The Rows: A NewsBrake for the Faculty and Staff

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UNK Plants a Tree

In spite of the threat of substantial budget cuts, the UNK administration has planted a tree and apparently established a bird sanctuary on campus.

Department of Economics Proposes Changes in Credit Policy

In the face of budget cuts, an extended economic recession, the changing demeanor of the political environment, and the fact that no one likes them, the Economics Department has proposed a creative plan to save UNK. According to acting Chair of the temporary department, Dr. Allan Eshelmarx-Borlakota, "We are facing an academic crisis as a result of the revision of the general studies program, pressure from accreditors, the demands of Assessment, and a decrease in the value of the UNK Credit Hour internationally. We see only one solution, devaluing the UNK credit hour by 50%.

Their plan provides a devaluation of all credit hours earned by current students at a rate of 2 CH for 1 CH. According to economists, the change is straightforward, whereby a current student who has earned 90 hours in his or her curriculum, will now have 180 hours but will still retain their current class rank as long as their graduation occurs within the prescribed graduation window for the credit hour exchange. So a sophomore will remain a sophomore but will have to earn twice as many hours in order to become a junior. In the event that a student has an incomplete then the exchange rate is determined by the prime interest rate. Of course, the plan will immediately make all programs 8 years long. Dr. Allan Eshelmarx-Borlakota said that was part of the beauty of the plan in that it will essentially solve our enrollment problems.

More immediate effects include changing the minimum hours for a Bachelors degree to 250. The General Studies Program becomes a 90 hour program, a minor 48 hours, and most majors between 60 and 75 hours. The only exceptions to the changes are College of Education programs which remain at 342 hours.

Initial reactions to the changes are positive. Some Faculty Senators were confident that an acceptable 90-hour General Studies Program could be developed. Several departments expressed interest in larger majors.

The Data for the Proposed Changes

When critics noted that since faculty workload was dependent on credit hour production, an outcome of the devaluation would be an increase in the number of hours faculty teach. However, Dr. Eshelmarx-Borlakota was confident that those effects are based on the unlikely assumption that the administration reads this article.

Accreditation Milestone Reached

UNK is now 100% accredited! The last unaccredited department has achieved accreditation from its national accrediting agency. According to Senior VCAASL Murphy, "With no department unaccredited, this takes an enormous burden off of the Academic Affairs Office. We no longer have to enforce academic rules and regulations since that responsibility comes from the accrediting agencies."

SVCAASL Murphy announced the immediate closing the Registrar's Office and plans to redesign the Registrar's area as temporary office space for visiting accreditation teams. He also said he is planning other structural changes to Academic Affairs.

The Colleges have already dissolved their Academic Affairs/Ed Policy Committees and it is expected that the Faculty Senate will follow. As of fall 2008, students will have their senior checks done by the appropriate accrediting agency. They should expect a 9-month wait.
Utilities Upgrade has Construction Workers Swinging Some Impressive Pipe on Campus

A Construction Worker and One Enormous Pipe

The ongoing upgrade of the campus utilities service has seen construction crews on campus installing new pipes necessary for the cooling and heating systems. The work will include replacement of the old steam tunnels, which are in terrible shapes. The disruption of campus activities has been relatively minor because the cooperation of students, faculty, and staff has been incredible, according to Director of Facilities Steve McQueen.

Given that faculty, staff, and students are coping fairly well with the longer walks necessary to get from one building to another, the campus will also need to be patient as the construction has changed the landscape of the campus. Trenching work and pipe installation will continue until midsummer.

General Studies Proposal Moves Forward

In a close vote of 13-11, the Faculty Senate moved the General Studies Proposal to the General Studies Council for further refinement. In an effort to promote campus collegiality, the ROWS, immediately after the meeting, conducted a survey of the 11 nay-voting Faculty Senators to determine the various reasons for their negative votes. We hope that these issues become part of the continuing debate about the new General Studies Program and be incorporated into version 26 of the proposal.

List of the Senators' Concerns About the Proposal
- Not enough Economics
- Not enough History
- Not enough of My Department
- Not enough everything
- Too much Economics, History, and everything
- Not enough primary text
- Not enough writing
- Not enough reading
- Too much work
- Too little work
- Didn't like the font
- Not enough bullets in proposal
- I was missing page 6
- Huh? I voted for adjournment
- Hillary would like it, so I'm against it
- Not enough depth
- Not enough breadth
- Nothing wrong with what we got
- Faculty weren't involved in the proposal
- Didn't know we were working on THAT
- Needs more salt and pepper
- Didn't read it
- If we approve we will embolden the terrorists
- Interdisciplinary courses suck
- I thought a "no" vote was for it
- I think we should keep the fountain in Harmon Park
- My Dean told me how to vote, but don't report that
- Too many hours
- Too few hours
- A vote to send the material to the Gen Studies Council would abrogate our responsibility to make a decision on an important topic—sending it merely defers the decision until more hard work has been expended on a basically excellent proposal. It will be divisive, we should dump the piece of crap now.

Report Determines that BMs are Good for Fine Arts and Humanities

FA & H Dean Bacteria has released the results of a 5-year study of the College's highly touted BM programs. The report concluded that "A good BM is at least the equivalent of a BFA, if not superior in many ways."

A similar study is underway in the College of Social and Natural Sciences concerning the efficacy of BS programs. Dean Harry Francis said that he was hopeful that the report will show similar outcome-based assessments of BMs and BS programs.

Service Learning to Expand

Service Learning has hit the big time, according to Service Learning Director Geraldine Fritz, "Service learning hasn't received so much attention since Seattle Slew retired." As a result of the latest North Central Accreditation visit, service learning will expand to include full service and self service, in addition to community service. To inaugurate the expanded programs, the Service Learning Office unveiled its new logo, "Shirt, shoes, and service!"