

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
May 19, 2009
Johnson Hall Conference Room

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Dave Hubin, Sean Jin, Jennifer Joslin, Dean Livelybrooks, Karen McLaughlin, Ian McNeely, Caleb Owen, Ron Severson, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Tom Wheeler, Trudy Cameron,

Absent:

Sue Eveland, Lisa Feldhusen, Amy Goeser Kolb, Anne Laskaya, Andrew Leavitt, Laura Vandenburgh, Morgan Williamson, Paul Engelking, Elizabeth Reis, and Jennie Leander

Minutes:

The Convener opened the meeting with a call for review and vote on the minutes from the May 5, 2009 meeting.

The motion was made to accept the minutes from the May 5, 200 meeting.

Moved: Sean Jin

Seconded: Ron Severson

The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

Agenda

Karen Sprague discussed with the Council members the selection of new student representatives to serve on the Council for AY 2009-10. Two of the current students, Caleb Owen and Morgan Williamson, will continue their service into next year. Sean Jin, Andrew Leavitt and Lisa Feldhusen will be graduating. Karen McLaughlin volunteered to assist in interviewing nominees for the vacated student spots.

Karen Sprague asked Council members to submit nominations for Council Chair before the next meeting. Ron Severson suggested that Ian McNeely be placed into nomination, and Josh Snodgrass concurred. Ian was willing to be nominated, and other members of the Council agreed that Ian would be a good selection as chair. The Convener called for a motion.

The motion was made that Ian McNeely be selected to serve as Chair of the Undergraduate Council for 2009-2010 by acclamation.

Moved: Ron Severson

Seconded: Dean Livelybrooks

The Council unanimously approved the motion.

Report on Discussion of UGC Proposal on Grade Culture by the Leadership

Council

[Combined Purpose and Criteria for General Education]

On May 13, 2009, Tom Wheeler, Ian McNeely, and Josh Snodgrass presented the Undergraduate Council Proposal on Grade Culture to the Leadership Council in order to solicit feedback and input. Ian reported that there was very good discussion by the full Council. It was not necessary to form break-out groups. The Leadership Council agreed that something needs to be done to address the grading culture. There was receptivity to the ideas of adding context information to transcripts and disseminating grade distributions to departments. The Leadership Council favored the development of guidelines for faculty grading practice within departments. A concern is how fast and how aggressively to address grading practices. It is probably best to proceed incrementally and to evaluate and readjust approaches periodically.

The Leadership Council agreed with the Undergraduate Council's plan of promoting broad campus discussion of the current proposal. Karen Sprague proposed that members of Council begin discussions within their home departments and work out a plan for ensuring discussion in other departments. These discussions will begin in earnest in Fall term, and will be supplemented by open town hall meetings. Karen will work over the summer to get the UGC Proposal on the agendas of various groups and will take advantage of New Faculty Orientation to initiate the discussion with new faculty members. By Fall, there will also be useful feedback from the panel discussions on college expectations that have been designed for this summer's New Student Orientation (IntroDUCkTion).

In the interim, Council members were asked to contribute their own definitions of what letter grades mean in their disciplines. For example, what is "A" work in a particular Journalism course? The collection will be shared at the first UGC meeting in

Fall 2009 and should provide useful specific examples to help departments get started on their own discussions.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 2009, 12:30pm at Johnson Hall Conference Room.