

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

October 29, 2002

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

Members absent: John Postlethwait

Writing Deadline Proposal

Hilary Gerdes, Herb Chereck, and Karen Sprague distributed a draft of the Proposal to Require Completion of WR 121 and WR 122/123 Within 90 Credit Hours to the council. By Fall 2003 the backlog of upper level students needing WR 121/122 should be greatly reduced or entirely eliminated. Thus, it would be feasible to implement the proposal. Discussion of how this proposal would affect transfer students will be delayed until a later council meeting when more information is available. Three possible ways to begin implementation were considered:

1. Send warning letters to students approaching 90 units who have not taken WR 121/122, advising them of UO requirements and subsequent consequences, but not blocking registration. Track fulfillment of the WR requirement. If there is no perceptible change in the number of students completing the WR requirement after a trial period, then enforce the rule by blocking registration.
2. Implement the proposal, as drafted, with enrollment block used to enforce the rule. Collect data for a year on the number of affected students and the cost of implementation. With the proposal in place and a change in culture, the number of students who don't meet the requirement will likely be small.
3. Before the proposal is implemented, begin sending out letters to determine how many students are involved, what kind of students are affected (e.g. transfer, international, freshman, etc), what costs are incurred, and what staffing is required. Plan to begin sending letters next term (Winter 2003).

The council unanimously decided on approach # 3.

The following suggestions for identifying students and for publicizing the proposal were made:

- Data Warehouse queries could be run at the end of this term by the Registrar's Office in order to determine the number of students involved.
- The registrar's office could develop a Student Data Warehouse query to share with departmental office managers and faculty that would identify students who

- have not met the WR requirement. Thus, departments or programs could identify their own students who could benefit from a bit of prodding.
- The Faculty Advisor newsletter could alert faculty about the changes to the WR completion requirements.
 - All communications should accentuate the benefits of completing the WR requirement early.

Reports of the General Education Work Groups

At the October 15 meeting, council members were divided into four work groups to review sample class syllabi distributed at that meeting. Work groups were asked to meet and develop a summary sheet that could be used to analyze and describe each course. The work groups presented their evaluations of the syllabi and suggested these items for a summary sheet:

- Syllabi should state what group satisfying requirement the course fills and how the criteria for group status are fulfilled.
- It would be helpful to state how the course relates to other courses in the same group. For example, HIST 101 and HUM 101 build on the same themes.
- Professors not GTFs should teach general education courses. Students need more contact with professors.
- How is learning evaluated? Most syllabi need expansion in this area.
- It would be helpful to estimate the reading and writing required for the course, not just the percentage of the grade attributed to tests, and papers.
- It would be helpful to describe the class workload. For example, x number of quizzes and lab reports.
- Scoring suggestions might include a mark of 3 for a course that requires a paper, 2 for courses giving essay tests and a score of 1 for a course giving a multiple choice test as the only grading device.
- General education courses should be taught using a variety and a broad range of methods.
- Arts and letters courses should contain a writing component.
- Does this course teach what a generally, well-educated person should know?
- On-line courses are not appropriate for general education.
- Should a general education course have 4-5 pre-requisites? It seems that at least one of the pre-requisites would meet a general education requirement.
- It would be helpful to students to have informal links on the on-line class schedule under notes, offering suggestions such as: This course goes well with ___ and ___.
- Syllabi are so diverse that students can't make good choices. It would be helpful to have sample syllabi templates available to faculty.
- Faculty advisors would find it helpful to have majors provide sample course program plans so they can advise students of general education courses that fit well together for that major.
- Departments should list how often a course is offered.

The council concluded that the UO should develop stiffer guidelines for general education requirements so students can't avoid a particular area of study. There is a need to carve away at the smorgasbord of general education offerings. For those students who want guidance, it is useful to provide links to courses that fit well together. For other students, it is important to allow sampling of a broad spectrum of coursework. All group-satisfying courses should be able to justify their group-worthiness.

Meeting adjourned at 9:36