

DRAFT: Memorandum

To: Deans and Department Heads

From: Jim I.; Paul E.; John N. (chairs of curricular/undergrad committees/councils)

Date:

Re: Lower division courses with 4 credits and 3 contact hours

Cc.

Over the last few years the curricular committees and Undergraduate Council have expressed concern about the increasing number of courses at the lower division level that do not meet the “norm” of four contact hours. While it is generally agreed that “seat time” is not the only measure of student effort and learning, the committees do believe that there we have a clear record of explaining how the nature of the additional work and how it is evaluated.

In this respect it is important to bear in mind the following:

1. The other institutions in the OUS system remain on a three credit standard and view the UO variation as a credit grab.
2. The midterm Accreditation team is due in Eugene shortly. At the last major review concern was expressed about the coherence and standards of our general education courses.
3. The Provost has recently written to deans expressing his concern about the issue.

In response to these concerns, the curricular/undergraduate committees/council are asking each department to articulate the standards of the department in respect to how the forth credit is earned and student effort evaluated. We are asking that such statements outlining the department standards be attached to the departmental curricular report of.....

In addition to the statement of principles we recommend the following and will seek legislation to affirm the standards governing lower courses that meet three hours/week.

- Classes that do not have GTFs or graders should be limited to 40 students. Larger classes must use graders to respond to submissions but in any case restrict class size about 100.

- Prepare a set of distinct out-of-class assignments (as in ASTR); assignments that are qualitatively different from the routine.

We also suggest the following:

- Make use of advanced undergraduates to review (under supervision of faculty) student effort (e.g., in Physics 101, etc.).
- Wave the credit/contact requirement in those cases when a lab is attached to the course.
- Develop classroom (like 204CON) that allow for student to explore alternate learning paths.