Memorandum

To: Lorraine Davis, Senior Vice President and Provost
From: Karen Sprague, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies
Subject: Proposal for Revisions to the Human Physiology Major
Date: December 1, 2011

I have read the proposed revisions to the Human Physiology Major and think that the increased integration of anatomy with physiology and of labs with lectures is an excellent plan. I initially had concerns about the suitability of this major for two very different groups of students -- future physical therapists and future physicians. The requirements for the major fit nicely with the requirements for physical therapy training, but much less well for medical or dental school, and some of the revisions reduced that fit still further. In addition to fulfilling the 98 credits required for the major (48 with the HPHY prefix), pre-med students must take Organic Chemistry (14 cr), the second term of Calculus (4 cr), Physics labs (6 cr) + 3-4 Biology courses (4 cr each) at the cellular/biochemical level. When combined with University General Education requirements, the total credits required of HPHY/pre-med students would be ~186, leaving little room for coursework outside the sciences that goes beyond minimal General Education (e.g. foreign language)

In response to these concerns, the proposers agreed to the following:

1. Catalog copy and advising material will be re-written to communicate clearly and specifically to HPHY majors considering medical or dental school that they must plan on significant basic science coursework beyond the major.

2. The range of courses that fulfill the upper-division electives requirement (16 cr) has been expanded to include upper-division Biochemistry, Genetics, and Cell/Developmental Biology courses that modern medicine requires and that medical schools increasingly expect their applicants to have taken. This increased flexibility at the upper division relieves some of the pressure on pre-meds in this major and thus improves the fit.

With the changes detailed above, I support the Undergraduate Council’s recommendation to approve the revised HPHY major.