UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
October 23, 2009
Rowe Conference Room, Knight Library

Present:
Susan Anderson, Sue Eveland, Eric Carlson, Sue Eveland, Amy Goeser Kolb, Dean Livelybrooks, Karen McLaughlin, Ian McNeely, Kiwako Sakamoto, Ron Severson, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Drew Terhune, and Matt Villeneuve

Absent:
Andrew Bonamici, Kathie Carpenter, Jordynn Didlick, Dave Hubin, Jennifer Joslin, Caleb Owen, Laura Vandenburgh, Tom Wheeler, Morgan Williamson, Josh Roering, Paul Engelking, and Elizabeth Reis

Guests:
Rich Margerum, Department Head and Associate Professor, Planning, Public Policy and Management
Laura Leete, Assistant Professor, Planning, Public Policy and Management

Minutes:
The Chair asked for any amendments or corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. None were given.

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

    Moved: Josh Snodgrass
    Seconded: Amy Goeser-Kolb
    The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

Introductions:

Proposal for changes in the PPPM Undergraduate Major and the PPPM minor

The Chair introduced Rich Margerum and Laura Leete who presented a proposal to change the PPPM Undergraduate Major and Minor degree requirements. The rationale for the proposal is that the new alignment of courses is a better reflection of the expertise of current PPPM faculty. Moreover, the new introductory sequence in the required core offers students an overview of the major concentration areas in PPPM. The changes would also allow for an expansion of PPPM electives that could be offered.

The proposed changes include:

- Change the current “Leadership and Change” sequence in the required core of the major to a 3-course introductory sequence focusing on:
  1. public policy, planning and management;
2. the nonprofit sector;
3. urban planning.
• Replace the current “Research Methods” course, which primarily supports the thesis, with a new course, Urban Geographic Information Systems. The thesis requirement for the major was dropped several years ago.
• Change the internship component of the major from a requirement to an option.
• Increase the number of elective credits from 24 to 28 and restrict eligible courses. “Out of Department” credits would no longer satisfy the PPPM upper-division elective credit requirement.
• The total number of credits required for the major would change from 64 to 60, of which all would be satisfied within PPPM.
• Changes in the PPPM Minor mirror the proposed changes in the Major, i.e. replacing the “Leadership and Change” sequence with the three focused introductory courses in public policy, planning and management; the nonprofit sector; and, urban planning.

Following the presentation of the proposal, Council members raised several questions:
- What is the rationale for excluding courses from other departments in the upper division electives? (To allow for more PPPM electives to satisfy requirements for the major.)
- If a thesis and/or an internship is no longer a requirement in the major, is there any kind of capstone experience for majors? (The courses PPPM 494 – Practice of Leadership and Change and PPPM 330 – Policy and Planning Analysis focus on skill development and serve capstones for majors.)
- If generalized internships are a problem (not seen as significant, relevant experiences by students), would it be possible to link internships with specific courses or tracks within the major? Why are students so resistant to internships? (Academically accomplished students are most resistant to internships, perhaps because the internships take up 12 credits that are not graded. They therefore reduce the opportunities to earn higher grades. There are also budgetary considerations since the department can only afford a .50 FTE Internship Coordinator, which is insufficient to manage an internship program large enough to serve all PPPM majors.)

• **Discussion**
- Council members understood the logistical and workload problems associated with internships and theses, but felt that there should be a requirement for either an internship or a thesis for the major. However, it was agreed that the UGC should defer to the department’s judgment on this matter.
- There was concern that the proposal was not clear on how the proposed changes would enhance the value of the PPPM degree and suggested revision of the proposal to make this explicit.
- It was pointed out that this Major does allow room for about 20 credits in outside department electives even though they do not apply to the PPPM Major or Minor.
- The Council was concerned by the lack of a required experiential component or capstone, and recommended that the proposal clarify the fact that encouragement of internships will continue in the absence of a requirement. Overall, the proposal would benefit from a clearer rationale for the PPPM Curriculum design.

The Council deferred any recommendation of endorsement until a clarified proposal has been re-submitted.

**Revitalizing General Education**

The Chair distributed a proposal for re-modeling General Education (submitted as a Big Idea in March, 2009) [See "Revitalizing General Education" - Proposal] and invited Karen Sprague, as a co-author (with Lisa Freinkel), to present it to the UGC. She explained that the proposal was developed by a group of faculty from across campus interested in revitalizing General Education. Although the proposal was not selected for support by the Big Idea Selection Committee, it has continued to gain enthusiastic interest and support from university faculty.

The main idea is to organize the “Group-satisfying” part of General Education through “Teaching Institutes” which would encourage cross-disciplinary teaching around large questions or themes. “Global Citizenship” was the specific example elaborated in the proposal. The institutes would consist of arrays of General Education courses pertaining to the themes, and would function as more flexible versions of the General Education Pathways that were piloted in the early 2000s. Ideally, each institute would have a physical location on the campus where participants could gather for activities outside the classroom (e.g. visiting speakers and artists, discussion of current questions and investigation in the field). The institutes would be designed to develop critical thinking, analysis, and judgment in students.

Council members were interested and enthusiastic. The current structure of the Group-Satisfying part of General Education tends to foster “cherry-picking” and “list-ticking.” The institute model provides a better context for students’ selection of courses.

The Undergraduate Council wants to consider this proposal in more depth and also generate additional ideas. This discussion will be the focus of the next council meeting.

**Grading Culture Talking Points**

The final draft of talking points for discussions with departments and other groups on campus was presented by Josh Snodgrass [See Grade Inflation Talking Points]. The Council accepted the draft and members will proceed with calling meetings within their departments to initiate the discussion across campus on the subject of the Grading Culture at UO.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 6, 2009, 2:30pm at the Rowe Conference Room in the Knight Library.