

University Committee On Undergraduate Instruction

Annual Report

2001-2002

Membership

College of Arts and Sciences: Jane Eberwein (Chair)

General Studies: Carole Crum

Library: Shawn Lombardo

School of Business Administration: Ron Tracy (fall); Joseph Callaghan (winter)

School of Education and Human Services: Mary Stein

School of Engineering and Computer Science: Gautam Singh (fall); Michael Polis (winter)

School of Health Sciences: Kathy Galloway

School of Nursing: Diane Norris

Students: Heather Doran; Nicole Karris (fall)

Registrar: Steven Shablin

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education: Susan Awbrey

Vice President for Student Affairs Designee: Charles Clark

Committee Activities

UCUI put in a busy and productive year, meeting alternate weeks from September through April to deal with a broad range of concerns relating to undergraduate education. Here is a brief report on our work, organized in terms of the Senate's charge to this body.

To recommend to the University Senate academic policies and procedures concerning undergraduate education and, when necessary, seek advice from other appropriate bodies concerning the impact of these policies and procedures.

- UCUI considered the impact of on-line course delivery by meeting with Mark Ludorf for an update on web-delivered and web-enhanced courses now being offered and to find out what national standards are emerging to assure academic quality. We hold that Oakland University's academic policies and standards apply to on-line courses just as much as to those offered in traditional ways; responsibility for seeing that these policies are applied rests with chairs and deans of sponsoring academic units.

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

- UCUI acted upon 25 petitions relating to the university's ethnic diversity requirement, approving 18 of them.
- We decided to grant automatic approval to all petitions based on students taking courses whose titles contain the words African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, or Native American.
- We also granted automatic approval to HST 114 and 115 classes taken at Oakland University between 1990 and the start of the ethnic diversity requirement in 1994.
- We provided advice on petitions, when asked, to committees on instruction, academic advisers, and the Registrar's Office.

To prepare an annual report on all petitions of exception to be shared with the Office of Academic Affairs, the Registrar, individual Committees on Instruction, and the Senate Planning Review Committee.

- UCUI gathered data on petition actions by Committees on Instruction for fall 2001 and for the 2000-2001 academic year and reported our findings as indicated in our charge.
- We are in the process of updating the document that provides advice to COIs and academic advisors about how petitions are to be handled.

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

- We reviewed and recommended a proposal from the School of Health Sciences for a B.S. program in Wellness, Health Promotion, and Injury Prevention; which was later approved by the Senate.
- We reviewed and recommended a proposal from the School of Business Administration for a B.S. program in Financial Information Systems, which was later approved by the Senate.
- We reviewed a proposal from the Department of Art and Art History (College of Arts and Sciences) for a liberal arts major in Studio Art and forwarded it to the Senate Steering Committee with our recommendation for Senate approval.
- In the course of our review of three departmental self-studies, we found no reason to recommend discontinuation of any programs.

To advise the Senate Planning Review Committee (SPRC) and the Senate Budget Review Committee (SBRC) concerning proposed new undergraduate programs and to maintain regular communication with SPRC and SBRC through exchange of minutes.

- UCUI kept the SPRC and SBRC apprised of our activities by sending copies of our minutes.
- We maintained active communication while concurrently reviewing program proposals in Wellness and Financial Information Systems.

To cooperate with the General Education Committee in overseeing undergraduate instruction throughout the University and to maintain regular communication with that committee through exchange of minutes.

- We distributed our minutes to the General Education Committee
- In cooperation with the GEC, UCUI developed clearer catalog language with respect to the 8 additional credits of general education course-work students admitted under the MACRAO agreement must complete (clarifying that these are to be taken at a four-year institution).
- UCUI took active interest in emerging proposals for a new general education system, with particular concern for ethnic diversity and writing proficiency.

To schedule and monitor decennial reviews of all undergraduate programs in timely fashion and report findings to the Senate Planning Review Committee and the University Senate.

- We reviewed decennial self-studies for three departments: Modern Languages and Literatures; Linguistics; and Music, Theatre, and Dance. We then reported our findings to department chairs and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.
- UCUI voted to monitor new undergraduate degree programs five years after implementation to find out about their enrollment, graduation rate, placement of graduates, curricular changes, funding and resources, staffing, and accreditation status along with particular concerns raised by Senate committees during a program's initial approval process. This system will begin with programs approved by the Senate this year.

To evaluate ongoing and proposed undergraduate programs for their consistency with University academic policies and mission, to monitor catalog copy to ensure compliance with all such policies; and to monitor all catalog changes impacting outside of the Committee on Instruction making the change.

- Discovering that 500-level and 600-level courses were being introduced as program requirements for undergraduate programs in secondary education and engineering, UCUI worked with the units sponsoring those programs (SEHS and SECS) to find ways to comply with academic policy on distinctions between undergraduate and graduate courses.
- UCUI reviewed and amended catalog language and placement of information regarding the Air Force-ROTC program.
- We maintained communication with Irene Graham, catalog editor, by including her as a regularly attending visitor at our meetings.

To construct the list of courses designed to meet the university wide ethnic diversity requirement from among those courses submitted for this purpose by the academic units and to maintain and update this list.

- The committee approved a request from the School of Nursing to substitute NRS 302 for NRS 446 as meeting the ethnic diversity requirement for nursing students.

To advise the Senate on all matters that body or its Steering Committee may refer to UCUI concerning undergraduate instruction and the general requirements within which the specifics of undergraduate degree programs function.

- In response to requests from the Student Congress and Senate Steering Committee, UCUI recommended that a student's major(s) and honors be recorded on the baccalaureate diploma. The Senate approved this proposal.
- In response to a request from the Steering Committee, UCUI made a recommendation on the timing of the December commencement; we hold that there should always be a reading period of at least one full day between the end of classes and start of examinations and that commencement should not be held until examinations are completed.

Concern

In the course of reviewing departmental self-studies last year and this, we have become concerned about the extent to which Oakland University's academic units are struggling to maintain high academic quality and even introduce improvements despite under-staffing, equipment limitations, and generally inadequate resources. There is real need to relieve pressure on the people who strive to keep existing programs going even as we introduce new ones that, it seems probable, will also be under-funded.

UCUI Role in Governance System

Overall, we feel that UCUI has been carrying on its work in cooperation with the Senate, its Steering Committee, the Senate Budget Committee, Senate Planning Review Committee, and General Education Committee. We note, however, that there is no direct connection between UCUI and the Graduate Council even though many issues affect both undergraduate and graduate students. Whenever committee charges get reconsidered, some mechanism for cooperation should be introduced.

Also, whenever committee membership specifications get changed, consideration should be given to appointing the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education as chair (paralleling arrangements for the Graduate Council). This was the Senate's original plan for UCUI and still makes sense in terms of power to implement decisions and keep the catalog updated.