

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

October 15, 2002

Members present: Karen Sprague, Jim Imamura, Paul Engelking, Malcolm Wilson, Steve Ponder, Herb Chereck, Sherrie Barr, Colleen Bell, Deborah Baumgold, John Postlethwait, Kathy Roberts, Hilary Gerdes

Members absent: Wendy Mitchell, Lowell Bowditch

Preventing Class Time Conflicts

A document was circulated by email to council members from Herb Chereck regarding time conflicts on student class schedules. Currently the registration system allows students to register for two courses that meet at the same time or overlap with one another. Herb has proposed to program the registration system to check for time conflicts and disallow registration in a course which conflicts with another in the student schedule. In the rare occurrence where it might be appropriate, Banner will be programmed to preauthorize a student to register with a time conflict. This solution will go into effect winter term. Herb will report back to the council in one year with the results.

Deadline for Completion of the Writing Requirement

The council has previously (April 5, 2001) discussed the idea of adding a deadline to the university writing requirement so that WR 121 and WR 122 would be completed early in a student's career and be of maximum benefit for later university work. An impediment to putting such a requirement in place at that time was the lack of an adequate number of writing classes to meet the demand of both incoming students and the large number of current students (708) who had not yet begun to fulfill the requirement (that is, they needed both WR 121 and WR 122). Another 1071 students needed WR 122 only. This problem should be resolved by next fall, as a result of careful planning by CAS, the English Department and Undergraduate Studies. Thus, it is now feasible to propose that, for the Fall '03 entering class, WR 121 and WR 122 be completed by the end of the sophomore year. Students not meeting the requirement would be blocked from registering the following term. There was considerable support for such a plan because it would increase the likelihood of gaining writing skill early enough for it to be useful. Although students vary in their need for these courses, and in how much they take away from this formal instruction, a time limit of this sort will likely be helpful to most UO students. The council considered the possible pitfalls in adding a time limit, and identified the following:

- Time limit could create bureaucratic and advising headaches. There will be petitions for exceptions, and, added to the existing petition load, they could become burdensome.
- Should such emphasis be placed on WR 121 and 122?

1. Some students want to take WR classes that are more interesting or more difficult than WR 121 and WR 122.
 2. The content of WR 121 and WR 122 is not worth requiring.
 3. Since there is no required math, there should be no required writing.
- Will the penalty associated with this proposal detract from the advising experience? Better to put the energy into mandatory advising.
 - What about transfer students? Will they be able to meet the deadline?

Some solutions were suggested:

- It was suggested that a sentence be added on Duck Web and DARS to WR 121 and WR 122, stating the UO requirement that these courses be completed by the end of the sophomore year. This should reduce the number of students who don't meet the deadline because students are unaware of it.
- A placement test is offered to students who want to test out of the writing requirement. Also, students with high verbal SAT scores are not required to take WR 121 and WR 122.
- Journalism requires students to have completed WR 121 and WR 122 before they are admitted to the professional program. Additional writing and grammar courses are required for the journalism major, and these build on WR 121 and WR 122. Thus, the School of Journalism would favor early completion of WR 121 and WR 122.
- Students with an ASOT transfer degree from a community college and most transfer students with significant credits have already taken the WR 121 and WR 122 courses. Transfer students could be required to have completed the writing courses before they are admitted to UO.

It was agreed that students should be given plenty of warning so that they would be aware of the deadline and able to meet it. A possible procedure was outlined roughly:

- Identify students at x credit hours who have not completed WR 121 or WR 122 and students at y credit hours who have completed WR 121, but not WR 122.
- Send letters to each group as a reminder of the deadline and of the consequences of not meeting it. The letters would give students about two terms to take the necessary writing course(s).
- If the requirement is not met at 90 credit hours, place a HOLD on registration.

Herb, Karen Sprague and Hilary Gerdes will develop a more detailed, written proposal to present to the Council at the next meeting.

Review of General Education

Karen distributed packets containing four randomly selected syllabi in each of three areas: Arts and Letters, Social Science and Science. Before the next council meeting,

work groups need to meet and develop a summary sheet that could be used to analyze and describe each course. The summary sheet should include items such as:

- How does the course match up with the criteria for group-satisfying status?
- What is required in discussion sections (topics, specific assignments)?

Work groups should also consider what other materials we might need to collect (e.g. exams, other).

Next Meeting

The council will meet on October 29, at 8:00 am in Johnson Hall conference room.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20