UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
March 11, 2013
Collaboration Room, Knight Library

PRESENT
Susan Anderson, Andrew Bonamici, Ron Bramhall, Paul Engelking, Sue Eveland, John Gage, Dave Hubin, Madeleine Hudson, Jennifer Joslin, Loren Kajikawa, Diana Salazar, Alison Schmitke, Ben Smood, Josh Snodgrass, Kerry Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Beata Stawarska, Randy Sullivan, Karen McLaughlin, and Glenda Utsey

ABSENT
Ashley Buchholz, Sue Eveland, Loren Kajikawa, Diana Salazar, Alison Schmitke, Ben Smood, Kerry Snodgrass, Beata Stawarska, and Tom Wheeler

GUESTS
Barbara Altmann, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs
Ruth Keele, Assistant Vice Provost, Academic Affairs

AGENDA
1. Discussion on Online Education

MINUTES

* MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 25, 2013 MEETING
No minutes from the February 25, 2013 meeting were available at this time. [Cathy Kraus was absent from this meeting.]

* NON AGENDA ITEM: PREVIEW OF COUNCIL WORK FOR REMAINDER OF THE YEAR
The Chair presented a brief outline of work that will come before the Council over the course of the remainder of the AY 2012–2013:

– Program reviews: Native American Studies minor; Arabic Studies minor

– SAPP name change (still to be scheduled)

– Grade inflation and grade culture. Karen Sprague and Josh Snodgrass will be meeting with CAS department heads at their meeting on April 17 to review the topic with them.
I. ONLINE CLASS POLICY
The Chair invited Council members to articulate the rationale for the Council’s involvement with the issue of online education. In the course of the discussion, several ideas on developing policy for online courses were brought forward, including:

- There are qualitative differences between online courses and classroom courses; quality is a real issue for some online courses.

- The process of developing high quality courses online is very different from the process of developing traditional classroom courses. To develop online courses well will require utilization of university resources, with much consultation, much earlier in the development process than with standard classes. Moreover, a process needs to be established that assures online instructors are consulting and getting the technical and development assistance they need to develop quality courses. Online courses need to get out of the department early. For example, OSU has actively been developing their distance education program with online courses for 13 years. They use the resources developed for the creation of online courses to also develop hybrid courses. After 13 years of developing distance education, 60% of OSU students taking online courses are on campus. Students make use of the online courses for scheduling flexibility and the opportunity to take courses they need in order to control education costs and the timely achievement of their degrees. We need to revise the idea of online courses as primarily for distance education. At the UO, growth of online courses will likely not be in distance learning, but in courses (both fully online and hybrid) for UO students on campus.

- Regulation will drive how online courses will develop. We need to understand the goal of online education at UO.

- There is concern that oversight could lead to another layer of bureaucracy. At OSU, the development of online courses is client driven, managed by a project director under the guidance of the instructor of the course. If done right, the standards will evolve “naturally” from the development of the courses themselves. Currently, UO Academic Extension develops the delivery of most online courses, but does not assess their academic content. Oversight of the academic content is the concern of the Council. This is the issue that needs to be carefully addressed.

- The Council should be developing an effective policy about online courses and, at the same time, promoting best practices for the development of new online courses.

- Online courses should not be under the aegis of Continuing Education/Academic Extension. The Council should recommend moving distance education and online courses into the regular faculty-led curricular structure.

- There are resources available through Academic Extension (monetary, staff) that facilitate the movement of regular courses into the online environment by individual instructors. Whether a
course should be offered through the normal tuition model or through Academic Extension is a departmental decision.

- Currently, most courses go online through Academic Extension. In addition, there are some departments that have moved regular courses to an online environment, using their own internal resources to do so. This approach does not require consultation with any outside review group—on either course delivery mechanism or academic quality.

- Current online courses are in the regular catalog. They were regularized through the UOCC when they were originally created as face-to-face courses. These are General Education classes, for the most part. The question is how to deal with classes that are completely new or new to the online environment.

- The UOCC reviews courses when they are first offered; unless a change triggers an alert that there is a major change in the course content (as stipulated in the regular catalog) when it changes modality, the UOCC generally does not re-review the course.

- There are some courses taught in the traditional manner that have been offered repeatedly, but have never been reviewed through the Curriculum review process. (An example would be some SAPP classes).

- We need a Committee on Courses that can review existing courses for changes in pedagogy or changes in expectations. Right now, we are experiencing a worrisome shift in our curriculum -- promoted, at least in part, by the current budget model. The new electronic course review system may be able to help in spotting problems in the future.

- The Inter-College General Education Review (ICGER) Committee (convened through CAS) currently looks at General Education courses, but not multi-cultural courses. ICGER has the power to solicit new courses for General Education because it has the vision of what General Education is (or should be).

The Chair suggested several key issues that should be included in a review of online courses: Academic Rigor, qualification of instructor, grading, contact hours, GTF issues. Council members noted other aspects of reviewing online courses:

- Student engagement in an online course should include interactivity and learning should be assessed;

- High quality interactive instructional design must be considered in review of online courses;

- Are current online courses assessed? There are skewed grade distributions (toward high grades), particularly in departments with a broad array of online courses;
Another issue is the linking of credits with contact hours. Student engagement in active learning is assessed. Most courses at UO consist of 3 hrs/in contact earning 4 credits;

Online courses should not be required to be more rigorous than seated classes;

Hopefully, whatever criteria are adopted for online courses can also be applied to all courses;

We will have more hybrid classes, as we develop the online courses;

Hybrid courses are growing in the areas of language and lower division courses;

A major concern is the acceptance of equivalent transfer credits from online campuses that don’t have as rigorous a review as the UO. We are required to accept those credits. We have no way of reviewing or identifying these credits. This is a problem, particularly with General Education courses;

Quality control is an important issue for other institutions like UO. If we are going to be accepting these online credits, we need to know what they are and we need to know that they are good.

**Going Forward: Where to Go from Here**

Karen Sprague distributed a handout summarizing issues for the Council to consider while drafting a policy for online courses. The document, entitled *Features of Online Education that Might be Covered by Guidelines*, identified 7 points to consider. [See end of document.]

Barbara Altmann noted that the initiation of a recommendation to the Provost regarding guidelines for online education should come from the UGC through the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. Other Council members advised the recommendation should go directly to the University Senate.

The Council summarized points from the discussion:

- University resources are necessary to create high quality online courses and they need to be spread equally across departments;

- Online courses should be developed for those wanting to go in this direction, but should not be mandated for all;

- Because there is no centralization available at UO, there will be focused nodes of technical support and resources. Support will have to be provided on a project basis through team structure;

- Have students contribute to development of online courses.
The Council arrived at a consensus to move forward with developing guidelines and best practices for online courses. The new electronic course management system will not be fully operational until about September 2014. In the interim, the Council will work on developing review procedures for online courses that can be transferred to the electronic system. The goal is to be able to review online course proposals thoroughly, but quickly—e.g., within one term.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at 3:30pm in the Collaboration Room of the Knight Library.

FEATURES OF ONLINE EDUCATION THAT MIGHT BE COVERED BY GUIDELINES (KAREN SPRAGUE)
MARCH 11, 2013 DRAFT

1. Define what we’re talking about, e.g.
   - Fully online vs. hybrid
   - Some minimum # hrs/week face-to-face
   - Synchronous vs. asynchronous?

2. Specify who can propose and/or teach online courses, e.g.
   - Tenure-line faculty
   - Tenure-line faculty or NTTF
   - Procedure for exceptions

3. Ensure instructors are prepared to make the most of this teaching medium, e.g.
   - Training for faculty who create and/or teach online courses
   - Training for GTFs who lead discussion sections for online courses

4. Prepare students to get a high quality education from online courses, e.g.
   - Require previous demonstration of academic success in face-to-face courses
   - Provide introduction to relevant technology
5. **Ensure that the mechanism of online course delivery allows effective education, *e.g.***

- Show how sustained and effective intellectual interaction between students and faculty and among students will be achieved
  - Students should be able to interrupt with questions
  - Something beyond posting PowerPoints or other course material on the web is necessary
  - Feedback on assignments and tests should be timely – with the opportunity for discussion, if needed
- Design should minimize opportunities for cheating
  - Means for verifying identities of participants
  - Tests administered and proctored centrally: synchronously; face-to-face?

6. **Specify the means for planning and evaluating online courses, *e.g.***

- New or revised online courses reviewed through the regular review committees?
- Online versions of existing courses reviewed through the regular process before being offered
- Existing online courses periodically reviewed by university-wide curriculum committee(s). Review based on syllabi, exams, samples of student work, and grade distributions?
- Course design should be discipline-specific, reflecting the most effective use of electronic teaching technology in different areas (*e.g.* inclusion of videos/cartoons/tutorials illustrating molecular mechanisms in biology courses)
- Course descriptions and syllabi should be readily available to students and to faculty and administrators not connected with the course.
- Place-bound work (*e.g.* labs, field trips, face-to-face meetings) should be clearly specified—before students have registered
- Academic support for students taking online courses should be regularly available: Office hours; facilitation of group work by faculty
7. Specify expectations for oversight and support of online courses/programs at the university level, e.g.

- University’s rationale for creation or expansion of online offerings should be more than the desired to increase institutional size (e.g. opportunity for pedagogical creativity or response to true student need; what constitutes true evidence of need—is growing enrollment in such courses evidence of the need for them?)

- Commitment to logistical support of online courses/programs, including expansion of existing offerings, should be explicit and the necessary funding should be identified in advance
  
  - Technological support for students and faculty available 24/7
  
  - Centralized training and mid-course support for faculty and students new to this form of pedagogy

- Commitment to rigor and academic integrity should be explicit. It should be clear that University-level policy and actions support local efforts to maintain rigor and assure academic integrity.