

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
University Undergraduate Faculty

Minutes of the UUF Spring Meeting

May 1, 2008

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Clapp Hall 108

Call to Order

Interim Provost Jerry Goldberg called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Provost Goldberg asked for approval of minutes as distributed prior to this meeting. Upon motion, duly seconded, minutes of the Fall 2007 UUF General Meeting were unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda

Provost Goldberg asked for acceptance of consent agenda. Upon motion, duly seconded, the consent agenda was unanimously approved, including resolutions *in memorium*, introduction of new faculty, and reports from UUF standing committees.

Incoming First-Year Class

Randy Deike, Vice President of Enrollment, provided an overview of the status of the incoming first-year class. The goal for the class is 1050 students, and as of today's meeting, we have 995 deposits. Vice President Deike summarized admissions priorities to increase average SAT scores and selectivity, both of which appear to be on target (average SAT score is 1303 this year, compared to last year's 1297; selectivity is 73% this year, compared to last year's 75%). The current discount rate (53.8%) is slightly better than it was at this time last year, but will rise as the late-deposits are received.

Executive Committee Report

Chair Gary Chottiner gave a brief report of the UUFXC activities outlined in the materials distributed before this meeting.

Committee on Curriculum

Chair John Blackwell provided a brief report on the activities of the UUFCC for 2007-2008. The committee met seven times this academic year. The main item of business was the CSE modification of SAGES requirements for Engineering Majors (discussion saved for New Business). The committee supported the SOURCE proposal to encourage departments to create a 0-3 credit-hour course for undergraduate research and creative endeavors (discussion under Unfinished Business). The committee was sympathetic to undergraduate student representatives' request that mid-term assignments be due before semester break rather than after, to ensure a real break. Jeff Wolcowitz will include this request in his office's semester reminders to faculty. CAF and PAF actions are listed in the written report of the committee, distributed at this meeting.

Committee on Academic Standing

Jeff Wolcowitz summarized a handout that described the actions of the committee, including two procedural changes planned for the coming academic year: (1) a change in the course repeat policy, so that when students repeat a course, the new grade will automatically replace the old grade (without the petition process formerly required), unless the repeated course is failed the second time; and (2) students will be able to withdraw from courses online using the new SIS system, unless such a withdrawal would jeopardize academic standing, or other programmatic concerns (e.g., dropping a First Seminar), which would still require the traditional approval and signature processes.

SAGES Impact Committee Report

Gary Chottiner pointed out that the SAGES Impact Report online (available from the UUF website). Any additions or suggestions for the next iteration of this report should be directed to him. This committee was charged to report on the impact of SAGES; there will be a separate process, starting at the school/departmental level, to consider any necessary changes to the program.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SOURCE Proposal to Track Undergraduate Research

Sheila Pedigo reported that the SOURCE advisory board would like to encourage all departments to develop a 0-3 credit course for students pursuing undergraduate research and/or creative endeavors. Students would enroll in this course as a means of tracking research or creative endeavors on their official transcripts. The 0 credit option is intended for students who are being paid for undergraduate research, but individual departments and schools should set the guidelines for this new course number. This recommendation was distributed at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Three items under New Business were presented for general faculty discussion.

SOURCE Symposium and Poster Session

Sheila Pedigo reported on the SOURCE advisory board's proposal to coordinate a university-wide celebration where students would present their work (for SAGES capstones or other independent research). The SOURCE office would coordinate the presentations centrally, if departments desired. The proposal also includes putting this event on a day with no classes, or to cancel classes for the day.

Discussion:

- In Biology, there are fall presentations as well as spring presentations. This may well be true of other departments and needs to be taken into consideration.
- Would participation be mandatory? No, but the departments would be encouraged to use this coordinated event.

- How will all of the presentations be accommodated in a single day? Would students whose presentations are longer than 20 minutes (as in History and Religious Studies) be expected to be involved in the symposium?
- Is there interest in exploring the possibility of a university-wide celebration of undergraduate research & creative endeavors? If yes, then how do we proceed?

The SOURCE advisory board will bring these issues to the school curriculum and executive committees early next fall.

CSE SAGES Proposal & Modifications of SAGES

John Blackwell summarized the CSE proposal for modifying SAGES: 2 University Seminars become optional, to be replaced by 2 Humanities & Social Sciences courses in addition to the existing “breadth and depth sequence”; writing proficiency would be assessed writing in FSEM & ENGR398/ENGL398 (the SAGES departmental seminar for engineering students).

The CSE faculty support for this proposal was based on:

- a desire to widen student’s choices in Humanities & Social Science courses and to increase flexibility for students interested in minors
- the need to address concerns over the large fraction of the SAGES seminars taught by temporary or visiting faculty
- the fact that most of the Humanities & Social Science courses previously elected by engineering undergraduates are still being taught
- the belief that writing proficiency can be accessed from a portfolio of essays written by engineering students in their First Seminar & Departmental Seminar

Prof. Blackwell summarized the concerns raised by this proposal in the UUFCC:

- There is a preference for a university-wide GER for all CWRU undergraduates
- Potential negative effects on first-year recruiting
- Concerns over whether the engineering students will achieve the same level of writing proficiency
- Difficulties for (internal) transfer students
- More time needed for consideration by other faculties

UUFCC action on this modification was tabled to allow for more time for discussion. Schools will be asked to respond to two issues, on the following timeline: schools report to the UUFCC no later than December 19, 2008; UUFCC resume discussion and report action to the UUFCC no later than February 1, 2009; CSE modification to be placed on the agenda of a UUF meeting no later than March 1, 2009. Issues under consideration:

- Is it acceptable for the SAGES program for undergraduate majors in other schools to contain multiple tracks?
- Are the changes to SAGES proposed by the CSE also appropriate for their majors?

Discussion:

- Are undergraduate students supportive? USG would like a common SAGES program (dissenting votes from engineering students, who are concerned that this motion would slow down the implementation).
- Advanced placement credit for students – would students place out of additional Humanities & Social Science courses and therefore miss the critical thinking taught in such courses?
- UUFCC felt that the issues raised in relation to faculty instructing in SAGES should be addressed in other venues.
- After hearing from invited guests, the UUFCC established that engineering students who come to Case and identify a minor early in their academic careers do not have trouble completing their minor under the current SAGES program; only students who decide later on that they would like a minor have trouble meeting the requirements without several course overloads.
- Concerns about the evaluation of student writing – under this proposal, the timing would be very different for engineers and the content of their writing portfolios would be very different from other SAGES students.
- Under this proposal, there would be a different set of writing requirements for engineers as opposed to other students at Case. Traditionally, all Case students have had the same writing requirement.
- Faculty expressed concerns about the timeline – both that it is too short to allow the first full cohort to complete SAGES and that it is too long to react quickly to the needs of the program.
- How many of the goals of SAGES are being considered in addition to the issue of writing proficiency?

Future of the UUF

Gary Chottiner summarized the material sent out prior to this meeting about the potential future of the UUF. The Faculty Senate passed a motion to form a committee to establish a system of undergraduate governance that is effective and democratic.

Discussion:

- There seems to be a general perception that the UUF is not functioning as well as it might. Especially in a time of strategic planning, such conversations and questions are important.
- Does the UUF have a significant charge and is it appropriate? The FS ad hoc report will be available in the early fall. The material documents some possible changes to the current UUF to make it more efficient.
- Does the Faculty Senate's actions include a mechanism for a full-faculty mechanism for exchange of ideas?
- Clerical support is necessary for the UUF to function – not just for the UUFXC but for the UUFCC and other committees, too.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.