

## **UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING**

**February 27, 2006**

**Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library**

### **Present:**

Andrew Bonamici, Herb Chereck, Deborah Exton, Kelsea Feola, Hilary Gerdes, Anne Laskaya, Julie Newton, Dorothee Ostmeier, Steven Pologe, Kathy Roberts, Ron Severson, Karen Sprague, Mark Thoma, Mary Ann Beecher, Kate Wagle, and Glenda Utsey

### **Absent:**

Dave Hubin, Martha Pitts, Margarita Smith, Malcolm Wilson, and Paul Engelking

### **Announcements:**

The meeting was convened by Ron Severson. Peter Gilkey, who had chaired the Council since September, 2005, resigned on February 13, 2006 because of the pressure of scholarly work. Peter thoughtfully planned for a smooth transition by appointing Ron Severson as convener for the February 27<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

### **Minutes**

Minutes for the February 13, 2006 meeting had been distributed via e-mail to Council members for review.

**The minutes were accepted unanimously.**

### **Agenda**

#### **Introduction of English Department proposal for new Minor and Certificate in Writing, Public Speaking, and Critical Reasoning**

Copies of the proposal from the English Department were distributed to the Council for discussion at the next meeting on March 13, 2006. Anne Laskaya summarized the development of the proposal –starting from a general appreciation of the need to develop students’ reasoning and communication skills beyond what can be accomplished in two writing classes. The proposal has already been reviewed by the CAS Curriculum Committee, and the Chair of that Committee, Dorothee Ostmeier, noted that it had been examined carefully and had received enthusiastic endorsement.

**Draft document: “Possible Responses to UO Grade Inflation”**

A draft of a document to accompany the Grade Inflation Report, called “Possible Responses to UO Grade Inflation” had been circulated to Council members for final review and editing.

**Discussion:**

The Undergraduate Council members focused their critique of the document on several ideas:

1. The Preamble of the document should outline the steps that are expected to follow circulation of the Grade Inflation Report. It should also explicitly invite responses and direct them to the Undergraduate Council.
2. A section should be added that indicates the nature of some of the related topics the Council has talked about while considering grade inflation. For example, it should acknowledge speculation on the possible causes of grade inflation, but note the Council’s desire to focus campus discussion on ways to deal with the problem.
3. The Preamble should make it clear that the possible responses listed are not recommendations. They are simply ideas that have occurred to Council members, or approaches that are in use elsewhere. It is feed-back from the UO campus that will determine which ideas the Council puts forward as recommendations.
4. The Preamble should acknowledge the tension between academic freedom and academic responsibility in the grading of student work.
5. Section I should clarify the potential inclusion of grading practices in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

**Consideration of the method for initiating campus discussion of the Grade Inflation Report and possible responses to it.**

(See: [Trends in Undergraduate Grades at UO 1992-2004-March 2006 report](#), [Examples of responses to grade inflation](#))

Working from a list of groups likely to be interested in this matter, together with their meeting dates, the Council proposed the following schedule:

Immediately: As soon as edits are final, deliver Report and Possible Responses

to President Frohnmayer, Provost Moseley and Vice President Davis.

March 1: Give current draft to incoming Provost Linda Brady, during her visit to the campus.

March 9: Distribute the Report and Possible Responses to members of the Deans Council at regular Council meeting.

March 16: Karen and Vice President Davis discuss Report and Possible Responses at their regular meeting.

March 21: Deans Council discusses Report and Possible Responses at half-day work session.

Early April (?): Discuss with Student Senate. (Date uncertain because meeting times not yet known.)

April 12 (?): Present to University Senate. Ron Severson will consult with Senate leadership to determine optimal date.

March – April: Present to Curriculum Committees, Academic Requirements

Committee (ARC), and Scholastic Review Committee (SRC). This will be done by the UGC members who represent those groups. Discussion of Grade Inflation will be initiated when the agendas of these groups permit, but as promptly as possible.

## **Election of Chair**

Council members expressed appreciation for Ron Severson's effective leadership during this transitional period, and he was nominated for Chair for the remainder of the current academic year.

### **Nomination for Ron Severson for Chair of Undergraduate Council:**

**Nomination made by Herb Chereck;**

**Nomination seconded by Mark Thoma.**

**The nomination was accepted and Ron Severson was elected by unanimous vote of the Undergraduate Council.**

The meeting was adjourned.

**The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2006 at Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library.**