UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
October 16, 2014
Collaboration Room, Knight Library

AGENDA

Minutes from October 2, 2014 meeting

UGC Pre-Major proposal
   Presented by Ian McNeely, Assoc Dean for CAS
   Undergraduate Education

Concurrent degrees

Academic Credit discussion

The Chair opened the meeting by inviting the Council members to re-introduce themselves around the table since there were several newcomers in attendance. Following the introductions, the Chair asked if there were any emendments or corrections to be made to the minutes of the October 2, 2014 meeting. None were forthcoming and the Chair called for a motion.

Minutes:

   The motion was made to approve and accept the minutes of the meeting of October 2, 2014 as presented.

   Moved: Kelli Matthews
   Seconded: Kassia Dellabough

The motion was passed unanimously by the Council membership.

UGC Proposal for Pre-Majors:

   The Chair began the discussion of a UGC Proposal for Pre-Majors by presenting some background as to how the question came to the Council. In Winter term 2014, International Studies had presented a request that the Council approve the creation of a pre-major in International Studies. The Council was surprised to learn that there does not currently exist a policy for the creation of pre-majors.

   A proposed UGC policy on pre-majors was discussed by members of the Council. Several questions were raised.

   The Chair will work on revisions to the proposed pre-major policy based upon members’ comments and bring it back to the Council for consideration.

Concurrent Degrees:

   The question of allowing con-current degrees (i.e., two degrees in one college) spurred lively discussion about the history of how faculty own curriculum and award degrees. UO does have a high-standard policy for awarding consecutive degrees (post-bacculareate degrees), but currently disallows concurrent degrees from a single college. Colleges are allowed to award double majors (as long as they a share a degree in common, a BA or a BS), but there is an enforced practice of a 25% ceiling for course
overlap in the two majors. (This point also raises questions about the arbitrary distinction between BS and BA degrees.) Any policy changes to degrees offered must originate within faculty and departments. The entire issue is tied to the question of academic credit.

**Academic Credit:**

The Vice Provost felt that all these issues were highlighted in the report which had been distributed to the Council members: “*Cracking the Credit Hour*” by Amy Laitinen of the New America Foundation and Education Sector. She Lisa strongly encouraged them to read it because it lays out clearly the stakes of the issue: What is a degree? What are students paying for? The context of today’s education debate is that there is a transformative shift taking place. Similar to the moment at the end of the 19th century when the notion of the academic credit was established to measure faculty work, we are today at a place of transforming efficiency models in the way industry works that challenge many of our basic understandings of: What is work? What does it do? What should it cost? These questions are pushed by technology and for-profit online educational institutions, along with public disinvestment and public disenchantment. How do we educate: cheaper, better, faster? How do we define a student credit hour? In assessing these questions, there are five areas that need to be examined:

- How do we understand educational technology (in an asynchronous environment)? What does a 4-credit class mean and how does it apply to an on-line or hybrid environment?
- What is our relationship as a university to high school courses and prior learning? (dual credit, AP courses, IB program, etc.) A related question is: What is our relationship to assessment and learning outcomes? (It’s easy to talk about time; it’s difficult to talk about learning outcomes.)
- What is our relationship to experiential learning (that occurs while students are on campus)? Should that be credit-bearing? How do we measure it?
- How do we understand “overlapping” of credit-bearing courses? Do our current philosophies match existing realities?
- What are the budgetary implications? Currently we’re working with a budget model where dollars flow to student credit hours.

The Vice Provost summarized the core argument of the article: When the Carnegie Credit Hour was established, “Time” was used as a proxy for learning; grades were supplementally used to measure learning at the assessment level. The Time base for credit does not work anymore, and grades as assessment are no longer trusted. Let’s get rid of time measurement and move to direct assessment. The notion of “engagement” has shifted in the new on-line learning environment.

**Discussion:**

Council members commented on the conclusions of the article.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 30, 2014 at 10:30am in the Collaboration Room of the Knight Library.