

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

October 1, 2002

Members present: Karen Sprague, Kathy Roberts, Colleen Bell, Sherri Barr, Steve Ponder, Jim Imamura, Lowell Bowditch, Wendy Mitchell, Herb Chereck, Deborah Baumgold, John Nicols, Malcolm Wilson, John Postlethwait

Members absent: Paul Engelking, Anne Leavitt, Hilary Gerdes, Dave Hubin

New Meeting Time

It was proposed that the Undergraduate council meetings start one-half hour earlier. The council agreed to move the meetings forward to 8:00 am.

Summary Report for 2000-2002

A summary report from John Nicols, the past-chair of the Undergraduate Council, was distributed. The report outlined the work accomplished by the council during the 2000-01 and 2001-02 academic years. John made recommendations for future council work in three areas:

1. American Sign Language - Wendy Larson, the Associate Dean of Humanities, and the language departments should assemble a committee to address whether ASL should meet the BA language requirement.
2. 4 credit/3 hour document - The document approved by the council was forwarded to the Provost for consideration and further discussion within the University community. A problem with departmental accountability remains. If departments must review these courses, then who will review the subsequent reports?
3. Multicultural Requirement - The UO senate has asked for a report from the Undergraduate Council by February 2003. John feels the council should wait to address this request until the senate gives more information about what information they want in the report.

New Student Convocation

Approximately 1000 students and faculty attended the New Student Convocation at Mac Court on the Sunday before classes started. Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, president of University of Maryland Baltimore County, delivered the keynote speech, to start the school year with an academic perspective. Karen Sprague asked council members to be thinking of speakers and topics for next year's event.

Report on Freshman Interest Groups

Karen presented data comparing the grades that first-time freshman FIG and non-FIG students received in the same course. The FIG students received better grades. Mike

Eyster, Housing Director, has collected some data that suggests residential FIG students are performing even better than regular FIG students. Deborah Baumgold suggests a comparison of the FIG and non-FIG students who participate in registration at IntroDUCKtion because those students are usually more organized than students not participating. Wendy Mitchell suggests that some students do not participate in IntroDUCKtion because of the distance they must travel. Therefore, a FIG vs. non-FIG comparison controlled for residence (Oregon vs. out-of-state) would be interesting.

A grade distribution summary of lower-division, group-satisfying courses offered in Fall 2001 was given to the council. The graphs represent the number of students enrolled in each course plotted against the percentage of students in each course receiving A and B grades. This information will be used when the general education courses are reviewed.

Council Work for the Coming Year

A. Time limit for completion of writing requirement

Does the council want to propose completion of the writing requirement by the end of the sophomore year? This was the idea that motivated the present effort to supply enough writing classes for students to take both WR 121 and WR 122 within their first two years.

B. Systematic examination of General Education courses

Courses that meet the General Education requirement must be reviewed every five years. Karen would like to set up a cycle of review in which years one, two and three would involve the review of the necessary courses. Year four would summarize and analyze the work and year five would implement the changes resulting from the review. The review would initially focus on lower division, group-satisfying, general education courses and would exclude writing, math and introductory foreign language courses. We want to know two things: 1) Are the courses designed to introduce students effectively to key ideas in the three subdivisions? 2) Is the criticism true that there are too many courses offered that satisfy the general education requirement? An accreditation report criticized the UO for lack of coherence in its general education. The council needs to find out what our curriculum actually is.

Perhaps the February deadlines suggested by the senate in its requests for council recommendations regarding the multicultural requirement and American Sign Language will be modified when the scope of the council's review of general education is understood. This idea will be suggested to the senate.

Work for the next meeting

Come prepared to discuss ideas for a time limit for completion of the writing requirement. Also, Karen will collect information from a sample of lower division,

group-satisfying courses including syllabi, grade distribution, papers required and exams. Think about what other information you would want for review purposes.

Wendy Mitchell asked that council members be sent a list of the current council members.

The next council meeting will be on October 15, in Lewis Lounge-Law School, at 8:00 am.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:45