

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

May 22, 2006

Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Herb Chereck, Kelsea Feola, Julie Newton, Steven Pologe, Kathy Roberts, Ron Severson, Margarita Smith, Karen Sprague, Mark Thoma, Glenda Utsey, and Kate Wagle

Absent:

Patrick Bartlein, Deborah Exton, Hilary Gerdes, Dave Hubin, Anne Laskaya, Martha Pitts, Mary Ann Beecher, Malcolm Wilson, and Paul Engelking

Guests: JoAnna Gray

Minutes:

The motion was made to accept the minutes from the May 8, 2006 meeting.

Moved: Julie Newton

Seconded: Kathy Roberts

The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

Announcements:

JoAnna Gray, Co-Chair of the Accreditation Self-Study Committee, thanked the Undergraduate Council for its contribution to the ongoing discussion of issues to be covered in the Accreditation Self-Study. An outline of the Self-study is posted on the web and JoAnna asked the Council to review its portion of the document and suggest issues for particular emphasis. The deadline for the feedback is before the end of AY 2005-2006.

Agenda

Concurrent Degrees (See [Concurrent Degree Policy](#))

To provide context for the UO policy that allows concurrent degrees from different schools or colleges, Herb Chereck presented a brief history of the relationship of the University to its professional schools. He pointed out that the University was originally established as a liberal arts institution. The professional schools (Architecture & Allied Arts, Law, Business,

Journalism, Music and Education) were established at later dates, typically with less liberal arts emphasis than the liberal arts core (now the College of Arts and Sciences). Herb added that many people commonly use “degree” and “major” interchangeably. However, a “major” is only part of a degree and any major is an add-on to the basic liberal arts education core that is the foundation of a degree.

- **Discussion**

The Chairman distributed the current UO policy re. concurrent degrees, and the Council discussed the rationale for concurrent degrees. At the request of the Council, the Council’s discussion was summarized by the Chair in the following document:

DRAFT: May 25, 2006

ISSUES RELATED TO THE GRANTING OF CONCURRENT DEGREES AT THE UO

Currently, the UO grants concurrent degrees under the following conditions:

(From p. 18 of the current UO Catalog)

1. The second degree is offered by a different school or college;
2. The student completes the departmental requirements for each major;
3. The student completes the general education requirements for each degree;
4. The student completes a minimum of 36 credits at the UO beyond those required for the degree that has the highest credit requirement;
5. The student submits two Applications for Degree in the Office of the Registrar.

According to existing policy, students who major in professional schools can earn concurrent degrees if their second major is either in CAS or another professional school, but students who fulfill the requirements for two majors within the same professional school or within CAS are barred from receiving a concurrent degree even if they also satisfy the conditions listed under 2-5 above.

QUESTIONS

1. What constitutes a UO undergraduate degree?

Most broadly stated, this policy raises the central issue of what constitutes a UO degree. UO faculty, administrators, students, and external constituents ought to be able to answer this question. In some institutions, students need an additional 180 unique credits, consisting of general education requirements and major requirements to earn a second degree. In others, students need only to fulfill the requirements for a second major to earn a second degree. The current UO policy is closest to the latter type.

2. What is the rational basis for assuming that majors earned in different schools or departments (i.e. business and economics, both social sciences) are separate enough to constitute different degrees while majors earned within the same school or college (i.e. chemistry and international studies or theater and math) are too similar in nature to be considered as separate degrees? Stated somewhat differently, does the University consist of several, separate schools and colleges or does it grant degrees as a single entity?

Only students who pursue a professional degree can earn a double degree. Allowing students who pursue a degree from a professional school or college to earn a concurrent degree, while denying this opportunity to students who do not earn a professional degree, suggests that professional programs have a higher level of autonomy from the university than do departments within CAS. Is this accurate? The current policy could be construed as a privilege granted to students who pursue professional degrees that is denied to students who complete two majors in the liberal arts and sciences, even if they are quite unrelated.

3. If an inconsistency exists, how might it be eliminated?

Here are three possible ways:

- a) By allowing all students who earn double majors, as long as they also fulfill the remaining conditions under 2-5 above, to receive concurrent degrees. This would substantially increase the number of degrees the UO grants.
- b) By allowing all students to earn two (or more) majors, but not concurrent degrees – even if the majors are in different schools or colleges. This would reduce the number of undergraduate degrees granted by the UO. The reduction would not be as large as the increase under option “a” as the UO currently offers many more double majors than it does concurrent degrees.
- c) By increasing the requirements for earning a concurrent degree to include a larger, additional general education component, perhaps more tailored to that degree, and extending the option to earn concurrent degrees to all students, regardless of school or college affiliation.

4. Would eliminating the option for earning a concurrent degree, as currently configured, cause undue harm to any students?

To answer this question, the University would need to gather more information about:

- the potential effects of granting double majors but not concurrent degrees on licensure within particular professional fields. For example, would it be important for a History/Architecture double major to be able to earn a BA in History, as well as a B. Arch in Architecture?
- the potential effects on competition for jobs between UO graduates and graduates from universities that do grant concurrent degrees
- the concurrent degree policy at peer institutions

5. If the UO granted double majors but not concurrent degrees, how might this policy affect the granting of post-baccalaureate degrees?

In a sense, certain configurations of post-baccalaureate coursework resemble double majors, and are thus equivalent to concurrent degrees earned at different times. These degrees are not subject to the requirement that they be from different schools or colleges, however.

CONCLUSION

All of the above issues relate closely to the UGC's continuing review of General Education. Do we view General Education as something that happens once, generically, and then provides a platform for earning multiple degrees (as long as those degrees come from different schools or colleges), or do we view each degree granted as requiring its own separate foundation in general education or, perhaps, in another kind of interdisciplinary work?

Grade Inflation Report

The Chairman reported on the presentation of the Grade Inflation Report to the Senate. He noted that the Psychology department has already done an extensive internal study on grading practices. Ron also related that Jim Blick in the Registrar's Office would like the Council to encourage departments to request grading data from him for their internal analysis.

The meeting was adjourned.

(See also: [UO Undergraduate Council Grade Inflation Report-7/10/06](#), [General Education at the University of Oregon-draft 5-20-06](#), and [Summary of Group Curriculum Review 2002-2004](#).)

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 5, 2006, 1:00pm at Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library.