

Minutes of Undergraduate Studies Committee
Friday, January 21, 2005
2:00-3:00
HC 9030D

Members Present: Craig Bertolet (Chair), Chris Forhan, Justin Lowery, Jim Ryan, Dennis Rygiel, Isabelle Thompson, Don Wehrs

Members Absent: Cedrick May, Marc Silverstein

Business

1. Announcements

2. Approval of Minutes for November 8, 2004

3. Report of Enrollments for Spring 2005

Craig Bertolet reported that all classes offered in the English major for Spring Semester 2005 made. He said that three classes were overbooked: Later Shakespeare, Modern British Literature, and The American Novel. He also said that three classes—Survey of Linguistics, Rhetoric, and Creative Writing—had the longest waiting lists. Because Survey of Linguistics and Rhetoric are required courses for English majors, Craig will continue to monitor their enrollments.

Craig also discussed several changes in the registration process made this semester, especially in the use of waiting lists. Students will now submit their waiting list forms to Debra or Jean in HC 9030. When a seat becomes available, Debra or Jean will enroll these students in the requested classes. When a class becomes full and has a waiting list, the maximum enrollment on the class is dropped to 1. These new registration procedures have reduced the number of students who do not get the classes they want. During registration for Fall Semester 2004, 140 students filled out waiting list forms, and only 50 were placed in classes. During registration for Spring 2005, the first time this new system was used, 77 students filled out waiting list forms and 45 were placed in classes. Fewer students had to fill out waiting list forms and a comparatively higher percentage were placed in classes during Spring Semester registration.

4. Discussion of Two Proposals for the Distinction Program

Don Wehrs put forward two proposals for the Distinction Program. Because of time constraints, we were able to discuss only one of the two. The first proposal is as follows:

Proposal One: the Undergraduate Studies Committee adopt as policy the principle of recommending that instructors of 4000-level courses contracted for Distinction credit count the extra academic work performed to fulfill Distinction contracts in the calculation Distinction students' final grades for the course. Thus, the extra work for Distinction Credit may raise a grade beyond what it would have been without the extra work. As a practical matter, students are unlikely to contract for extra work unless they are confident that the extra work will be reflected in grades. Since all students may compete to achieve Distinction eligibility, and since all eligible students have the option of seeking Distinction contracted, this policy would be equitable.

Discussion about Proposal One was wide-ranging, with particular concern for equity issues. Don's goal to make the Distinction program more appealing for qualified students was weighed against inequities that might result when one student in a class is graded on work that other students cannot be graded on. It was also pointed out that extra work may lower as well as raise the grade in a class. Don amended Proposal One to be . . . "Distinction Credit may raise or lower a grade . . ."

Proposal One was defeated by a 4 to 1 vote of the Committee. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05. The Undergraduate Studies Committee will meet again on February 4 to discuss Proposal Two.