

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

December 2, 2008

Owyhee / Metolius River Rooms

Erb Memorial Union

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Sue Eveland, Dave Hubin, Jennifer Joslin, Anne Laskaya, Andrew Leavitt, Karen McLaughlin, Ian McNeely, Ron Severson, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Laura Vandenburg, Tom Wheeler, Trudy Cameron, and Paul Engelking

Absent:

Lisa Feldhusen, Amy Goeser Kolb, Sean Jin, Dean Livelybrooks, Caleb Owen, and Morgan Williamson

Guests:

Carlos Aguirre, Associate Professor, History and Director, Latin American Studies

Minutes:

Minutes of the November 18, 2008 meeting were reviewed. Amendments were proposed to change wording and add a sentence to the section covering the discussion of the first draft of the Council's recommendations on Grade Inflation. The Council agreed and a motion was called.

The motion was made to accept the minutes, with the proposed amendments, from the November 18, 2008 meeting.

Moved: Ian McNeely

Seconded: Ron Severson

The motion to accept the amended minutes passed unanimously.

Agenda

UOCC Response to the Undergraduate Council report on Grade Inflation

The Convener announced a change in the order of the agenda, with the response from the UO Committee on Courses to the Council's Multicultural Course recommendations becoming the first agenda item.

The response from the UOCC to the Undergraduate Council [[UO Committee on Courses Response to Multicultural Report](#)] summarized the remaining review of Multicultural Courses:

- 1.) The UOCC needs to review 28 courses:
 - 14 that the UGC thought did not fit the Multicultural category broadly;

- 14 that the UGC thought were appropriate Multicultural courses, but were in the wrong category.
- 2.) The UGC needs to follow up on 19 course that had insufficient information in their syllabi to determine whether or not they met the criteria

Karen proposed that the same small group that completed Round 5 of the initial Multicultural review over the summer of 2007 serve as a subcommittee review group for the 19 courses to be further examined by the Undergraduate Council. This group consisted of Ron Severson, Anne Laskaya, and Karen Sprague. Arkady Vaintrob agreed to participate in this subcommittee since he had participated in the original review of Multicultural courses. The advantage of the subcommittee approach is that it will ensure consistency with the previous review.

The Motion was made that a subcommittee be appointed by the Undergraduate Council to follow up with departments on the 19 remaining courses to be reviewed and report their findings to the Undergraduate Council.

Moved: Ron Severson

Seconded: Laura Vandenburg

The motion passed unanimously.

After reviews by the UOCC and UGC are completed, Paul Engelking and Karen Sprague will meet to develop the report to be presented to the Senate.

Proposal for Establishment of European Studies Minor

[European Studies Minor proposal](#)

[European Studies Minor Budget Review](#)

[European Studies Minor Synopsis](#)

[European Studies Minor Memo](#)

Since the proposal for the establishment of a Minor in European Studies appeared straightforward, and a Certificate Program in European Studies already exists (which the Minor would replace), a representative for the proposal had not been asked to present the proposal to the Council. However, Council members raised several questions:

- The Research Project in the program does not appear to have any credit attached to it; is the Research Project imbedded in the Capstone course or is it credit-worthy on its own?
- Is there too much overlap between a History major and this European Studies minor? It appears that only two extra courses outside those for a History major earn the minor; should there be more?
- How do overseas studies count toward the minor?

- How do the required 8 credits in Social Sciences and the required 8 credits in the Humanities interact with other majors? Again, the question is: are there majors that make this minor automatic?
- How are the courses chosen? European content varies considerably among the courses listed, and there may be courses with a European focus that are not listed.
- Who is administering this program?

Trudy Cameron noted that it would be helpful to make this Minor available to students in time for Spring 2009 graduation. Karen Sprague will send the Council's questions to the designers of the proposal with a request for clarification. If necessary, a representative for the proposal will be invited to meet with the Undergraduate Council.

Draft for Recommendations on Grade Inflation – version 2

The Council resumed discussion on its recommendations on grading practices. Whether or not information on grading practices should be included in tenure files produced vigorous discussion. The major points raised included:

- First, there should be a common understanding of how grades are awarded.
- The practice of including grading patterns in tenure files puts the onus on faculty to decide between currying favor with students or with tenure reviewers. This practice should not be used until there are established criteria for grading.
- The burden would fall principally on untenured faculty.
- There is a difference between grade distribution and grading standards. How can information on grading patterns be injected into tenure consideration without implying that giving high grades will be viewed unfavorably?
- This issue is outside the purview of the Undergraduate Council. The practice of incorporating grading patterns into faculty records is the least effective of all methods being considered to address grade inflation. It would only cause anxiety among junior faculty.
- Student Evaluations are just as problematic as records of grading patterns and yet, institutionally, they are required as part of the tenure file.
- Information about grading patterns is simply that – information; it does not indicate good teaching or bad teaching.
- The action of putting grading patterns into the record would be protective of new faculty; it would reveal honest grading.
- Grading is a significant faculty responsibility and it is a message to the larger world outside the university.
- It is important for departments to discuss the meaning of grades within their area. That means that the first step to be taken is for departments to articulate their own grading philosophy and practice. The views of departments on this matter should be communicated to the Provost and departmental faculty should be held to these standards.
- Grading patterns are currently part of the regular evaluation of departments that is done every ten years.

The draft recommendations on Grade Inflation will be revised again with emphasis on two points:

-Urge departments to consider their own grading practices and formulate a statement of them.

-Encourage departments to develop ways to reduce grade inflation.

Proposal for Establishment of Latin American Studies Major

[History Department Support of Latin American Studies Major](#)

[LAS Major Proposal Synopsis](#)

[LAS Major Proposal](#)

[Latin American Studies CASCC Approval Letter](#)

[Letter From Romance Languages Chair](#)

[Memo Regarding Funding for African Studies, European Studies, and Latin American Studies](#)

[International Programs Proposal](#)

Carlos Aguirre, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Latin American Studies Program, was introduced as the presenter of a Proposal to establish a Latin American Studies Major in the College of Arts and Sciences.

A Latin American Studies Major has been under development for seven years, ever since the minor was created. There is a strong demand for the major from students. Latin American Studies has the largest number of minors of any unit. The presence of Latin American Studies has grown in the last ten years, beyond CAS, e.g. in law, journalism, and communication. The Latin American Studies program wants to build on several specific areas of interest and faculty expertise: migration, gender studies, economics. All of UO's comparator schools have Latin American Studies majors. Demographics support the establishment of the major: in Oregon, the Latino/a population is growing very fast. There is increasing pressure to address the need for Latin American Studies.

The Latin American Studies major will offer four new courses when they are approved. The Romance Languages and History departments are the mainstays of the major. Other departments will fill in. The major will require **three** years of study toward Spanish or Portuguese proficiency. The requirement for three years of language study is more rigorous than most other programs in the U.S. Currently, expansion of the Portuguese language program within Romance Languages is being considered.

Following the presentation, Council members discussed several points with Carlos:

- Who will handle the advising for the major?
Ans: Initially, as Director of the Program, Carlos will be the main advisor for majors. Within two years, he anticipates 100 majors. At that point, he will look at ways to involve more faculty in advising.
- Is there a plan to offer a BS in the major? If not, then the proposal should specify that the program is for a BA. Also:
 - State specifically that 36 credits of upper division courses are required.
 - Give the capstone course a permanent course number.
- The new 200-level courses sound like excellent. Shouldn't these courses have credit towards satisfying the Multicultural requirement?
- Assessment appears to rely largely on grades. Could the capstone course be utilized as an assessment tool? Carlos explained that students will be required to write a thesis in their capstone course, and that the quality of the work would be a useful assessment.
- Is there a minimum number of majors needed to make the program viable? Carlos stated that about fifty majors will be expected initially. Many Latin American Studies majors will be double-majors (with Spanish or History, for example).
- Would there be admissions requirements to the program?
Not initially, but Carlos acknowledged that this may have to be looked at if the Major proves very attractive.
- GPA is suggested as a form of assessment. How would grading be monitored?
Carlos explained that he hoped to establish a mentoring relationship with students; however, he does not want students to view the program as an "easy" major. The Introduction course will help identify students who need to develop stronger skills, for instance in writing.

The Council was generally in favor of the proposal to establish the Latin American Studies major. The Convener called for a motion.

The motion was made that the Undergraduate Council endorse the establishment of the major in Latin American Studies and forward the proposal to the Provost with a recommendation for approval.

Moved: Paul Engelking

Seconded: Laura Vandenburg

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2009, 8:30am at the Rowe Conference Room in the Knight Library.