UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
October 21, 2011
Collaboration Room, Knight Library

PRESENT
Kathie Carpenter, Sue Eveland, Jennifer Joslin, Loren Kajikawa, Karen McLaughlin, Ian McNeely, Ben Smood, Josh Snodgrass, Zachary Taylor, Tom Wheeler, Stephen Frost, and Paul Engelking

ABSENT
Susan Anderson, Andrew Bonamici, Ron Bramhall, Ashley Buchholz, Dave Hubin, Dean Livelybrooks, Karen Sprague, Michael Sugar, Li-Shan Chou, and Elizabeth Reis

AGENDA
I. Minutes from June 6, 2011 and October 7, 2011 meetings

II. Proposal for Comic and Cartoon Studies minor-presented by Ben Saunders, Associate Professor, English Department, and Fabienne Moore, Associate Professor in French, Romance Languages Department

III. UGC agenda for upcoming year

IV. Updates from Grade Culture volunteers

MINUTES

I. MINUTES FROM JUNE 6, AND OCTOBER 7, 2011 MEETINGS
The Chair called for any changes or emendments to the minutes of the June 6, 2011 and October 7, 2011 meetings. Karen McLaughlin requested that the minutes of the October 7 meeting be changed to reflect that she was volunteered provisionally, “in absentia,” to serve as liaison to the College of Education as it worked on implementing Motion 11a of the Grade Culture proposal. (She later confirmed she was willing to take on this task.) The Chair entertained a motion to accept the minutes.

The motion was made to accept the minutes from the June 6, 2011 meeting and the emended minutes from the October 7, 2011 meeting.

Moved: Josh Snodgrass
Seconded: Loren Kajikawa

The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.
II. CAS PROPOSAL FOR DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMIC AND CARTOON STUDIES

The Chair introduced three guests: Ben Saunders, Associate Professor, Department of English; Glynne Walley, Adjunct Instructor, Department of Art History; and Fabienne Moore, Associate Professor of French, Department of Romance Languages. They presented a proposal for a Comic and Cartoon Studies minor.

For about 40 years, many institutions have had archives of graphic comic book and cartoon literature. The history of comic and cartoon literature can be traced back to as early as the 15th and 16th centuries. Modern elements of the genre (e.g. dialogue balloons and sequential story-telling panels) go back to at least the 17th century. Comic and cartoon literature is extant in cultures and traditions globally. Of particular influence in the modern era are the American, French, and Japanese traditions of the genre. Today, comics and cartoons are recognized as a powerful form of graphic literary representation.

The uniqueness of the proposal for the minor is that it will position the UO on the leading edge of this emergent field of knowledge. One challenge is that the opportunities for scholarly publishing in the field have exceeded the courses of study available in the field. The vision is to begin an introduction to a field that is interdisciplinary—an art form that crosses intellectual borders—and global in scope. The presenters noted that University of Chicago has hired someone to specifically teach graphic novels. The UO would be one of only a very few institutions to help give the field an “identity” and this could serve as a great draw for students to come to the University.

Discussion

Members of the Council asked questions about the proposed program:

Q: Is there a Steering Committee to guide the minor and monitor its curriculum?
A: At this time, such a committee would consist of the professors teaching the courses in the minor.

Q: Who will provide advising for the minor?
A: Ben Saunders said he would be serving as advisor for the minor, at least initially.

Q: There does not seem to be a core curriculum for the minor?
A: By comparison, the English minor does not have required courses, either. The proposed minor has one required course (ENG 280) and the requirement of 24 credit hours of approved courses within the field.

Q: Are there enough courses to service the minor?
A: The minor is completed with 6 courses over a four-year period. The challenge was whether there would be enough faculty interested in teaching courses for the minor. Yes, there are three faculty in English, several faculty in Romance Languages, and one faculty in Comparative Literature. There are enough established courses to support the minor and several more courses pending in the approval process pipeline.
Q: Is there a dedicated line established for the minor?
A: Currently, there is not a dedicated line. However, the proposal is designed as cost-neutral. Sources of private support are being explored for the possibility of supporting the program.

After the presenters left the meeting, the Council continued their discussion. Several reservations were raised:

- The program for the minor should have a clearly designated advisor.
- A residency requirement needs to be stated in the proposal.
- Many of the courses listed are not standard courses, but topical or experimental. There needs to be an evident commitment to regularized courses.
- The minor needs a core curriculum with required courses.
- There may be a risk of drift as new faculty and new courses enter the minor.
- The plus is that this proposal puts the University in front by creating a minor in a popular emergent field of study.
- Should there be concern of any blowback on the concept of “studying comics”?

The Undergraduate Council decided that its concerns could readily be addressed as the program evolved and many of the current reservations would be resolved. Given the intellectual and pedagogical merit of the proposal, the Council did not want to slow down the momentum or enthusiasm for establishing a “cutting edge” program like the proposed minor in Comics and Cartoon Studies.

The motion was made to endorse the Proposal for an English minor in Comics and Cartoon Studies, with clear communication of the concerns and suggestions of the Council.

Moved: Paul Engelking
Seconded: Karen McLaughlin

The motion to endorse the proposal passed unanimously.

III. UGC AGENDA FOR UP COMING YEAR
The Council did not have time to pursue further discussion of the agenda. Paul Engelking requested that a discussion of the meaning of an “H” on a course number be added as a future agenda item.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 4, 2011, 2:30pm in the Collaboration Room of the Knight Library.