

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUCTION

Annual Report  
1984-85

I. Membership

The following members served on UCUI, in accordance with Senate membership specifications:

Chair:

Jane Eberwein, designated by the Provost in the absence of an Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies

One faculty member from each organized faculty, appointed to staggered two-year terms by the Senate, each of whom represented UCUI to the Committee on Instruction or equivalent group in her/his academic unit:

Marc Briod, School of Human and Educational Services (1984-85)

William Cramer, Library (1984-86)

David Downing, Arts and Sciences (1984-86)

Richard Rozek, Health Sciences (1984-86)

David Sidaway, Economics and Management (1984-85)

Christian Wagner, Engineering and Computer Science (1984-86)

Carol Zenas, Nursing (1984-85)

The Director of Academic Advising:

Elaine Chapman-Moore

Two undergraduate students designated by the University Congress:

Risë Brayton (fall 1984)

Michael Carbone

Matthew Tomilo (winter 1985)

The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee), ex officio and non-voting

Rosalind Andreas

The Registrar (or designee), ex officio and non-voting

Lawrence Bartalucci

II. Achievements

The committee met for thirteen formal meetings, at approximately two-week intervals. In addition, four subcommittees carried on additional work.

This was the first year of UCUI's operation under its new, expanded charge as a separate standing committee of the Senate, approximately parallel to the Graduate Council, rather than as a subcommittee of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee (APPC). This report summarizes the committee's work in terms of that charge.

- A. To recommend to the University Senate academic policies and procedures concerning undergraduate education (except for general education requirements) and, when necessary, seek advice from other appropriate bodies concerning the impact of these policies and procedures.

Following this item of its charge, UCUI recommended to the Senate a revised policy on S/U grading that allows undergraduates at the sophomore level or above the opportunity to choose up to eight credits of free electives on a Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory grading basis. This legislation won Senate approval at the April 11 meeting. It will not be implemented in fall 1985, however, having been approved too late for the new catalog, but will be put into operation as soon thereafter as possible. Details of this proposal were worked out by a subcommittee after initial Senate discussion in the early winter (Briod, chair; Bartalucci, Chapman-Moore, Tomilo).

UCUI deliberated on several other academic policies related to undergraduate education, some of which it resolved in ways that seemed clarifications of Senate intent rather than changes that would need direct Senate approval. It now calls these decisions to the attention of the Senate and of the University community at large and is prepared to bring these matters to the Senate should that body request the opportunity to act on them.

The first of these policy matters involved transfer of courses taken at other institutions by students already enrolled at Oakland University, either for credit or to satisfy a course requirement. At the request of the Provost, UCUI considered a statement drafted by the Registrar for the winter Schedule of Classes to prohibit such elections unless approved in advance by a Committee on Instruction. The School of Engineering and Computer Science already includes such language in the Undergraduate Catalog. Faculty complaints about such transfers by matriculated Oakland students tend to focus on mathematics courses required for professional programs, although composition and other courses are also involved. While sympathetic to the concerns of academic units that try to discourage students from going elsewhere for better grades in not-exactly-equivalent courses that often leave them unprepared for advanced work, UCUI was strongly influenced by presentations made to it by the network of academic advisers (through Elaine Chapman-Moore and Sheldon Appleton), by David Beardslee, and by Jerry Rose--all of whom pointed out the frequency with which students come and go within academic institutions, the disadvantages some of them (especially non-traditional students) would encounter from the loss of accustomed flexibility, and the satisfactory outcomes of many such transfers. Rather than present to the Senate a ban on all such transfers, therefore, the committee decided to modify current catalog language to clarify that the ban on transfers of credit from two-year institutions after 62 credits applies as well to transfer of course equivalency. Schools may adopt more stringent requirements for their own majors and publish them in the catalog, where the general entry on transfer credit will direct attention to policy statements within specific academic units.

UCUI continues to feel concern about the pattern of such transfers, however, and about practices on our campus that encourage flight to supposedly less rigorous institutions. Specifically, we are disturbed to find that some of our academic units compute grades for transfer courses as direct equivalents of Oakland University courses when figuring grade point averages of candidates for admission to their programs. We wish to point out to the faculties of such units the injustice such practices can wreak on those students who attempt to carry out all their work here rather than finding refuge in other schools, primarily community colleges.

Two issues came before UCUI by way of interpreting the new undergraduate grading system approved last year by the Senate. A subcommittee (Chapman-Moore, chair; Bartalucci, Brayton, Downing, and Wagner) deliberated on both these matters and brought before the full committee detailed proposals that won general approval. The first such issue involved the question, raised by a Senator during debate on the grading system, about grades in repeated courses: Can a student forfeit credit for a course by earning a 0.0 after previously earning a grade above 1.0? In the past, the N grade would not have figured into the GPA, but now it does. The committee's decision, after looking at various alternatives, is that the student may indeed forfeit credit in this way. The general policy of counting the most recent grade for a course holds even in this case.

The second issue involving the new grading system had to do with the period allowed a student for replacing an I with a numerical grade. Current language reads "If more than three terms intervene before the student next registers at Oakland University, the I grade shall be changed to a grade of 0.0." Unfortunately, ambiguity results from the use of the word "term," which could include both semesters and sessions. Depending on when an I grade is incurred and on whether a student registers for spring and summer courses, great time disparities emerge. UCUI has, therefore, agreed to substitute the following language in the 1985-86 catalog: "If course requirements are not completed within one year, and no semester has been registered for, the I grade shall be changed to a grade of 0.0."

A related issue, brought before UCUI by the Registrar, involved the official withdrawal periods for undergraduates. There is now a strange sort of period following the ninth week of semesters during which a student cannot drop individual courses but may withdraw totally from the University with a notation of "withdrew (date)" on the transcript but with a numerical grade for each course. These grades, likely to be low or failing, enter into the GPA even though the student supposes she or he has escaped without academic penalty. Following the Registrar's suggestion, UCUI agreed to eliminate this late withdrawal period and stop withdrawals after the ninth week. Students encountering difficulty thereafter should be encouraged to continue trying or allowed to take Incompletes. This was what the Senators on UCUI recalled as the Senate's intention in the first place.

Other academic policy issues affecting undergraduates reached UCUI from various sources. Thomas Atkinson, Assistant Provost, invited the

committee's response to proposed academic calendars for three years at the end of this decade. UCUI objected to unequal amounts of time for various classes (especially night classes, which sometimes forfeit a full week's instruction to a holiday or registration day) and requested that a reasonable reading period be provided between the last class period and the beginning of final examinations. As the calendar involves academic policy issues equally pertinent to graduate students, we have referred the matter to the APPC, which intends to study the problem in the fall. The APPC has already supported UCUI's recommendation that classes be eliminated on the Monday of final examination week so that Monday-Wednesday-Friday students may have approximately as long to prepare themselves as those on Tuesday-Thursday schedules.

An inquiry from Robert Bunger regarding catalog applicability in cases that threaten to entangle the University in lawsuits led to discussion of that issue--specifically the interpretation of progress from pre-major to major standing as movement from undecided to decided status. Information is being gathered, and UCUI will return to this topic in the fall.

B. To evaluate and monitor petitions of exception regarding University-wide undergraduate academic requirements except for general education requirements.

UCUI devoted much of its final meeting to a summary review of actions taken by Committees on Instruction regarding University-wide academic policies: waiver of credits needed for graduation, waiver of requirements for 32 credits at the 300-level or above, permission to repeat a course beyond three times, permission to use earlier catalog requirements, waiver of the residency requirement, and allowance of late adds. The process revealed general consensus among academic units on interpretation of requirements and similar patterns of reasoning about exceptions. This review confirmed our judgment that applicability rules for catalogs need to be reconsidered. There is tension on campus between policy and practice in this area, especially with respect to the transition between pre-major and major standing.

C. To make recommendations to the University Senate and to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies regarding proposed and existing undergraduate programs, including recommendations for program modification, suspension, or discontinuance.

The only new undergraduate program proposed for UCUI approval was for a B.S. in Perfusion Technology within the Center for Health Sciences. After detailed consideration of this proposal, the committee recommended it to the Provost for implementation. As the B.S. is not a new degree for the Center, Senate action was not required.

- D. To advise the Academic Policy and Planning Committee concerning proposed new undergraduate programs.

UCUI called upon the APPC for advice on the Perfusion Technology proposal. APPC reported favorably to UCUI on the program's compatibility with Oakland University's mission and on its fiscal soundness. UCUI reviewed the program for its curricular merits, its relation to existing undergraduate academic programs, and faculty qualifications. Each committee advised the Provost on matters within its area of responsibility. Although no other new undergraduate programs emerged this year, UCUI alerted APPC to expect proposals for two-plus-two programs in the near future. These will probably require close scrutiny by both bodies.

- E. To cooperate with the General Education Committee in overseeing undergraduate instruction throughout the University.

The chair of UCUI serves in an ex officio and non-voting capacity on the General Education Committee, thereby ensuring communication. UCUI recognizes its responsibility to encourage integration between general education and major programs. We have also advised William Connellan, Assistant Provost, on changes in the MACRAO Agreement related to the new general education requirements.

- F. To ensure review of all undergraduate programs in timely fashion and report findings to the University Senate.

A subcommittee of UCUI (Andreas, chair; Eberwein, Rozek, and Zenas) has been working on matters pertaining to undergraduate program review. UCUI has no intention of conducting such reviews in the fashion of the Graduate Council but interprets its charge as one of seeing that such reviews take place on a reasonable schedule and helping units not already embarked on reviews to initiate appropriate processes. Some of these reviews are conducted by external accrediting agencies; others are purely internal; a few are both. At this point, UCUI is developing a calendar of such reviews, collecting copies of review procedures, and receiving reports on reviews completed.

Programs reviewed by external agencies during this past year are Engineering, Teacher Education, and Physical Therapy. The Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) sent a team to campus in October to review all four undergraduate Engineering majors (Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Systems Engineering). The School of Engineering and Computer Science has now responded to the team's preliminary report and awaits the reaccreditation decision. A team from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) reviewed Education programs this year with a view to determining whether Oakland University should be advanced to a ten-year

accreditation review cycle or retained on the current seven-year pattern. The team has now made its report, recommending the longer period of reaccreditation, and the School of Human and Educational Services has responded to the preliminary report. Action by the entire NCATE body is expected within a few weeks. The Physical Therapy program underwent review by the American Physical Therapy Association, earning full accreditation. Programs reviewed by the College of Arts and Sciences Planning Council include Biological Sciences, History, Mathematical Sciences, and Linguistics. Planning Council reports on History and Biology have now been submitted to the Dean for his action; the Council report on Mathematics will reach him shortly. All three of these reviews should be accomplished by the end of summer, with the review of Linguistics continuing into the 1985-86 academic year. The Bachelor of General Studies program is now conducting its first review. The School of Human and Educational Services is seeking out an appropriate external body to review its Human Resources Development offerings, and the School of Engineering and Computer Science is doing the same with respect to its Computer Science program. Other programs, notably some in Health Sciences, the School of Economics and Management, and Continuing Education have not as yet begun a formal review cycle although SEM went through an elaborate self-study recently as part of an accreditation process.

- G. To evaluate ongoing and proposed undergraduate programs for their consistency with University academic policies and mission and to monitor catalog copy to ensure compliance with all such policies.

UCUI considers itself obligated to conduct its own review of undergraduate programs to learn about their contributions to the University's stated goals. A subcommittee is at work now to prepare a questionnaire for distribution in the early fall to each department or division of a school to find out what programs are accomplishing in the following areas: skill development (writing, speaking, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, computer literacy); integration between general education and the major; recruitment, retention, and graduation of minority and educationally disadvantaged students; deployment of academic support resources for the benefit of undergraduates; and faculty development. The questionnaire is intended to elicit discussion and circulate ideas but should not entail time-consuming bureaucratic response. After an initial survey of the whole University, UCUI will integrate this process into the existing review schedule so that it can be accomplished as part of each unit's recurring self-study.

UCUI regards the Undergraduate Catalog as, in some sense, its publication. Its chair reviews catalog copy for the Provost and refers questions of overlapping academic territory and contradictory academic policy to the committee.

- H. To advise the Senate on all matters that body may refer to it concerning undergraduate instruction and the general requirements within which the specifics of undergraduate degree programs function.

During the 1983-84 academic year, UCUI undertook consideration of S/U grading options in response to a Senator's request. Passage of legislation creating such an option represents this committee's response to its parent body. So does our reconsideration of the policy relating to grades earned in repeated courses.

The Steering Committee of the Senate referred to UCUI several recommendations from last spring's report of the Commission on University Excellence (CUE). We have been making progress, detailed above, on undergraduate program reviews. A subcommittee (Sidaway, chair; Carbone, Cramer, and Downing) has met with representatives of the Mathematical Sciences and Rhetoric, Communications, and Journalism departments and with other interested members of the University committee to discuss the suggestion that academic credit be withheld from pre-college-level courses. They are making progress in clarifying the issues and expect to present a proposal in the fall.

### III. Future Plans, 1985-86

University-wide undergraduate program review with respect to Oakland University academic goals

Recommendation on credit for remedial or pre-college coursework

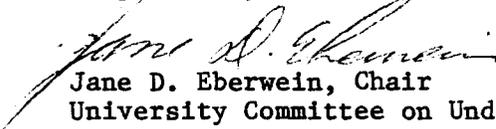
Improved communication with Committees on Instruction to stave off catalog surprises and overlaps

Discussion of catalog applicability issues

Consideration of other issues that have been brought to our attention or will be brought to our attention as problematic matters

Cooperation with task forces working on CUE recommendations, especially those on revising the Academic Support Program and on writing competency

Respectfully submitted:

  
Jane D. Eberwein, Chair  
University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction