

# UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

April 13, 2004

**Members present:** Deborah Baumgold, Kathy Roberts, Hilary Gerdes, Emily Gilkey, Colleen Bell, Tyler Neely, Deborah Exton, Paul Engelking, Mark Thoma, Jim Imamura, Ron Severson, Harry Wonham, Dave Hubin, Herb Chereck, Julie Newton, Steve Pologe

**Members absent:** Martha Pitts, John Postlethwait, Gordon Sayre, Laura Vandenburg

## Motion to Amend the Criteria for Group-Satisfying Courses

A document was distributed to the council with suggestions for revising the Motion to Amend the Criteria for Group-satisfying Courses. The council discussed the revisions to Part 1 of the Motion:

### Part 1

1. The syllabus for each Group-satisfying course must state the fundamental question(s) addressed by the course, **and indicate** how the course meets the criteria for Group status. For all Group-satisfying courses to be offered during a particular term, faculty or departments **are asked to post course descriptions that are substantially expanded over those provided in the catalog. In cases where these are not available, electronic syllabi will suffice. The posted course information should be understandable to someone unfamiliar with the field and should emphasize the questions or issues that reveal, by their breadth and significance, why the course has earned Group status. Examples of such descriptions are included in the Addendum to the Motion.** To help students make informed choices of courses, the web postings should be made prior to the start of the registration period for the term in question, and should be directly accessible from Duck Web. Links to Duck Web are easily established, and **departments may choose to give this responsibility to office staff or to individual faculty, as is locally appropriate.**

The following revised version was approved by a vote of 9 Yes and 1 No.

1. For all Group-satisfying courses to be offered during a particular term, faculty or departments are asked to post electronically, in the Schedule of Classes, course descriptions that are substantially expanded over those provided in the catalog. The posted course information should be understandable to someone unfamiliar with the field and should emphasize

the questions or issues that reveal, by their breadth and significance, why the course has earned Group status. Examples of such descriptions are included in the Addendum to the Motion. To help students make informed choices of courses, the web postings should be made prior to the start of the registration period for the term in question, and should be directly accessible from the Schedule of Classes. Links to the Schedule of Classes are easily established, and departments may choose to give this responsibility to office staff or to individual faculty, as is locally appropriate. In cases where course descriptions are not yet available, electronic syllabi that provide this information will suffice.

The council unanimously approved separating the following information from Part 1 and making it Part 2 of the Motion:

2. The syllabus for each Group-satisfying course should state the fundamental question(s) addressed by the course, and indicate how the course meets the criteria for Group status. The instructor may accomplish this either by including the course description posted on the web or by creating another one.

### **Part 2**

The council discussed the suggested revisions (in bold) to the original Part 2:

2. All Group-satisfying courses must be offered in time periods that are ***the contemporary standard*** for UO academic terms: ***[The Council needs to come up with minimum time periods.]***

The following revised version was approved by a vote of 9 Yes and 1 No, and was re-numbered 3:

3. All Group-satisfying courses should be offered in time periods that are standard for regular academic terms, and in no case may be offered for a period shorter than three weeks.

### **Part 3**

The council voted unanimously to delete the original Part 3, as had been suggested:

***3. The proposal for additional review of Group-satisfying courses offered in an on-line format has been deleted. We suggest that a more effective approach might be for a future Council to draft Guidelines for the presentation of such courses. These guidelines would address the appropriate use of technology and other design features***

*that ensure students are offered an educational experience similar to that in a classroom. They would be used by the regular committees charged with course review.*

#### **Part 4**

The council discussed the revisions ( in bold) to Part 4:

4. 300-level Group-satisfying courses are expected to serve as broad introductions to fields with which students are unfamiliar, but they must also provide depth and rigor beyond that of a typical lower-division course. To achieve this dual purpose, such courses should:

- a. introduce students to the perspectives of a discipline and engage them in substantial application of its fundamental ideas. ***Courses may be focused on a single text or period, but should use the examples provided by that focus to illuminate the larger discipline.***

***and***

- a. educate students about the way knowledge is created in a discipline by identifying its significant questions and showing how those questions can be answered. For instance, a course might analyze the design of particular experiments, show how modeling is done and when it is informative, or introduce specific kinds of data analysis. The use of primary sources is encouraged where appropriate – that is, in fields where this information is accessible to a non-specialist.

***and***

- b. encourage integration of perspectives, as well as specific application of general principles, through synthesis and analysis of course material, including concepts from other courses. These courses should also employ evaluation methods that measure this high level of understanding.

***and***

- c. assume that students are capable of advanced university-level intellectual engagement as a result of having completed substantial lower-division work, ***although not necessarily in the subject of the course.*** Some upper-division Group-satisfying courses may also have specific prerequisites in the form of other courses whose content provides an essential foundation ***in the subject.***

The council approved unanimously the revised version below:

4. 300-level Group-satisfying courses are expected to serve as broad introductions to fields with which students are unfamiliar, but they must also provide depth and rigor beyond that of a typical lower-division course. To achieve this dual purpose, such courses should do the following:

a) Introduce students to the perspectives of a discipline and engage them in substantial application of its fundamental ideas. Courses may be focused on a single text or period, but should use the examples provided by that focus to illuminate the larger discipline.

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b) Educate students about the way knowledge is created in a discipline by identifying its significant questions and showing how those questions can be answered. For instance, a course might analyze the design of particular experiments, show how modeling is done and when it is informative, or introduce specific kinds of data analysis. The use of primary sources is encouraged where appropriate – that is, in fields where this information is accessible to a non-specialist.

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c) Encourage integration of perspectives, as well as specific application of general principles, through synthesis and analysis of course material, including concepts from other courses. These courses should also employ evaluation methods that measure this high level of understanding.

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d) Assume that students are capable of advanced university-level intellectual engagement as a result of having completed substantial lower-division work, although not necessarily in the subject of the course. Some upper-division Group-satisfying courses may also have specific prerequisites in the form of other courses whose content provides an essential foundation in the subject.

Deborah Baumgold will submit the Motion to Amend the Criteria for Group-Satisfying Courses with the final revisions to the Senate this week for consideration at the May Senate meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

The council will consider the Incomplete Policy and the AAA proposal for an Undergraduate Minor in Nonprofit Administration at the next meeting on April 27, from 3:30-5:00 in Johnson Hall Conference Room.

Undergraduate Council, 5256 University of Oregon • (541) 346-1221 • Last Update: May 25, 2004