UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
April 26, 2012
Collaboration Room, Knight Library

PRESENT
Susan Anderson, Andrew Bonamici, Ron Bramhall, Kathie Carpenter, Sue Eveland, Dave Hubin, Karen McLaughlin, Ben Smood, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Zachary Taylor, Li-Shan Chou, and Paul Engelking,

ABSENT
Ashley Buchholz, Jennifer Joslin, Loren Kajikawa, Dean Livelybrooks, Ian McNeely, Michael Sugar, and Tom Wheeler

In the absence of the Chair, the meeting was convened by Karen Sprague.

AGENDA
I. Minutes from April 12, 2012 meeting
II. Discussion of revised Course Prospectus form
III. Proposal for “H” designation to General Education Courses in the College Scholars Program

MINUTES

I. MINUTES FROM APRIL 12, 2012 MEETING
The Convener called for any changes or emendments to the minutes of the previous meeting. There were none.

The motion was made to accept the minutes from the April 12, 2012 meeting.

Moved: Ron Bramhall
Seconded: Susan Anderson

The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.
II. CAS REVISED COURSE PROSPECTUS FORM
Karen summarized the CAS Curriculum Coordination group’s review of the recently-created CASCC Course Prospectus. The Prospectus was developed to improve the process of reviewing new CAS courses by explicitly requesting all of the information needed by reviewers rather than relying on a syllabus to provide it. Karen went on to describe the universal Course Prospectus that she had distributed to Council members, which was inspired by the CAS Prospectus. The university Course Prospectus is intended to serve for review of course proposals campus-wide, not just within CAS, and at the three levels of review: department, college/school, and university. Initially, the idea was to make this course proposal form analogous to the form being developed for program proposals by composing it of sections that would collect information for the three review levels incrementally. While working on the form, however, it became clear that it could not function this way; nearly all of the information in the Course Prospectus form is necessary at the first level of review (department). The Council members were asked to consider the idea of a common course review form used across campus, and to critique the particular version of the form they had been given.

Paul Engelking announced that purchase of the CourseLeaf software for managing review of both courses and programs has been approved. The Course Prospectus form will be useful because it will inform the adaptation of this software for the UO. Questions and items on the form will be the prompts and pull-down items on UO CourseLeaf.

DISCUSSION
Council members were very positive about the idea of a universal Course Prospectus and thought that the version presented to Council would likely be effective. As with any new form or procedure, it would need to be tested through review of a real new course. The following points and questions emerged during the discussion:

– One Council member’s recent use of the CASCC Course Prospectus gives evidence of the effectiveness of this approach. Another member, who had used the form for review purposes, agreed. The form helps both proposers and reviewers understand what information needs to be provided in the proposal and what reviewers can expect to find in particular parts of the proposal.

– Use of the form should speed up the course review process. The form will assure that the proposal is reviewed efficiently by the appropriate groups.

– Council members wondered what distinguishes review at the school/college curricular committee level from that at the UOCC level – especially if a universal Prospectus were to be used?
  Answer: The UOCC is responsible for assigning credits and the Graduate School is the primary arbiter of the 400/500 differential. Currently this review happens very late in the process because the Graduate Council has delegated this review to one graduate school representative and the UOCC.


What is the relationship between the Course Prospectus and the Course Syllabus?

Answer: The Prospectus asks for information beyond that typically required for a syllabus. Because it is faculty policy that a syllabus be provided to students, a syllabus should be part of the material vetted for course proposals. Syllabi can also help facilitate small changes in courses. A syllabus can reveal problems in policy application, e.g. the meaning of “P/NP”, FERPA guidelines for blogging projects, and technical problems like improper use of characters in course titles – all of which are elements of the UOCC review. Some technical problems should be avoided through the new CourseLeaf software which will not allow fields to be filled improperly.

Sue Eveland and Karen Sprague will work together to identify the information that is included in the “nuts and bolts” aspects of course review and how it can be captured through the universal Course Prospectus.

The Undergraduate Council moved that a recommendation be made to the UOCC to ask the Senate to approve, in principle, the development of a common university–wide process for approving new courses.

Moved: Josh Snodgrass
Seconded: Karen McLaughlin

The motion passed unanimously.

III. COLLEGE SCHOLARS PROPOSAL FOR “H” DESIGNATION ON ITS GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

The Council reviewed a proposal from Marjorie Taylor, Professor of Psychology and Director of the College Scholars program, and Ian McNeely, Associate Professor of History, requesting the “H” designation for General Education courses taught in the College Scholars Program. Ian McNeely’s absence allowed him to recuse himself from the discussion.

There are two types of College Scholars courses:

1) “Reacting to the Past” courses in which students analyze a turning point in history and use historical documents to recreate the debate surrounding the event;

2) Enriched and intensified small-class offerings of group-satisfying or multicultural courses that already exist in the General Education curriculum

The Council discussion on the proposal centered on these questions:

- The conceptual question of “Do courses in the College Scholars program qualify for an honors designation?”
• Should authority to grant the honors designation be devolved to the College Scholars Advisory Board?

• The question of how such a designation could be accommodated within the current rules for course numbers and names.

**DISCUSSION**

– Council members agreed that the College Scholars courses meet the criteria developed by the UOCC for honors courses.

– The Council also agreed that establishment of an Advisory Board to provide oversight is a good idea and that such a group would help assure sustained quality in the College Scholars courses. However, even though the Advisory Board already exists in CAS, there was some concern about the precedent that could be set. Would it become common for other groups to claim autonomy in designating their courses as honors? Currently, all “H” courses have to be run through the Honors College for approval.

– Adding an “H” creates problems for the Registrar:
  
  o The College Scholars program is trying to use the same course for both group-satisfying or multicultural credit AND honors; this is not allowable. A designation of “H” would therefore require the course to be vetted through the entire course approval process because it would have to be reviewed for appropriateness as a group-satisfying or multicultural course in addition to an honors course.

– Council members disagreed as to whether such extensive review would be required – especially of those courses that are enhanced versions of existing group-satisfying or multicultural courses. The appropriateness of content and overall design of these courses has already been established. The Honors version simply represents deeper coverage and more frequent interaction with the instructor.

– CAS could not be allowed to designate “H” locally without also allowing other schools like AAA or Music & Dance the same autonomy.

– There are specific catalog listing requirements that would have to be met.

– The Council recognizes the need for care and faculty oversight in creating Honors courses, but also believes that more courses of this kind, in a broad range of disciplines, are needed.

Council members concurred on the value of the H designation for College Scholars courses; they also concurred on the efficacy of Advisory Board oversight; however, there was not unanimity on the question of local control for the Honors designation. Should the full course approval process through the UOCC be required? Consensus on this question was not reached.
It was suggested that the leaders of the College Scholars program think about how they envision their program for the future:

- Will the same courses be taught repeatedly? In that case, going through the process to get a permanent course number might be worthwhile.

- Alternatively, will there be fairly frequent course turnover? In that case, all of the courses could be given experimental numbers.

- Paul Engelking stated that the UOCC has approved changing CAS101 Reacting to the Past to CAS101H.

It was suggested that the discussion continue with Ian and Marjorie directly.

The meeting adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 11, 2012, 2:00 pm at the Collaboration Room of the Knight Library.