Present:
Lisa Feldhusen, Amy Goeser Kolb, Dave Hubin, Sean Jin, Andrew Leavitt, Dean Livelybrooks, Karen McLaughlin, Ian McNeely, Ron Severson, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Arkady Vaintrob, Laura Vandenburgh, and Trudy Cameron

Absent:
Andrew Bonamici, Sue Eveland, Jennifer Joslin, Anne Laskaya, Caleb Owen, Tom Wheeler, Morgan Williamson, , Paul Engelking, and Elizabeth Reis

Minutes:
The Convener called for a motion on the minutes from the previous meeting.

The motion was made to accept the minutes from the March 12, 2009 meeting.

Moved: Laura Vandenburgh
Seconded: Josh Snodgrass
The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

Agenda
[Request of Name Change from Academic Learning Services]

Susan Lesyk, Director of the Center for Academic Learning Services, is requesting a change in the Center’s name to the Teaching and Learning Center. The proposed name more accurately reflects both the Center’s dual programs: 1) services to students in developing learning skills, and 2) services to the University’s teaching faculty through the Teaching Effectiveness Program (TEP). The name change would align the UO Center more closely with other programs throughout the country that do the same work.

A pressing reason for the request is that the Center for Academic Learning Services is becoming confused, both in the general public as well as within the university, with the new Academic Learning Center for Student Athletes. For example, bills intended for the Athletes’ Center are being sent to Academic Learning Services.
In considering the request, Council members wondered if the proposed new name could be confused with programs in the College of Education that have similar names. Karen McLaughlin will check to see if there is a problem.

The Council was in favor of the request for the name change. The Chair called for a motion.

The motion was made that the Undergraduate Council provisionally endorse the proposed name change of the UO Center for Academic Learning Services to the UO Teaching and Learning Center (unless it is found that the Teaching and Learning Center name could be confused with a pre-existing name at the University).

Moved: Ron Severson
Seconded: Karen McLaughlin
The provisional motion passed unanimously.

Draft of Preamble to Grade Inflation Proposal

Copies of a draft Preamble to the UGC Grade Inflation Proposal were distributed to Council members for review. The preamble includes contributions from Trudy Cameron, Amy Goeser Kolb, and Karen Sprague. Karen asked Council members to consider whether the Preamble was “on the right track” and to suggest changes, if needed.

Discussion:

Council members raised several points regarding the Preamble draft:

- The Preamble needs to make the case that there is a problem more strongly. Including statistics from the grade inflation study, as well as anecdotes, will help.
- The Preamble needs to address upfront three potential reactions:
  - Is grade inflation really a problem?
  - Grade inflation is a problem, but it doesn’t matter;
Response to grade inflation is an individual matter. An orchestrated effort isn’t needed. Therefore, the Preamble needs to give the rationale for each point in the proposal.

- The Preamble needs to acknowledge that the current guide to grading is limited to the brief definition of letter grades published in the UO Catalog. The UO needs to carefully review what grades mean. Grades are not rewards for effort nor are they personal assessments. They are assessments of what students have learned relative to the expectations of particular courses.

Council members examined each of the eight points in the Proposal and suggested rearrangements and condensation. Inclusion of specific anecdotes and data will clarify the Undergraduate Council’s intent.

Proposals 1 & 2: Add example of what a rationale for a grading practice within a discipline would look like;

Proposal 3: Syllabi should explain what the grades mean in a particular course; also, course objectives should be specified; grading practice should be related to the course objectives;

Proposal 4: Need to make point that student education on grades will occur in many settings; give specific examples (not just IntroDUCKtion);

Proposal 5: Include IU-Bloomington url as an example;

Proposal 6: Grade distribution reports are already made available at 10-year department reviews. Strike remarks referring to public posting of grading distributions;
Proposal 7: Schools that report grades in context indicate that their students like the practice because it protects students in harder classes. The practice has had a positive impact on grade culture at those institutions.

Proposal 7 will be rewritten as a general principle rather than a specific mandate.

The revised Preamble and Proposal for Recommendations will be presented at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 12:30pm at Johnson Hall Conference Room.