Undergraduate Council Meeting
May 24, 2012
Collaboration Room, Knight Library

AGENDA

I. 2:00-2:05 Minutes from May 10, 2012 meeting
II. 2:05-2:10 Request for nominations for 2012-13 UGC chair
III. 2:10-2:45 College Scholars petition to offer honors versions of Gen Ed courses [Prof. Marjorie Taylor, CSCH Director; Nick Drushella, Student]
IV. 2:45-3:30 Motions to improve UO course review process

IN LIEU OF MINUTES

III. COLLEGE SCHOLARS PETITION TO OFFER HONORS VERSIONS OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR HONORS DESIGNATION
I’m following up on the discussion at the last Undergraduate Council meeting, and the email exchange that followed it, on the best way to allow appropriate College Scholars courses to be offered as Honors courses. I think it’s important to respond to the request from the College Scholars leadership (Marjorie Taylor and Ian McNeely) with a solution that’s workable for them, and that also establishes a practical procedure for the campus, generally. As this year’s Undergraduate Council discussions have revealed, the current procedure isn’t widely understood and it is complicated by the interplay between policy requirements and technical limitations imposed by the BANNER system. I think we all agree that greater clarity is needed, and to move in that direction, I’d like to make two contributions: (1) Review the Council’s thoughts on the Honors designation for College Scholars courses, and (2) List the current constraints on giving such a designation, as I understand them. I confess that I don’t have a good grasp of either the policy or the technical constraints that exist, despite Paul’s vigorous efforts to explain them. My purpose in making this summary is to prompt clarifying corrections that will lead to a document we all understand.

1. UGC Thoughts on the Honors Designation for College Scholars Courses
This topic was discussed substantively at two Council meetings: April 26 (neither Ian nor Marjorie was present) and May 24 (both were present).

April 26 Meeting: Based on the minutes, as well as the recording, of the April 26 meeting, I would say that the Council believes that College Scholars courses meet the Honors criteria of rigor and individualized pedagogy. Although not unanimous, there was strong support for allowing considerable autonomy in conferring the Honors designation. Specifically, the Council favored a procedure that
would allow faculty on the College Scholars Advisory Board to review and confer the designation on individual courses, with oversight by the CAS Curriculum Committee. What was not clear was what the designation itself should be—e.g. an H added to the existing number of the parent non-honors course, an H added to a generic course number (e.g. CAS 101H), an experimental number without an H, but with the word “honors” included in the title. These possibilities were introduced near the end of the April 26 Council meeting, but were not considered in detail and I think it’s fair to say that few people at the meeting understood their pros and cons. That’s certainly true of me. Moreover, there was no suggestion of recommending a particular one to the College Scholars leadership. Instead, the Council asked to continue this discussion directly with Marjorie Taylor and Ian McNeely. Specifically, before suggesting an approach, the Council wanted to understand how stable the array of College Scholars Honors courses is likely to be. Will the same faculty teach in the program for multiple years, or will turnover be frequent—even annual?

**May 24 Meeting:** This meeting was the follow-up with Ian and Marjorie, directly, that the Council had requested. The Council re-iterated its conviction that College Scholars courses are Honors-worthy in principle, but did not reach consensus on the extent of review that would needed to confer Honors on an individual course, or on the nature of the designation itself.

2. **Constraints on Conferring the Honors Designation**

   a. **Constraints Based on Policy**

      1.) Creating a new Honors course
      
      - Requires review as a new course by: school/college curriculum committee and UOCC.
      - If the course is to count toward General Education group-satisfying requirements, it must also be reviewed by the ICGER (Inter-College General Education Review) committee.
      - Multicultural status is reviewed by UOCC, not ICGER, just as is already the case with regular university courses.
      - Does one of these review steps focus specifically on Honors worthiness? That is, is there an Honors review function that’s analogous to the specialized review performed by ICGER for General Education courses?

      2.) Creating an Honors version of an existing course

      - Requires review as if it were an entirely new course. Thus, must be reviewed by school/college curriculum committee and UOCC, at minimum.
      - Must also be reviewed by ICGER, if it is a General Education course – even if its General Education content is not being changed.
      - In this comprehensive review, where is suitability for Honors considered?
3.) General

The UOCC believes that certification of Honors-worthiness through the review process should be translated into action at the actual point of delivery by training of instructors (perhaps even “co-instruction”), providing support, monitoring the courses, and maintaining their honors level quality. Since these practices are not mentioned in the newly-adopted list of requirements for adding “Hs” to course numbers, it is unclear whether the UOCC intends them to be binding as a matter of policy.

4.) Asked whether it would be appropriate to have some honors classes designated with an “H” appended to the course number on the transcript, and others designated with the letters “HON” in the course title, the Registrar was inclined to defer to the judgment of the relevant committees.

b. Constraints Based on BANNER Limitations

1.) An H (or any letter) cannot be added to an existing course number to create two courses (honors and non-honors versions of the original course) that can be distinguished by the degree audit system. That’s because the degree audit system doesn’t see the H. While there are exceptions to this rule in the catalog—e.g. BA 352 and BA 352H—it would present severe technical implementation problems if allowed to become general practice. Similarly, experimental course numbers (199, 399) cannot have H added to them.

2.) Experimental course numbers (199, 399) cannot be used for courses that count toward General Education requirements or that serve as pre-requisites. [Not sure why, but maybe it’s because these courses can’t be distinguished from one another, except by their titles, and the degree audit system can’t check titles.]

• There is an exception that allows courses with experimental numbers to be taught once for General Education credit, while permanent numbers are sought.

3.) Topics courses provide a way to offer a series of related courses under the same number, without re-review at each change of topic.

• Can topics courses count toward General Education requirements?

• Can topics courses serve as pre-requisites?

• Can topics courses carry the H designation? e.g. CAS 101H “Reacting to the Past”