

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

April 8, 2003

Members present: Deborah Baumgold, John Nicols, Steve Ponder, Hilary Gerdes, Lowell Bowditch, Karen Sprague, Mark Thoma, Jim Imamura, Wendy Mitchell, Sherrie Barr, Malcolm Wilson, Paul Engelking, Colleen Bell, Dave Hubin

Members absent: John Postlethwait, Kathy Roberts, Herb Chereck

New members: Nora Ahmed, Tyler Neely

Introduction of New Members

Deborah Baumgold introduced the two new student members on the Undergraduate Council, Nora Ahmed and Tyler Neely.

Agenda Item for Next Meeting

It was suggested at the March 7, 2003 Undergraduate Council meeting that the council consider the UO policy on the Incomplete mark as a future agenda item. Malcolm Wilson and Sherrie Barr will draft a proposal regarding Incomplete mark policy to present to the next council.

Discussion of Group-Satisfying Course Survey

Of the 164 group-satisfying courses (not including foreign language or math) offered in fall 2002, the council reviewed 144 course syllabi. There were only 20 courses for which syllabi were not obtained (14% of the total). The 100- and 200-level courses will be reviewed now, and 300-level courses will be reviewed separately at a later date. Twenty-seven lower-division courses have been selected for discussion by the full council on the basis of the preliminary review summarized on score sheets. Specifically, if there was more than one "no" vote on the content questions, the course material was distributed to each council member as a basis for further discussions. The courses where insufficient course information appeared to account for the "no" votes were not included.

The following observations and questions emerged from the council's review of the first 10 of 27 courses:

1. Some excellent courses have syllabi that don't convey the main ideas effectively to a naive audience. Templates or examples of good syllabi would help faculty create syllabi that do justice to their courses.
2. Do faculty teaching group-satisfying courses understand the criteria for group status? Distribution and discussion of these criteria would help.
3. Do fundamental elements of general education such as writing, need to be addressed in every course, and indicated on its syllabus?
4. Some courses appear to be too narrow or specialized to be introductory.
5. Should a general-education course have a prerequisite?
6. Are on-line and one-week courses appropriate for general-education?
7. Are there ways to increase the coherence of General Education?
Possibilities that surfaced during the council's discussion:

- a. Advisors can create coherence through their suggestions of course linkages.

- b. Course groupings can be suggested on-line (e.g. on Duck Web) for students to consider when registering.

Future Work

To be in position to draw meaningful conclusions, the council wants to collect complete information for the courses with missing or incomplete syllabi. Donna Schimmer and Nora Ahmed will collaborate on this project.

The council will review the remaining 17 courses in the present set at the next meeting on April 22 at 3:30 in the Johnson Hall conference room.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55