UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
April 8, 2010
Collaboration Room, Knight Library

Present:
Susan Anderson, Andrew Bonamicci, Sue Eveland, Amy Goeser Kolb, Dave Hubin, Karen McLaughlin, Ian McNeely, Caleb Owen, Josh Roering, Ron Severson, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Drew Terhune, Matt Villeneuve, and Josh Roering

Absent:
Eric Carlson, Kathie Carpenter, Jordynn Didlick, Paul Engelking, Jennifer Joslin, Dean Livelybrooks, Kiwako Sakamoto, Jim Tice, Tom Wheeler (on leave), Morgan Williamson, and Elizabeth Reis

Guests:
Herb Chereck, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management
Julie Newton, Assoc. Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, School of Journalism and Communication

Minutes:
There were no minutes to vote upon. Minutes for the previous meeting will be presented at the next meeting.

Introductions:
Agenda
Vice Provost Chereck and Associate Dean Newton were introduced as the Review Committee representatives for the committee conducting the 5-year administrative review of Vice Provost Karen Sprague (who did not attend the meeting during this portion.) Undergraduate Council members were invited to give candid and confidential feedback on Karen’s work with the Council. At the conclusion of this portion of the meeting, the Council took up its regular business and Karen attended for the rest of the meeting.

Review of the UGC Proposals blog site and Campus Feed Back Town Hall meetings:
Andrew Bonamicci presented an update on the status of the blog. Upwards of 70 comments have been posted since the blog launched on March 29, 2010. Generally, the postings indicate that there is a lot of interest in seeing some sort of grading standard set up at the departmental level.
The Council discussed strategies pertaining to the upcoming Town Hall Meetings (April 20 and April 29) to discuss Grading Culture. These included:

- Designing the event with a shorter presentation time and more time allowed for Q&A with the audience;
- Use a screen projection of the blog url address and the 4 proposals listed;
- Create an interactive dynamic with the audience to encourage more dialogue;
- Video tape the meetings so everything is captured for the record (Andrew Bonamici will arrange this);
- Have information packets available for the Council members participating as panelists at the event;
- Purchase advertisements to go into the Oregon Daily Emerald to encourage attendance;
- Send e-mails to GTFs and Faculty inviting them to attend the Town Halls.

**General Social Science Proposal**

The Council discussed the CAS Proposal for a new General Social Sciences Major. The Chair summarized the Council’s concerns about the proposal and submitted it to the Associate Dean for the Social Sciences in CAS, with a copy to the Associate Dean for Humanities, who handles curricular issues. The document is inserted in the minutes immediately below.

**General Social Science major – preliminary feedback from Undergraduate Council**

The Undergraduate Council discussed the proposal for a revived General Social Science major at its April 8, 2010 meeting and had a number of questions and concerns. (These are in addition to the questions Sue Eveland submitted last month via e-mail, which I haven’t duplicated here.)

- Will there be enough advising available for majors given that there is only one part-time NTTF to run the program? General Science, for example, hires GTFs to advise its majors (and is a smaller program than GSS is envisioned to be).

- The faculty commitment to this major, not just to individual courses within it, is unclear. Again, there is some concern that one part-time NTTF will not be enough to run the major. Most proposals that have come before the Council – particularly interdisciplinary ones – have had a core group of faculty who are intellectually committed to the program and are dedicated to running it (updating the lists of courses, advising students, handling petitions, monitoring the general level of quality, ensuring intellectual coherence, etc.).
• Have the undergraduate advisors in participating departments been consulted about their willingness to participate *ex officio* in running the GSS program? Many are overworked already.

• Can we ensure that GSS students will have access to the courses they need (particularly if majors in regular disciplines get first dibs at registration and enrollment pressures are building already in many of these disciplines)? Some courses in the social studies teaching track, for example, tend to be limited to students in the College of Education. Cooperative agreements may need to be sought between GSS and other units whose courses GSS majors will need.

• What will be the impact, under the new budget model, on social science departments who lose students to this major? Is the proposal supported by these departments? What has their reaction been to it? How will they be expected to make the “adjustments” to course offerings (p. 38) and “reallocate[s] of faculty” (p. 45) that the new major will entail?

• Has careful attention been paid to prerequisites so as to ensure that required GSS courses don’t entail additional coursework unstated in the proposal? (The CASCC delegate on the Council said this had in fact been looked into.)

• There was a general feeling that the tracks should be defined in such a way as to *focus* a student on a well-defined subject not currently covered by other majors. Some argued that some degree of specialization and focus are necessary in any undergraduate course of study, whereas the GSS tracks offer perhaps too much flexibility and not enough coherence. For example, one Council member found that a student could complete the “Crime, Law, and Society” track without taking any courses either on crime or on law. For tracks other than “Applied Economics,” there’s little sense of how ideas build and how skills accumulate as a student moves through a given track.

• What defines each of the four tracks besides a list of required and elective courses? There is no stated intellectual rationale for any of them. We need at least one concise paragraph officially defining each track in order to prevent confusion about its mission and avoid intellectual “drift” as course offerings need updating in the future. The director of the program should have some kind of description for each track to fall back on and consult in determining which courses are to be included or excluded. Otherwise, there is the risk that as students (or even instructors) petition to count certain courses for GSS credit, ad hoc exceptions will be made with essentially no check.

• Would it be possible to produce a grid or table of lower- and upper-division requirements, core vs. elective requirements, etc. for each track? Currently it’s hard to visualize the curriculum, nor is it clear in every case how the number of credits adds up to between 56 and 68.
• What limitations, if any, should be put in place to prevent GSS students from double-majoring in one or more related fields? Given the wide array of courses that count for most tracks, overlap with multiple majors is almost automatic. (This complements Sue Eveland’s concern about combining the GSS major with one or more minors.)

• How will students in the Applied Economics track be expected to succeed in gaining admission to MBA programs (p. 40) if it is anticipated that many will be too weak to thrive in the Business School or the Economics major?

• The number of credits for the social studies teaching track seems both too high and too focused on lower-division credits compared to, say, the History major. Again, there is little sense of focus or accumulation of skills in the track. What are the actual Oregon state requirements for social studies teaching? Is this track the best way for students to prepare themselves to become social studies teachers?

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2010, 12:30pm at the Collaboration Room (122) in the Knight Library.