

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

October 4, 2006

Johnson Hall Conference Room

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Herb Chereck, Hilary Gerdes, Dave Hubin, Dan Keller, Anne Laskaya, Dean Livelybrooks, Dan Patton, Martha Pitts, Steven Pologe, Ashley Rees, Ron Severson, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Kate Wagle, Malcolm Wilson, Pat Bartlein, and Paul Engelking,

Absent:

Deborah Exton, Kathy Roberts, Bill Ryan (on leave), and Ken Calhoon

Agenda

The Chair presented an overview of the meeting's agenda ([Undergraduate Council Outlook for 2006-2007](#)).

Introductions

The Chair greeted new members and noted that there are three new student representatives. He encouraged them to participate fully in the Council's discussions.

Undergraduate Council Outlook for 2006-2007

The Chair highlighted projects that the Council had agreed last Spring it would continue working on in 2006-2007. These tasks include:

1. Grade Inflation Report- The Council will continue to get feedback on the Report that was circulated to the campus last Spring. Based on that feedback, it will propose a response to grade inflation to be forwarded to the University Senate.
2. General Education course review – During the 2002-2004 academic years, the Undergraduate Council used the criteria for Group-satisfying courses to review this part of the General Education curriculum systematically. It is important that the Council continue this work this year with the specific goal of reviewing the multi-cultural requirement and the courses that satisfy it. The Council's consideration of state-level criteria for General Education courses is also needed.
3. Classroom design and maintenance- The Undergraduate Council will continue to explore how faculty can influence the process of designing classroom environment and establishing effective maintenance of classroom space.

• Discussion

The Chair invited members of the Council to suggest other issues they would like to see addressed by the Council. Several suggestions were made:

- Consider ways in which we know that students are learning what we are teaching. The Chair acknowledged that the issue of assessment will likely be an important discussion within the Council. It was pointed out that one

reason the Council is focusing on grade inflation is to improve the validity of grading as assessment.

- Explore the issue of undergraduate research
- Examine how the Human Subject Protocol is handled in undergrad research projects. This can be a barrier to inexperienced students trying to get started on research projects.
- Analyze the Drop/Add timeframe for classes; there are inconsistencies in current practice
- Define or clarify the meaning of the “mathematics proficiency” requirement for BS degree
- Look at support for students doing their studies away from the Eugene campus; examine how distance education is supported.

There was an inquiry into the status of expanded course descriptions for Group-satisfying courses, a project which was undertaken last year. Many departments have submitted descriptions, but there are a few departments that have not submitted anything to the Registrar’s Office. A website for the course descriptions is being designed and the plan is to have it active by the Spring Term. The descriptions will be collected in one place (in an electronic notebook), but they will also be individually accessible from the corresponding course listings in the online Schedule of Classes.

Accreditation

Karen Sprague and Dave Hubin provided a brief update on the status of the UO Accreditation Self-Study being developed by UO. The Undergraduate section of the report will be refined within the next week. In early November, the draft of the full Self-Study will be distributed to the Undergraduate Council for review and comment.

Grade Inflation Report ([UO Undergraduate Council Grade Inflation Report](#), [Example Responses to Grade Inflation Report](#), [Campus Responses to Grade Inflation Report](#))

The Chair distributed copies of the Grade Inflation Report completed in Spring 2006 along with the collection of Example Responses to Grade Inflation that was circulated with the Report last Spring. A Summary of Campus Responses to the Report received to date was also distributed to the Council.

Generally, there is strong support for the Undergraduate Council to pursue the problem of grade inflation. However, the Chair pointed out that the final proposal from the Council needs to be informed by campus feedback and based on consensus when it is presented to the University Senate.

• Discussion

The Council agreed that solutions to grade inflation should be departmentally based. The following points were raised during the discussion:

- a study of grade changes may show a correlation or an influence on the issue of grade inflation; “Y” grading is still problematic
- where does the external pressure for “As” come from?
- there should be a discussion of the criteria for grading in addition to the general rising trend in grading
- it is necessary to clarify the descriptive meaning of letter grades

The Chair asked the members of the Council to discuss grade inflation with their peers and colleagues within departments and report what they learn at the next meeting.

Agenda items for the next meeting are: 1.) departmental comments on grade inflation, and 2.) an update on the state effort to define criteria for General Education courses.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 18, 2006, 3:00pm at Johnson Hall Conference Room.