

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, April 13, 2005

Johnson Hall Conference Room

Present:

Deborah Baumgold, Deborah Exton, Hilary Gerdes, Dave Hubin, Anne Laskaya, Martha Pitts, Tyler Neely, Julie Newton, Steven Pologe, Ron Severson, Karen Sprague, Mark Thoma, Laura Vandenburg, Amalia Gladhart, Shelly Kerr, Colleen Bell, Herb Chereck, Paul Engelking

Absent:

Kathy Roberts, Emily Gilkey, Peter Gilkey,

Announcements:

The Chair reminded faculty representatives that expanded course descriptions for Fall group-satisfying courses are due on April 22, 2005.

Agenda

Proposal to Eliminate Y Grade

[\(Survey of "No Basis for Grade" Marks, AAU and OUS\)](#)

(Continuation of discussion from previous meeting)

Herb Chereck handed out to Undergraduate Council members copies of an informal survey of "No Basis For Grade" marks utilized by the American Association of Universities (AAU) and the OUS. He noted that the most frequently used mark among AAU institutions is "NC". He pointed out that it is important that any mark used on transcripts convey meaningful information. He gave the history of "Y" as appearing in lieu of "D" and "F" during the Vietnam era when students were vulnerable to the draft based on disqualifying GPAs. "Y" is not meant to be used in this fashion. Rather, it should indicate that no academic work was attempted (typically because of a registration error or other technical misstep on the part of the student), not that academic work was unsatisfactory.

- **Discussion**

The UGC unanimously agreed that transcript marks must convey meaningful information, but expressed concern about the impression created by the “NC” mark:

- Professional readers of transcripts may understand “NC” as “no basis for grade,” but others (prospective employers, e.g.) may interpret the mark as “No Credit” due to unsatisfactory work, hence as equivalent to an “F”
- A neutral mark on the transcript is needed to account for situations in which students are, through no fault of their own, recorded as enrolled in classes but not attending (e.g. clerical error, emergency withdrawal)
- The neutral mark should be a non-punitive placemaker on a transcript, with a possibility of resolution
- It is necessary to curb the misuse of “Y” (e.g. the change of “Y” to a letter grade, which implies acquisition of a “basis for grade”!)

The proposal was scheduled for presentation to the Academic Senate the afternoon of April 13, 2005 and the UGC desired to provide some recommendations, based on its discussion, for the Senate’s consideration.

Action:

It was moved by Anne Laskaya that the “Y” mark be retained as the symbol designating “No Basis For Grade” on University of Oregon transcripts. The motion was seconded by Deborah Exton.

The UGC passed the motion, (5-years; 4-abstentions).

([“Y” as the Symbol for “No Basis for Grade”](#))

It was moved by Paul Engelking that any request for a grade change involving a “Y” must be accompanied by a letter of explanation submitted to the Registrar who will determine appropriate action. The motion was seconded by Mark Thoma.

The UGC passed the motion unanimously, (9-years; 0-abstentions).

Group Markings in the Curriculum

Karen Sprague distributed a short list of symbols used at the University of Oregon to designate group-satisfying courses (>1, >2,>3, >4, >5) and she inquired whether UGC members could define them. Few could define the entire set and Karen suggested that symbols with more mnemonic value would be more effective. Herb Chereck explained the history of these symbols as having evolved when enrollment and transcript records were maintained manually. A 2-character designation for group-satisfying courses that is more intuitive than >1, >2, etc. is compatible with current technology, and the Council endorsed such a change.

The Chair asked Karen, Herb and Hilary Gerdes to propose new designations at a future UGC meeting this term.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2005 at Johnson Hall Conference Room.