

**The University of Texas at Arlington
Undergraduate Assembly
Minutes**

The Undergraduate Assembly met in regular session on Tuesday, September 23, 2008, at 2:15 p.m. in the UC Rio Grande. Senior Vice Provost Michael Moore presided.

Attendance.

Member	Present	Excused	Absent	Alternate
Don Bobbitt		✓		
Michael Moore	✓			
Bess Alvarez	✓			
Susan Appleton	✓			
Wendy Barr	✓			
Barbara Becker			✓	
Deborah Behan	✓			
Travis Boren	✓			
Camille Broadway	✓			
Bill Carroll	✓			
Ann Cavallo	✓			
Andrew Clark	✓			
Phil Cohen			✓	
Wanda Dye	✓			
James Epperson	✓			
Donald Gatzke			✓	
Jeanne Gerlach	✓			
Ruth Gornet	✓			
Nancy Hadaway			✓	
Nancy Handy	✓			
Robert Hanks	✓			
Andy Hansz	✓			
Dan Himarios	✓			
Richard Jimmerson	✓			
Sonia Kania	✓			
Andy Kruzic	✓			
Robert Kunovich	✓			
Joo Hi Lee			✓	
Peter Lehmann			✓	
Carl Lovely	✓			
Jeffrey McGee	✓			
Diane Mitschke			✓	
Sung Seek Moon			✓	
David Navalinsky	✓			
Jaimie Page	✓			
Paul Paulus	✓			
Lynn Peterson	✓			
Karl Petruso	✓			
Martin Pomerantz	✓			
Phil Popple			✓	
Elizabeth Poster			✓	
John Priest			✓	
Steve Quevedo	✓			
Allen Repko	✓			
Lana Rings	✓			
Jamie Rogers	✓			
Kim Ruebel			✓	
Salil Sarkar	✓			

Gerald Saxon	✓			
Chris Scotese			✓	
Chandra Subramaniam			✓	
Meng Tao			✓	
Saibun Tjuatja	✓			
Beth Wright	✓			

Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the regular meeting on April 22, 2008, were approved as published.

Report of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Kimberly van Noort announced that the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee would begin presenting changes at the next meeting. One procedural change for this year is that proposals for new courses will only be accepted for consideration at the second and third Undergraduate Assembly meetings. Since the registration period is much earlier than in the past, all new courses need to be on the books, in the system and on the schedule when students begin to register. To accommodate this, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee asks that all requests for new courses be submitted for consideration at the second or third Undergraduate Assembly meeting. No action by the Undergraduate Assembly was necessary.

Core Curriculum Evaluation Reports

Leighton McWilliams, associate chair, presented a report from the Department of Art and Art History. The course assessed was ART 1301 Art Appreciation taught in Spring 2008. It is a large class for non-majors, typically there are 100 students in the class. Twenty students were randomly selected for assessment purposes. A pretest was administered to the entire ART 1301-001 section. This test was an assessment of the basic visual vocabulary terms and methods for criticism that would be discussed throughout the term. From this assessment, 20 students were randomly chosen. The student learning outcomes chosen were: To provide a foundation of knowledge of the various disciplines that makeup the visual arts, To understand and make intelligent decisions about aesthetic issues that relate to visual arts, To converse easily and intelligently about art using the method of art criticism, and To acquire a general overview of the history of art and its relation to the people who make the art.

The outcomes were that 40% of the students consistently scored high on all student learning outcomes, 35% of the students showed a steady increase in the comprehension of the student learning outcomes and 15% showed a decrease. After reviewing the percentages, the suggestion was made that perhaps a smaller class would increase the level of intimacy with the material, get the students closer to the instructor and perhaps that would assist the outcomes. In terms of the 20 students who were evaluated, the average was 81, which was expected, and the grades ran from A to F.

John Burton, chair, presented a report from the Music Department. We took a look at Music Appreciation and the History of Jazz. These are two of our largest non-major liberal arts core classes and we offer many sections. Our assessment plan was that we would hit about half of those sections with the pretest and a posttest, one early in the semester to gauge their ability to hear musical elements and then later in the semester to see the improvement. The courses were mapped to four educational outcomes: To understand works of art as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context, To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities, To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities, and To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and the arts. The committee decided that to meet all four of the objectives, one must have, not only the factual database of information about historical style periods and genres of music, but also to have listening skills. We devised a test in both areas.

What we found is that in the traditional music appreciation course, that is the history of western music as it is traditionally taught, scores ranged from the pretest being a score of 55 out of 100 to the posttest being 92 out of 100. We saw significant improvement in listening skills. In the history of jazz we saw much worse numbers in the ability to articulate those listening skills early in the course, 37 out of a 100 rising to 50 in the

posttest. We decided we were going to make some changes. First of all, we need to have more oversight of the faculty who teach that class. We've evolved into some of the faculty not teaching an organized and unified syllabus. We will make that change. In the history of western music, the elements of music are learnable. When you get to the History of Jazz, those mutate so you're really drilling down a little deeper. We're going to look at our instruction in the History of Jazz to see if we can incorporate a further and deeper study of the elements of music earlier in the semester to give those students some listening skills.

Miriam Byrd gave a report from the Philosophy Department. We chose to look at two sections of Phil 2300, our introductory course. We chose four of the exemplary educational objectives: To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities, To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities, To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities, and To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy and/or the arts on intellectual experiences. All students enrolled in PHIL 2300-002 and PHIL 2300-003 participated in the evaluation. Two student work products were assessed: the third and fourth exams. Scores for each student were averaged with the benchmark of success being 80% of the students completing the course receiving an average of 3 out of 5. Interpretation of the results has shown that the Department is effectively promoting the Exemplary Educational Objectives of the core curriculum courses. Upon averaging each student's scores on the three rubrics, we found that 88.6% of student met the benchmark on Exam 3 and 84.5% of students on Exam 4.

The assessment revealed two areas in need of improvement: writing mechanics and the ability to present a well-argued objection. The first is addressed by PHIL 3307 Seminar in Research Methods and Philosophical Writing, a new course recently developed and required of all majors. Few, if any, introductory students have taken PHIL 3307 prior to enrolling in PHIL 2300, but we hope that students who are interested in further study in philosophy, even if they are not majors, will take advantage of its availability.

On the second area of concern, the instructor is confident the students did master the general skill of responding critically to works in the arts and humanities because this skill was implicit in another rubric where the students scored well. However, the more specific objective of students being able to support their objections with well-constructed arguments is one which the Department values and believes is a crucial part of the critical thinking process. The instructor plans to put more emphasis on this skill in the future and is planning to incorporate new active learning techniques in pursuance of this goal.

Ken Roemer gave a report from the English Department. The assessment committee selected the following four exemplary educational objectives: To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context, To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities, To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and the arts, and To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intellectual experiences. The committee mapped these four objectives onto the four departmental goals. The committee's expectation was that the students would perform at least a C level in all four areas. The committee selected eight instructors teaching nine courses for Spring 2008 for an assessment of 261 students.

Student performance met the committee's expectations. There was consistent performance across all four goals, though the averages calculated suggest that the understanding of historical/cultural contexts for the literature was slightly better and the analyzing literary elements and principles was weaker than the other goals. That may be a signal to the department that we need to do a little better in that area.

Other Business. Michael Moore reminded everyone of the date change for the Fall Faculty meeting to Oct. 31.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Michael K. Moore
Secretary

MKM:jw