are still attending the University, the instructor must file a grade in the Office of the Registrar within four terms of attendance following the assignment of the incomplete. If you are no longer attending the University, and have not earned a degree, the grade-filing deadline is extended to three calendar years from the date the incomplete was assigned. Earlier deadlines may be set by the instructor, dean, or department head. Incompletes remaining on the academic record after the degree is awarded may not be removed.”

The ARC has received a number of petitions with faculty recommendations asking the ARC to overlook the 4-quarter policy. Herb Chereck explained that the policy has not been reviewed for the last 30 years. The UO Incomplete policy is not widely understood on campus. For instance, the Incomplete grade does not convert to an F if the missing work is not made up, but many faculty assume that it does. The council discussed various ideas including:

- Involved faculty could have left the university before the student decided to make up the grade—making it difficult for the student to meet the 4-quarter deadline.
- Some departments use a student/faculty contract when Incomplete grades are assigned. The contract clearly states the guidelines for removal of the Incomplete along with a timeline.
- Some faculty members give Incompletes only for medical reasons.
- It is difficult to maintain accurate records and to reconstruct a grade with equity after a period of time
- Having an Incomplete go to an F automatically has the advantage of minimizing student/faculty conflict.
- A memo to faculty outlining the present UO policy on the use of Incompletes would be useful.

It was suggested that the council consider the UO Incomplete policy as a future agenda item. Whatever the outcome, students would still have the opportunity to petition the ARC for exceptions. The intent of the council is not to limit or alter that process. Herb Chereck, Sherri Barr and Malcolm Wilson will draft a proposal regarding Incomplete grade policy to present at the next council meeting.

### **Final Exam Conflict**

Herb distributed a document to the council outlining the final exam conflict problem, history and proposed resolutions. An increasing number of conflicts are occurring between final examinations for late afternoon and evening courses because these hours have traditionally been outside the regular exam schedule and thus available for special exams – especially the combined exams for multi-section courses. With the present longer class day, more regular exams are scheduled during evening hours. For example, combined examinations are scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm, but courses meeting at 5:00 pm or later have evening examinations beginning at 7:00pm, creating an overlap of one hour. In addition, because combined examinations are primarily scheduled on Monday or Tuesday of exam week, there are sometimes conflicts between two combined examinations

The council discussed the proposed resolutions and had several questions:

- Why must the course with the largest enrollment provide an alternate examination time?
- Should students be expected to take three final examinations on the same day? Should the maximum be reduced to two?
- How many final examination conflicts occur with the present limit of no more than 3 on the same day? How many conflicts would occur if the limit were reduced to 2?

Herb will provide data on the number of final examination conflicts for the council.

### **Next Meeting**

This is the final meeting for winter term. Some council members have teaching obligations that prevent them from attending council meeting at 11:00 on Friday. A new meeting time will be announced within two weeks.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00