

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

May 13, 2003

Members present: Paul Engelking, Colleen Bell, Hilary Gerdes, Nora Ahmed, Herb Chereck, Sherrie Barr, Mark Thoma, Lowell Bowditch, Tyler Neely, John Nicols, Wendy Mitchell, Jim Imamura, Kathy Roberts, Karen Sprague, Malcolm Wilson, Deborah Baumgold

Members absent: John Postlethwait, Steve Ponder

Incomplete Policy

Malcolm Wilson distributed a document outlining the current policy for handling marks of “Incomplete” at the UO, plus Herb Chereck’s survey of the “Incomplete” policies of 35 universities across the country. The current UO policy on Incomplete marks is as follows:

“An instructor-initiated mark. A mark of I may be reported only when the quality of work is satisfactory but a minor yet essential requirement of the course has not been completed for reasons acceptable to the instructor. To remove an incomplete, an undergraduate student must complete the required work within the next four terms of residence at the university or, if absent from campus, no later than three calendar years after the incomplete was awarded, or at such earlier date as the instructor, dean, or department head specifies. Applicants for graduation should see special limitations under Application for a Degree.”

1. All universities have some form of an Incomplete (I) mark.
2. Most universities have a deadline for the removal of an Incomplete mark.
3. Many universities have a much shorter period allowed than the UO for making up the Incomplete - between four weeks and one semester.
4. Most universities change the Incomplete to F after that period.
5. An Incomplete does not automatically become an F at the UO.

The Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) has concerns regarding the Incomplete mark at the UO. Specifically, current Committee practice is not always congruent with official UO policy. Many extensions beyond the 4-term limit are being given.

There is sentiment that changing policy so that an Incomplete mark turned to an F could improve student academic performance and hence retention. The

desire to avoid an F would encourage students to complete work promptly and make progress toward a degree.

Herb will speak with colleagues at other universities regarding the consequences of a period shorter than ours for making up the Incomplete mark. This topic will be discussed again in the fall, when Herb will facilitate a group appointed by the council.

Lower-division Group-satisfying Course Discussion

The council continued its review of the lower-division courses that were selected for discussion on the basis of the preliminary review summarized on score sheets. The following observation again emerged from the council's review of the next 7 courses:

1. There is a concern about the emphasis on pre-professional/technical training in some pre-major courses that presently satisfy group requirements.

The remaining five lower-division courses will be reviewed at the next meeting. The 300-level general education course review may also begin at that time. Council members were asked to gather and review the 300-level syllabi they received during the course review process. Karen Sprague noted two questions that emerged from the council's summary sheets of 300-level courses:

- Are these courses really at the 300-level – that is, are they more advanced than the 100/200-level courses reviewed so far?
- If the courses are truly at the 300-level, are they broad and fundamental enough for General Education?

Next Meeting

The next Undergraduate Council meeting will be on May 27, in Johnson Hall Conference Room at 3:30 pm.