UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

January 30, 2006

Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library

Present:

Andrew Bonamici, Herb Chereck, Deborah Exton, Kelsea Feola, Hilary Gerdes, Peter Gilkey, Dave Hubin, Martha Pitts, Julie Newton, Dorothee Ostmeier, Steven Pologe, Kathy Roberts, Ron Severson, Margarita Smith, Karen Sprague, Mark Thoma, Mary Ann Beecher, Kate Wagle, Malcolm Wilson, Paul Engelking, Wendy Mitchell, and Glenda Utsey

Absent:

Anne Laskaya, Ron Severson, Kate Wagle, Malcolm Wilson

Guest

Jo Anna Gray, Co-chair, University Self-study Committee

Agenda

The Chair distributed six handouts to the Undergraduate Council. He noted the Graduate Council’s discussion of the purpose of graduate education and suggested it might serve as a model for the Undergraduate Council to develop a similar statement (HO 1).

Peter Gilkey also referred to the 2005 Undergraduate Council report by Deborah Baumgold, past Chair, to the University Senate, as a resource in the Council’s current consideration of recommendations on grade inflation (HO 2). He also cited a survey of external practices on grade inflation compiled by Ron Severson as another resource for the Council (HO 3).
Grade Inflation Report

Mark Thoma distributed hard copies of his most recent draft of the Grade Inflation Report (HO4), which had been distributed previously in electronic form. Karen Sprague provided a copy of the same report but with the text edited for additional clarity (HO 5). She suggested postponing detailed discussion of the report itself until people had the opportunity to review her revisions.

- Discussion

Council members discussed whether to submit the report to the Senate by itself or with recommendations for action. There were concerns about the timeline of submitting the report with recommendations:

- Rushing the report to the Senate could be counter productive because, at present, the Senate is fully occupied with other matters. Would Senators be able to give adequate attention to the report or any attendant recommendations?

- A period of campus-wide consultation should precede a request for Senate action. This will insure greater input and allow a consensus to develop.

- Some reservations about the effectiveness of anti grade-inflation legislation were expressed. Legislation is effective for only one or two years.

- Members discussed the relative merits of responding to grade inflation by means of legislation, administration or policy.

- In addition to addressing the question of “What do grades mean?” it is also necessary to address the question of “What do course levels mean?”

- To focus on what we need to do now, it is useful to consider what we want to have in place five years from now:
  
  - guidelines for appropriate grade distributions in all units.

  - accessible information on actual grading practices.

Grade Inflation Report: Potential Recommendations
The draft of Potential UGC Recommendations on Grade Inflation from Ron Severson was distributed to the membership (HO 6). The Council decided to review the draft and return with editing recommendations at the next UGC meeting.

The Council set the goal of having both the Grade Inflation Report and a set of Potential Recommendations in final form by the end of the next Council meeting. Both documents would then be circulated for campus comment and discussion. They would also be submitted to the Senate at its March meeting, for discussion but not legislative action.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 13, 2006 at Rowe Conference Room, the Knight Library.