

## **UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING**

**May 5, 2009**

**Johnson Hall Conference Room**

### **Present:**

Andrew Bonamici, Sue Eveland, Amy Goeser Kolb, Dave Hubin, Jennifer Joslin, Anne Laskaya, Andrew Leavitt, Dean Livelybrooks, Ian McNeely, Ron Severson, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Laura Vandenburg, Tom Wheeler, and Trudy Cameron

### **Absent:**

Lisa Feldhusen, Sean Jin, Karen McLaughlin, Caleb Owen, Morgan Williamson, Paul Engelking, and Elizabeth Reis

### **Guests:**

Truman Capps, student and opinion writer for *Oregon Daily Emerald* newspaper.  
Ellen Scott, Associate Professor, Sociology and Director, Women's and Gender Studies

### **Introductions:**

Karen Sprague served as Convener for the meeting and introduced student, Truman Capps, to the Council. Because of time constraints due to Truman's class schedule, the vote on minutes was deferred to later in the meeting. Truman had been the author of an opinion piece for the *Oregon Daily Emerald* entitled "[Everyone can't 'B' winners](#)" which dealt with the topic of grade expectations from a student perspective. Karen invited him to talk with the Council about reactions to his column and his own sense of the grading culture at UO.

Truman said that, in general, there was not a great deal of response to his column. One letter opposed his view, but there was not a general backlash or disagreement with his main point that students have a sense of entitlement in the current grading culture at UO. He agreed to encourage the *ODE* to report on the work of the Undergraduate Council as it seeks input on the topic from the general academic community.

### **Agenda**

#### **UGC Proposal to Improve the UO Culture Connected with Grades**

[\[Proposal to Change the UO Grade Culture\]](#)

A final draft of the UGC Proposal to Improve the UO Culture Connected with Grades was distributed to Council members. After reviewing the draft, minor changes in wording and phrasing were suggested. The proposal will begin with Truman Capps' editorial to show that grading culture is a concern among UO students, as well as faculty.

The Council agreed that the motion was ready for a vote.

**The motion was made that the Undergraduate Council approve the final draft of the Proposal to Improve the UO Culture Connected with Grades.**

**Moved: Ron Severson**

**Seconded: Anne Laskaya**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Following the acceptance of the Proposal by the Council, Karen gave an overview of how the Proposal will be presented to campus:

- 1) The Proposal will be presented to the UO Leadership Council on May 13, 2009 by Ian McNeely, Josh Snodgrass, and Tom Wheeler. The presentation will include prepared questions for the LC to discuss and an accompanying Powerpoint with url links to outside institutions that illustrate effective dissemination of grade distributions (Indiana University, Bloomington : <http://registrar.indiana.edu/gradedist.shtml>; North Carolina State University : <http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/courses/grade.html>).
- 2) The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will be used to publicize the Proposal to the campus community.
- 3) Additional methods will be used to gather input from both faculty and students.
- 4) Education on the meaning of grades will be part of new student orientation (IntroDUCKtion and Week of Welcome) beginning this summer (July-August).

Ian, Josh, and Tom will report on the Leadership Council presentation at the next UGC meeting.

**Minutes:**

Minutes from the April 7 and April 21 meetings were distributed prior to the May 5 meeting. A vote for their approval was called.

**The motion was made to accept the minutes from the April 5 and April, 2009 meetings.**

**Moved: Anne Laskaya**

**Seconded: Ron Severson**

**The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.**

**Proposal to change credit hour requirements for the Women's and Gender Studies**

**Major**

**[Women's and Gender Studies Revised BA and BS Requirements]**

Ellen Scott, Director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program requests a reduction of the credit hours required for a Major in the program from 68 to 48. The rationale for the change is that, initially, Women's and Gender Studies had to be tied to existing or traditional majors and students had to earn a major or minor in one of these majors in addition to doing the required coursework in Women's and Gender Studies. Now that the field is well established and recognized, the requirement for a second major or minor seems unnecessary. The reduction to 48 credit hours is in line with the UO policy that requires a minimum of 36 credit hours for a major.

Council members made two suggestions for the Women's and Gender Studies faculty to consider:

1. Ask students to communicate the basis for the courses they select to count toward the 28 elective credits in the major. The goal is to encourage students to create intellectual coherence by identifying particular foci, within this broad field, that interest them. This is not intended to restrict student exploration, and should not be seen as a burden, either for students or their advisors. Rather, the Council believes that the simple act of thinking through their course selections will be

helpful to students. Ellen concurred that this can be incorporated in the new catalog copy.

2. Another suggestion was to reduce the number of credits that can be taken Pass/No Pass from 13 to 12. This would be congruent with the overall University limit of 12 Pass/No Pass credits for students wishing to graduate with the minimum number of total credits (180).

Ellen noted that there are no budgetary implications involved in the proposed change of credit hours.

The Council was generally in favor of the proposal, and Karen called for a motion.

**The motion was made that the Undergraduate Council endorse the proposal to reduce the number of required credit hours for a Major in Women's and Gender Studies to 48 total credits.**

**Moved: Anne Laskaya**

**Seconded: Ian McNeely**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned.

**The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 19, 2009, 12:30pm at Johnson Hall Conference Room.**