

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

November 12, 2002

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

Members absent: None

Future Revision of Verbal SAT

The verbal portion of the SAT test is on the verge of change. Martha Pitts reports that the changes will likely take effect in 2005-06. A timed writing test will be added, and the analogy section will be changed or eliminated. The motivation is to communicate the importance of writing to high schools, and to test students directly on a capacity that's necessary for success in college. A preliminary writing test has already been calibrated and schools are invited to calibrate it on their own campuses. This does not reduce our need for an early WR completion requirement, and should contribute to our effort to emphasize writing.

Selection of Undergraduate Council Chair

At the final council meeting of the spring term in June, only a few of the council members were eligible to serve as chair and none were able to do so. Now that the council members whose terms begin this year have expanded the pool, it should be possible to select a chair. Paul Engelking nominated Deborah Baumgold and the council unanimously endorsed her chairmanship.

Plan of Future Undergraduate Council Work on General Education

The ideas that emerged from the work groups fell into two broad categories: 1.) Creation of suggested course linkages that can help students create personally rewarding programs of general education, and 2.) Systematic review of group-satisfying courses.

1. Sample Programs and Suggested Course Linkages

Groups other than the Undergraduate Council would accomplish this work. Various groups on campus should be asked to suggest coherent patterns of group-satisfying courses for students. Departments may want to suggest programs that would be especially effective for their majors.

Group-Satisfying Course Review

Karen Sprague distributed a summary of the key characteristics of ideal lower-division courses with Group status, which had emerged from the work groups at the last council meeting. The summary was discussed and revised so that it could potentially serve as a checklist for the council's review of group-satisfying courses. Several suggestions were made for revision and the following points were discussed.

- Is the Undergraduate Council's goal clear to departments and faculty? Probably not. We need to explain the purpose clearly, and emphasize that the review is not an audit for credit-hour, or other, accounting purposes. The goal is simply to describe the general education landscape. The end product of the course review will be:

1. A list of characteristics of excellent group-satisfying courses in different areas.
2. A description of the characteristics of current UO group-satisfying courses, with patterns indicated, if they appear.
 - What is the purpose of the summary/checklist? To delineate characteristics that the council could look for when describing individual courses.
 - Does the summary/checklist include the same elements used by the committee that approves new courses? Some elements are the same (e.g. comparison with group criteria); others are distinct (e.g. information content of syllabus).
 - Should the summary/checklist document be given to the UO Senate for approval before proceeding with the course review? The council was strongly in favor of this course of action.
 - Should the council review 300 level group-satisfying courses at the same time it reviews 100 and 200 level group-satisfying courses? Should a distinction be made? This question was not resolved.
 - Would it be useful to create a syllabus template for faculty use when the review process is complete? Yes, very useful.

Karen and Deborah will revise the summary/checklist document before the next council meeting. The next Undergraduate Council meeting is November 26 at 8:00 am in Johnson Hall conference room.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08