

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
2001-2002 Report

Meeting Dates: September 13 & 20, October 11 & 18, November 1 & 29, January 31, February 14, March 7, April 21, May 2

Members of the Committee: S. Berns, J. Burt, E. Dudek, W. Flesch (fall term only), M. Kingsberg, S. Lamb, J. Mandrell, J.A. Owens, A. Pai, M. Paiva, D. Rakowski, R. Sen, M. Solis (spring term only)

Ex Officio: M. Hewitt, M. Kornfeld, M. Rosenthal, E. Wong

Possible 2001-2002 Agenda Items

Dean Owens reviewed the charge of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee as outlined in the new Faculty Handbook, before introducing possible 2001-2002 agenda items. These items include review of the 2000-2001 UCC Report; Dean's List eligibility; rate of work issues; reports from the Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs and Concentrations on Neuroscience, History of Ideas, Latin American Studies, and Medieval and Renaissance Studies; approval of new study abroad programs; review of guidelines for summer school credit; and preparation for the review of the writing requirement. Suggestions from committee members include review of the policy for undergraduate peer teaching assistant course credit; eligibility for reduced rate of work status, policies related to "incomplete" deadlines; and full credit for the second semester biology laboratory course.

Procedures for the conduct of UCC meetings also were discussed and approved.

Review of 2000-2001 UCC Report

UCC members approved the 2000-2001 UCC Report, after suggesting revisions to the sections on "theater practicum" and "dean's list." This report will soon be posted on the web; committee members asked if access to the report could be limited to members of the Brandeis community (i.e., password protected to allow access only to those from the Brandeis user domain).

Dean's List

UCC members reviewed confidential information about the standards required for Dean's List recognition and the percentage of students receiving this recognition at selected AAU institutions. The most common standard across all institutions is a 3.5 GPA. Private universities tend to have higher percentages of students achieving higher GPAs and receiving Dean's List recognition, while public universities, with larger student bodies, have lower percentages receiving this honor. Some institutions, which either use or allow more pass/fail grades, do not have Dean's Lists.

The UCC considered three issues related to Brandeis's own Dean's List. Should the university award the honor each semester or only at the end of year? (Each semester, because end of the year awards create complications in calculating GPAs, and for students who are away for a semester.) Should our standard be GPA or percentage based? Percentage based standards are automatically immune to grade inflation, but put students in competition with one another and create a moving target for GPA achievement. Should our standard be raised to make the award more of an honor? After reviewing different options, the committee unanimously approved a motion to establish a 3.67 GPA as the Dean's List standard for all first year students entering in the fall of 2002 and thereafter.

At a subsequent meeting, the student representatives to the UCC reported a vehemently negative reaction from the Student Senate to the proposal to establish a GPA of 3.67 as the Dean's List standard for all students entering Brandeis in the fall of 2002 and thereafter. The Senators do not believe that grade inflation is a problem at Brandeis (the university attracts excellent students who continue to earn grades reflecting their accomplishment); in the opinion of the Senators, raising the standard would be elitist.

The Dean's Office announced the scheduling of an open forum at 5:00 pm on April 22, 2002 for students, faculty and staff to discuss standards for achieving Dean's List recognition. At this forum, students in attendance were persuasive in arguing against raising the standard, and the UCC's motion was withdrawn from discussion at the faculty meeting.

Rate of Work

Mark Hewitt presented a proposal to modify academic standing provisions in relation to Rate of Work issues. UCC members approved, with one abstention, new language for the Brandeis University Bulletin stating that students who work below the minimum rate of work (three courses or 12 credits per semester) without permission will be placed on probation and subject to withdrawal. This text was revised slightly to state that students may petition the Committee on Academic Standing for exceptions to rate of work provisions under rare circumstances. One UCC member asked when students are notified of the fact that they are working below the minimum rate. Students are notified prior to the deadline for adding courses. Another member asked if probationary status matters to students. Is there any real penalty? At one time, students on probation were not allowed to participate in certain extracurricular activities and were required to attend classes. In large lecture classes and some medium sized classes, students do not appear to feel obligated to attend class. Some instructors do not consider it essential for students to attend lecture classes, but most believe that

students greatly benefit from attendance. Techniques to encourage large lecture attendance include regular quizzes or assigning points for daily exercises. Residence Assistants, orientation staff, and academic advisors might also emphasize class attendance

Report from the Standing Committee to Review Interdepartmental Programs and Concentrations: Neuroscience

The review of the Neuroscience concentration (major) was initiated in 1997-98, although the committee's report was just recently received. A large number of faculty actively participate in the curriculum, which serves an average number of 20 graduating seniors per year. The review committee's concern about unsatisfactory teaching lab facilities was duly noted. The UCC unanimously approved continuance of the program for a seven-year period, beginning in 2002-03.

Review of the Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs and Concentrations: History of Ideas

History of Ideas also has a long and distinguished history at Brandeis; its concentration, which no longer exists, once attracted some of the brightest students at the university. The report of the review committee notes that while enrollment in courses offered by the program are usually healthy, enrollment in the program itself is currently small to nonexistent. The chair of the program, Professor Amelie Rorty, has recommended appointment of a tenured co-director of the program, or lacking that, dissolution of the program. Following that recommendation, Robin Feuer Miller has been appointed co-director of History of Ideas. A faculty executive committee has also been appointed and is now meeting to support the program.

The UCC unanimously approved continuance of the program until 2005 with a review to commence in the fall of 2004.

Review of the Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs and Concentrations: Latin American Studies

Latin American Studies is a well-funded, well-run program, which supports both an interdepartmental major and minor. The program, which enjoys a long history at Brandeis, benefits strongly from its endowed funding and the energetic leadership of its chair, Professor Silvia Arrom. The UCC unanimously approved continuance of the Latin American Studies major and minor for a period of seven years.

Report from the Standing Committee to Review Interdepartmental Programs and Concentrations: Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Last year, partially in response to the review process then underway, the Medieval Studies program proposed curricular changes, which expanded the program to include Renaissance Studies. These changes were approved by the 2000-2001 UCC, and the program has since benefited from recent appointments in Renaissance art, history, and music. The UCC noted the program chair and review committee's call for additional administrative support before unanimously approving continuance of the program for a period of five years.

Reports From the Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs

The discussion of reports on Environmental Studies and Russian and East European Studies from the Standing Committee on Interdepartmental Programs was postponed until the fall semester.

Approval of New Study Abroad Programs

J. Scott Van Der Meid, the Coordinator of Study Abroad, was invited to present new study abroad programs for UCC provisional approval. Criteria for program approval continue to include: the program's academic credentials, duration and credit hours; its language requirements, student services, and course offerings; and support from both Brandeis faculty and comparable colleges and universities. New programs should also provide new opportunities to students, which do not duplicate course offerings of already approved programs. The UCC unanimously approved the programs of Lexia International at the L'Institut Catholique, in Paris, France; of New York University at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic; and of the Institute for the Education of Students at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany.

The UCC unanimously approved a study abroad proposal for a "direct enrollment program at Moscow State University in Moscow, Russia. This provisional approval will enable students on a case-by-case basis to participate in the program.

Study Abroad GPA Requirement

J. Scott Van Der Meid, the Coordinator of Study Abroad, presented a proposal to require both good disciplinary as well as academic standing, and a minimum grade point average of 2.8 as eligibility requirements for study abroad. The latter proposal would signal that students must have strong academic backgrounds for successful participation in study abroad programs. Most study abroad programs require a minimum GPA of 3.0, but some fall semester programs, which would otherwise lack enrollment, accept students on the basis of financial instead of academic considerations. Students who fall below the 2.8 minimum GPA would be evaluated on a case-by case basis.

The proposals for these new study abroad requirements were unanimously approved.

Approval of New Study Abroad and Domestic Leave of Absence with Credit Programs

J. Scott Van Der Meid, the Coordinator of Study Abroad, presented five new study abroad programs for the UCC's provisional approval. The committee unanimously approved the programs of: 1. Lexia International at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand; 2. CIEE at the University of Havana in Havana, Cuba; 3. University of New Hampshire/EcoQuest New Zealand in Pokeno, New Zealand; and 4. Institute for the Education of Students at Bei Wai University in Beijing, China. The direct enrollment program of Queen Margaret University College in Edinburgh, Scotland failed to win approval by a vote of three nays, with two abstentions, primarily because its representatives have not provided Brandeis with requested information. Boston University's Washington Journalism Center in Washington, DC was approved by a vote of five yeas, with one abstention. (This program's internship course accounts for half of its coursework, and Brandeis' current internship policy allows students to earn credit for up to two internship courses.)

Proposal for Changing the Length of the Brandeis Summer Session

Gwenn Smaxwill, the Director of the Summer School Program, presented a proposal for changing the length of the Brandeis summer session from five weeks (with four two-hour classes per week) to four weeks (with five two-hour classes per week) for courses in the humanities, creative arts, and social sciences. In 1974 when the Summer School began, only physical sciences courses were taught, in two five-week sessions. The current proposal would not shorten the number of scheduled weeks for science courses, nor would it change the total number of contact hours for any Summer School course. The School has already won approval to teach language courses and some creative arts classes on an intensive four-week schedule. Experienced Summer School faculty in the humanities do not believe the revised schedule would negatively impact the learning experience of students, because Summer School classes are smaller, students are highly motivated, and a greater and more focused continuity exists in classes.

The Boston area has 29 summer school programs. Brandeis's major competitors are Boston College, Boston University, Brown, Harvard, Tufts, and Wellesley. Of this group, Wellesley has a four week session, while the others offer one to two sessions of five and one half to eight weeks. Two other schools offering four-week sessions are Drew and Rutgers, though each also offers some courses of longer duration.

This proposal, which is prompted by a desire to increase enrollments, would enable faculty to teach courses of four weeks duration for the same stipend as currently earned. Although tuition would remain the same, students would have to pay for one less week of room and board. About 50 Summer School students reside on campus each summer. One of the most attractive features of the Summer School is the small size of its classes. A deterrent to enrollment has been its relatively high cost, although its tuition is now slightly below the median of its competitors. The majority of students who enroll are Brandeis undergraduates. One reason why our students choose to enroll in the School is that only grades earned at Brandeis are factored into Brandeis students' cumulative grade point averages.

How would the Summer School manage two different schedules for science and humanities courses? Science courses would begin one week earlier. The science departments would be asked to approve four or five week sessions on either a departmental or course by course basis. The beginning and ending dates of the Summer School are set by the calendar committee, and depend on such variables as the date of commencement and the beginning of orientation.

One UCC member reported that while there are differences in teaching summer school courses in comparison with semester long courses, once you've made the shift from 13 to five weeks, it's not significantly different to shift to a four-week schedule. Another member noted that time spent in completing assignments is an important component of any class, and that long weekends can be an opportunity to complete this work. Still another member asked if a four-week session would dissuade students from selecting the Brandeis Summer School because of the shortness of its session. Short sessions are well-established at certain institutions. For example, at Colorado College, all courses are taught in sessions of three and one half week weeks, although students select only one course per session.

The Office of the Registrar has asked the registrars at other UAA schools about their standards for accepting summer school credit, which are mainly based on number of contact hours rather than weeks. Contact hours are used to support and evaluate variable credit systems. As a separate and future agenda item, the UCC will discuss whether Brandeis should evaluate summer school credit from other institutions on the basis of contact hours or session duration. UCC members agreed that any change in the length of the summer session would have to be approved at faculty meeting.

Before the UCC comes to a decision, the Summer School will be asked to report back to the committee on results of a survey of all Summer School instructors, regarding the advantages and disadvantages of a four-week versus a five-week term. In addition, institutions which offer both four-week and longer sessions should be asked about their rationales for deciding on session length and for their perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of a four-week session in comparison to a longer session.

Preparation for Review of the Writing Requirement

According to faculty legislation, the writing program is to be reviewed in 2001-2002, but the Dean's office and the USEM and writing committees have recommended that this review be postponed until 2003-2004. The university is currently in the process of searching

for a new Director of University Writing, who will not begin work at Brandeis until the fall of 2002. Postponing the review for two years would enable the new Director to participate in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current program. Components of a future review might include gathering student and faculty feedback on USEM+writing and UWS courses, evaluating undergraduate writing proficiency, and review of Writing Intensive courses (approval process, criteria, standards, goals, effectiveness). The UCC will continue its discussion of review procedures at its next meeting.

Although the UCC and other parties involved in implementing and overseeing the writing requirement have agreed to delay review of the requirement until after a new Director of University Writing is able to play a meaningful role in the review process (that is, until '03-'04), the committee must still decide what data to collect in preparation for the review.

One UCC member suggested that this data include not just regular course evaluations, nor enrollment preferences, nor an outcome exam, but also interviews with faculty and students regarding what seems to be working and not working in the writing program. The current requirement enables two competing philosophies on the teaching of writing to co-exist in the form of two first year writing options: UWS and USEM +writing. Information about the kinds of writing and reading assignments, and subjects addressed in the two options should be gathered. Graduate students who have taught both UWS and USEM+w courses could also be interviewed before they graduate. A survey instrument asking first year and sophomore students for their opinions on the goals and effectiveness of each system might also be devised.

Is there a "neutral" way of measuring outcomes in the two programs? Should the university measure the effectiveness of the two programs by reviewing the grades over time of students in each program? Could we collect first and last papers in USEM or UWS courses, as well as senior essays, or other portfolios of papers from students?

A student member of the committee asked if there should be a campus wide consensus about what good writing is, so that students would know what they are trying to achieve. Are our students becoming the writers we want them to be? Can we clearly articulate the goals of our writing program?

College writing moves from the expressive focus of high school writing (what do I think and feel?) to the persuasive (how do I engage people with different points of view, and contribute to a public conversation that began before I was born, and will go on after I have gone?).

Committee members agreed that the writing review should be conducted by an ad hoc review committee, including outside experts in the field. From the Registrar's perspective, any decision about a new writing requirement should be made in the fall of an academic year in order to provide enough time to implement a new program.

Committee members suggested minor revisions (e.g., delete level of contribution from student self-rating of effort and contribution in class) to the USEM+W and UWS supplementary evaluation forms for students and faculty. The UWS supplementary evaluations are kept in the office of the English Department, and the USEM evaluations in the University Studies office, but both sets could be collected for the review of the writing requirement. Other suggested information to assemble includes: surveys of course instructors, writing samples from writing intensive courses, and surveys of writing intensive faculty and students. Portfolios are also a useful way of evaluating growth in student writing. Papers written by students in their first year, junior and senior year courses could be collected, and a neutral instructor asked to evaluate this work.

Undergraduate Peer Assistantship Credit

The committee reviewed the number of students who have received course credit for peer assistantships over the last few years, as well as the grades assigned to these students. Information from surveys and peer assistant guidelines from 1994 was also reviewed. UCC members asked if all peer assistant courses should be graded on a credit/no credit basis. The committee also intends to survey students and faculty on their experiences in peer assisted courses. Both peer assistants and students enrolled in peer assisted courses would be surveyed. Questions might include: What do students gain from the peer assistant experience? What are the job descriptions of peer assistants? How do peer assistants' responsibilities differ from undergraduate teaching assistants? How do peer assistants' responsibilities differ from graduate teaching assistants? Do faculty members provide instruction on pedagogical issues to peer assistants, as recommended in the 1994 guidelines? To what degree are peer assistants involved in the evaluation of other undergraduates' academic performance?

Committee members observed that the responsibilities of peer assistants, peer tutors, and undergraduate teaching assistants often overlap, though pay scales appear to vary (e.g., tutors were reported to earn \$11.00 per hour while undergraduate teaching assistants earn \$7.50-7.75 per hour). Some students prefer to be paid, while others prefer course credit. Dean Owens noted that a survey of tutoring programs is currently being conducted, and might be expanded to include peer assistants and teaching assistants.

It is not clear that the original guidelines for peer assistants are well known or implemented, but in any case, these guidelines should be revisited. Should faculty members be required to receive approval from either the dean or a departmental chair before utilizing a

peer assistant? Should there be new restrictions on the kinds of courses allowed to utilize peer assistants? Why is it that some departments frequently utilize peer assistants and others do not choose to do so?

The evaluation of undergraduate and graduate Teaching Assistants might also be reconsidered. The current questions on TA evaluation forms aren't always appropriate.

Committee members next revisited their discussion of undergraduate peer assistantship credit. At the last UCC meeting at which this issue was discussed, members had considered the possibilities of mandating "credit/no credit" grading for peer assistantship credit, revising the peer assistant guidelines, and surveying students who had served as peer assistants, as well as faculty who had utilized peer assistants, and students enrolled in peer assisted classes. At this meeting, the UCC considered drafts of these three surveys, before deciding on a different strategy, that of designing a new form to add a peer assistantship course. This new form will review the guidelines for peer assistants on one side, and on the other, request specific information about job description and responsibilities, academic requirements, and proposed pedagogical instruction.

Chairs of departments offering Peer Assistantship courses will be sent the names of faculty who have utilized peer assistants, along with the 5PE4 course grading profile and a draft of the new add form. The UCC will ask the chairs to consult with instructors of peer assisted courses about implementing the new add form and changing to credit/no credit grading for 5PE4 courses.

Review of Peer Assistant Guidelines and Add Form

The UCC reviewed drafts of a new form for adding a 5PE94 or peer assistantship course, which would be filed with the Registrar's Office, and a new online evaluation form, which would be sent to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education. Faculty in departments utilizing peer assistants will be sent the form, evaluation, and grading profile of peer assistantship courses, and asked for their comments regarding implementation of the form and of "credit/no credit" grading for all peer assistantship credit.

Some committee members expressed interest in utilizing only credit/no credit grading for independent internship (92) and independent study (98) courses, all of which appear to result in relatively high grades, thus contributing to grade inflation. Would utilizing this grading option affect student effort in peer assistantship or other courses? Probably not in peer assistantship courses. At its next meeting, the UCC will review information on the grades assigned in all 98 and 92 courses before deciding whether to recommend credit/no credit grading for these courses as well as for 5PE94 courses.

Undergraduate Incomplete Policy/Unexcused Incomplete Policy

The UCC concluded its discussion of policies related to undergraduate incompletes by reviewing a new letter from the Registrar explaining two new forms to be distributed to faculty with grade sheets this spring. The first of these forms, entitled "Agreement for an Excused Incomplete for Undergraduate Students", would be used to establish a contract between a student and a faculty member regarding specific expectations for completing outstanding coursework. The form, which provides directions for instructors and students, and room for the signatures of each, would be returned to the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. The "No Grade and Unsatisfactory Grade (below C-) Report Form" would report information about students' unsatisfactory coursework to the Committee on Academic Standing for use in reviewing students' academic status. This report form would also be used by a faculty member willing to consider late work from a student who had not signed an "Agreement for an Excused Incomplete" for whatever reason. An "NG" or "no grade" would thus replace an "XI" or "unexcused incomplete".

Committee members asked that the letter from the Registrar be revised to better explain which grades and forms should be used in which circumstances. UCC members also recommended that three new explanations for unsatisfactory work be added to the "No Grade and Unsatisfactory Grade Report Form". These new categories are "Poor performance", "Did not turn in required work", and "Other (please describe below)".

The UCC unanimously approved both forms and the explanatory letter from the Registrar. Committee members requested that the Dean's and Registrar's offices inform faculty in advance about the introduction of these new forms. Announcements should be made at both a departmental chairs meeting and through an e-mail message to all faculty.

The Committee on Academic Standing, at its end of the semester meetings to evaluate the academic performance of students, often reviews student records that include grades of "incomplete". In some cases, these incomplete grades, which can be either "EI" (formally excused by faculty after consulting with the student) or "XI" (indicating that no form or agreement was involved), become failing grades, but only after it is too late to require a student to withdraw.

The Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs has reviewed the policies of other institutions, and is now recommending that the XI designation be eliminated, and that a new form be completed by faculty members who issue incomplete grades. This purpose of this form, which would be attached to the grade sheet, would be to provide more information to the Committee on Academic Standing about student performance in courses where incomplete grades were issued. Committee members suggested that instructors be reminded that students on probation cannot receive incomplete grades unless approved by class deans. Probationary status might also be listed on class rosters. The new form might also ask for the deadline for completion of unfinished work, and the grade a faculty

member would assign if no further work were completed. Whether or not to send a copy of this form to the student was also discussed.

The UCC postponed discussion of this topic until its next meeting, at which time additional information about current procedures will be presented.

The committee returned to its discussion of Unexcused Incompletes by agreeing that the designation “XI” should be eliminated. UCC members then reviewed the “Documentation of an Excused Incomplete for Undergraduate Students” form prepared by the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. This form, which would be attached to the grade sheet by a faculty member who issues an incomplete grade, would record information about the reason for the excused incomplete, and the nature of and due dates (no later than the published deadline) for outstanding work. The signature of the instructor and student would also be requested, although the signature of the student might not be required. Committee members asked if the form could be considered a “contract” if the student’s signature were not required. In the latter case, the form could be sent to the student or the information conveyed to the student by a dean. What if a student complains that he/she never received the form or message? Does lack of a student’s signature imply that a student need not have a reason for the late completion of work? Some committee members believe that a student’s signature is unnecessary, because the faculty member is responsible for setting the standards and deadlines for the course. Others believe that students should be active participants in or the primary initiators of an excused incomplete agreement.

Committee members also discussed the desirability of asking instructors to indicate expected course grades, if no further work were completed. Another way of obtaining comparable information would be to ask what grades were assigned to tests, papers, and homework already completed, or for either a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” grade report. Lastly, a committee member asked if an “I” could replace the “EI” grade. No, because an “I” signifies a permanent incomplete on a graduate transcript.

The UCC will continue this discussion at a future meeting.

Proposal to Change BIOL 18a from a Two Credit Course to a Four Credit Course/ Discussion of Proposal to Award Full Credit for BIOL 18a

Judith Tsipis of the Biology Department was invited to discuss a proposal to change BIOL 18a, Genetics Laboratory, from a half credit course to a full credit course. This proposal has received unanimous support from both the Biology Department and the School of Science Council. Over the past twenty years, the amount of credit assigned to laboratory courses has changed from no credit, to half credit for a small number of courses, to half credit for all laboratory courses. This proposal would not change the credit granted for BIOL 18b, the lab which accompanies the first semester Cell Biology course, because the amount of work required for that lab resembles that of other labs (a weekly lab lecture and a four hour lab). Neither would the proposal enable students who earned half credit for BIOL 18a in previous terms retroactively claim full credit. The rationale for expanding credit for BIOL 18a is that students are required to spend much more time in this lab, above and beyond the scheduled lab periods, than in other labs, in order to conduct and complete the genetics experiments. Tsipis, the lab instructor, considered but decided against reducing this workload, because it provides necessary background and training in preparation for medical school and summer jobs. BIOL 18a is also a writing intensive course. Although the writing intensive aspects of the course have been revised over the years, students continue to write five or six lab reports, at least one of which must be revised. Teaching assistants are now trained by a faculty member experienced in teaching writing. Topics of the training, such as writing introductions and conclusions and presenting data, serve both the undergraduate students and the graduate teaching assistants who benefit when writing their theses.

UCC members asked the following questions. Would it be desirable to schedule BIOL 18a for two lab meetings a week? No, space issues preclude this option, and the labs also require variably timed return visits (some labs are completed in two days and others in six days). The current schedule enables students to return to the lab at any time of the day or night. Would full credit for this course lead to additional credit for other lab courses? Students originally wanted all biology lab courses to be full credit, but this course seemed exceptional in its workload, and won’t set a precedent for other courses. At other universities, advanced level biology lab courses are full credit. At Brandeis both chemistry and physics offer both introductory half credit labs and full credit advanced labs. Will granting full credit for the biology lab encourage pre-medical students in the second semester of the sophomore year to enroll only in organic chemistry and its lab and the biology genetics course and its lab? That course load is already a legal three-course load so the change in credit might not affect student behavior and choice. Increasing the credit will not change the absolute number of courses required for the biology or other related concentrations, though a greater proportion of the courses counted toward the 32 course degree requirement would be biology concentration courses. While the total number of courses required for the concentration is high, the number of required biology courses is relatively small, because students are required to take two years of chemistry and one year of physics, each with accompanying labs. What is the downside to continuing half credit for the BIOL 18a course? Students will continue to complain that the amount of work is comparable to a full credit course. If another faculty member taught this course, would the course still be worth full credit? There are experiments in a basic genetics lab that cannot be curtailed, so there is little chance that the course work would be reduced by another instructor. Is course credit determined by the amount of work or the number of contact or instructional hours required? What are the guidelines? Generally speaking, it’s not the amount of work a student devotes to a course, but the amount of instructional time. Some courses are more demanding than other courses, even though all earn the same amount of credit. There are also exceptions to the instructional time guideline. Some language courses require four, five or six

contact hours per week for four units of credit, as do some studio art courses. The University Writing Seminar is the only course that now receives full credit for meeting two hours per week. At some other universities, variable amounts (e.g., from one to five) of credit are offered per course. If we do not link credit with instructional time, what makes a course worth half or full credit?

In discussing the proposal, one committee member noted that a writing intensive designation is not sufficient reason for a course to receive additional credit, since the designation is not in itself credit bearing. A motion to approve the proposal to grant full credit for BIOL 18a yielded four yeas, four nays, and one abstention. The UCC will continue its discussion of this issue at its next meeting, but may wish first to establish guidelines for establishing either full or half credit for all courses.

UCC members returned to their discussion of awarding full credit for BIOL 18a by reviewing historical documents related to past laboratory credit decisions and by affirming that the number of contact hours, or amount of instructional time supervised by a member of the faculty or a teaching assistant, are the criterion for awarding either half or full course credit for a laboratory course. Variable credit systems at other universities appear to be based on contact hours. BIOL 18a requires many hours in the lab, but because these additional hours do not require the presence of a teaching assistant, the additional work is viewed by the UCC as homework and not contact time. Most half credit Brandeis labs appear to have one hour of lecture and three supervised hours of lab. Full credit labs appear to have six laboratory hours, or three hours of lecture, or some combination yielding six instructional hours. While there are several Brandeis studio and language courses that require more than three contact hours, these courses have not been awarded additional credit for requiring additional hours at the "high end".

A "call for the question" to decide whether or not to cease discussion of BIOL 18a issues yielded two votes in favor of ceasing discussion and six against. UCC members asked the dean's office to request additional information of Professor Tsipis and to also inform her that members of the committee have not been convinced by the arguments that full credit should be awarded to BIOL 18a because it requires many additional hours of unsupervised work, which fall into the category of homework by the committee's definition, or because it is writing intensive, since this designation does not carry additional credit for other courses. The dean's office will also explain the committee's understanding that full credit for a lab course should be awarded for either three hours of lecture or six hours of supervised lab sessions or whatever permutations already exist for other Brandeis full credit lab courses, such as CHEM 39 and 59 and the Physics Electronics lab. Professor Tsipis will be asked to answer the following questions. Has the syllabus for BIOL 18a changed in the twenty years since credit was first granted? Does the current syllabus indicate more advanced content or techniques? Are there deleterious pedagogical or educational effects if we continue to assign half credit for the course? Would students work harder if they were granted full credit?

In its talks over the last two meetings, the UCC has not been convinced that full credit should be awarded to BIOL 18a just because it is writing intensive or because it requires many hours of work. The writing intensive designation does not carry additional credit for any other courses (although as I write this, I realize that no other half credit courses are also designated writing intensive). UCC members also believe that the additional hours required for lab experiments fall into the category of homework; the instructional hours of the lab are those in which an instructor or teaching assistant is present to supervise the work. Many courses require extra work out of class, and that has not been considered sufficient to grant additional credit. Because these arguments were not convincing to the committee, it was not prepared to vote on your proposal, until you had an opportunity to present other arguments.

The UCC expected to use "instructional hours" as the guidelines for establishing full credit for a lab. The Registrar's office grants full credit to lab courses taught outside of Brandeis if the courses involve six hours of lab meetings (two scheduled lab sessions). I was asked to find out what the hours of instruction are for CHEM 39b and for the Physical Chemistry and Physics Electronics labs, because those courses also establish a precedent for the number of instructional hours required for a full credit course. The UCC was under the impression that each met for two lab sessions or a total of six hours of instruction. I will, of course, now share your findings with the committee. But the general gist was: we believe that full credit should be awarded for either three hours of lecture or six hours of supervised lab sessions or whatever permutations already exist for other Brandeis full credit labs. Lastly, other members asked if you would be able to provide the following information. Has the syllabus for BIOL 18a changed in the twenty years since credit was first granted? Does the current syllabus indicate more advanced content or techniques? Also, do you believe students would work harder if they were granted full credit for this course? Are there deleterious pedagogical effects of only assigning half credit for the course, so that the lack of full credit is affecting the student's education in some way?

UCC members began their continued discussion of awarding full credit for BIOL 18a by reviewing answers to the committee's questions from Professor Judith Tsipis. Has the syllabus for BIOL 18a changed in the twenty years since credit was first granted? Yes, the lab is very different now: dissections have been replaced by advanced molecular experiments, which are heavily dependent on the use of computers and modern equipment. Are there deleterious pedagogical or educational effects caused by assigning "half credit" for the course? The mismatch between amount of work and amount of credit is not healthy. How do the contact hours for BIOL 18a compare with those of advanced full credit labs in Chemistry and Physics? BIOL 18a's hours are similar to those of full credit advanced labs. There are six contact hours, but the lab facility is supervised weekdays from Monday to Friday, providing access to instructional help, if needed. Completion of an experiment requires more than the scheduled contact hours and is not viewed as "homework". Writing the lab report is the homework assignment.

A motion to award full credit for BIOL 18a passed by a vote of six yeas to two nays, with one abstention. The UCC then recorded its intention that full credit not be awarded to any other “half-credit” introductory science lab.

Proposed Changes to the English Major

Caren Irr, the Undergraduate Advising Head of English and American Literature, and Michael Gilmore, the chair of the department, were invited to present their department’s proposed changes to the English major. The current English major has been in place for at least 30 years, with almost identical requirements. The requirements appear to be attractive to undergraduates in the program, but some declared majors, especially those who are double majoring, enrolled in other minors or programs, studying abroad, or completing student teaching requirements, have been unable to complete certain period requirements due to logistical concerns, and thus have “lost” their English majors. Students are currently required to complete one course in five of six historical periods, plus ENG 11a, ENG/HUM 10a, a course in literary theory or criticism, and one elective. The new structure would require ENG 11a, three courses focusing on literature written in English before 1850, one course in world literature (or foundational texts or a comparative literature course taught in English), and four electives. The goal is to bring our requirements more in line with those of our peer institutions, by loosening the period requirement. A survey of 14 highly ranked, non-ivy schools indicates that all have fewer (one to three) period requirements, and most use dates (e.g., 1800 or 1860) to classify courses in the period requirement. 1850 was selected by the Brandeis department, because it demarcates the Victorian era and the beginning of modernism. Students would be informed about which courses count toward the pre-1850 requirement by course numbering and by a supplementary handout. The new structure will provide more options to English majors. The English profession has changed substantially in the last 30-35 years, as has the faculty in the Brandeis English department. More attention is now paid to world literature and the development of genres and themes over time.

A committee member asked why English courses taught by graduate students would not be allowed to count toward the major. Why exclude courses taught by University Prize Instructors, when these courses are not only a result of campus wide competition, but are also approved by department, School Council, and Dean in the usual manner? If our transfer and summer school policies allow students to receive credit for courses taught by graduate students from other institutions, why should courses taught by our own graduate students be specifically excluded?

The UCC unanimously approved the proposed changes to the English major (with one recusal), contingent upon the removal of the sentence stating that “No courses taught by graduate students will count toward the major”, but also asked representatives of the department to return to the UCC for further discussion of excluding these courses. This exclusion has been the internal practice of the department for several years, but members of the UCC feel strongly that the practice should not continue to be implemented. Departments should not enforce unstated degree requirements. The UCC would not necessarily object to barring particular courses, but is against barring a course for no other reason than that it is taught by a graduate student.

Appointment of Subcommittees

UCC members delayed appointment of a subcommittee to review concentration requirements and a subcommittee to approve Independent Concentrations until the next meeting. UCC members, including those absent from this meeting, are invited to volunteer, via an e-mail to “ewong”, for service on these committees. Stephen Berns and Mark Hewitt have already volunteered to serve on the subcommittee on concentration requirements, but two faculty volunteers are also being sought. Members of this subcommittee may wish to study such issues as the proportion of concentration requirements to overall degree requirements, the size of comparable concentrations in relation to one another, and the amount of double counting allowed for two or more concentrations.

In the past the subcommittee on independent concentrations, which meets approximately once a semester, has consisted of two faculty members from the UCC and two faculty members from the Committee on Academic Standing, with non-voting support from a dean from the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and one from the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences, but the composition of this year’s subcommittee must still be decided. According to new faculty handbook legislation, final approval of Independent Concentrations now rests with the UCC.

Appointment of the Subcommittee on Independent Concentrations

David Rakowski and Ranjan Sen volunteered to serve on the UCC subcommittee on independent concentrations. Regarding the composition of the subcommittee, UCC members agreed that it should include representation from all four schools of the college (Creative Arts, Humanities, Science, and Social Science) and at least one member from the Committee on Academic Standing (COAS). Committee members suggested that either Mark Hulliung or Mary Davis, who serve on COAS as representatives from social science departments, and Richard Lansing, who chairs an interdepartmental program, be invited to serve as additional members of the subcommittee. Either the sophomore or junior class dean and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education will also attend meetings. Students will not be asked to serve on this subcommittee in order to avoid peer evaluation of an undergraduate’s concentration requirements.

Report from the Subcommittee on Independent Concentrations

The committee unanimously approved seven petitions for independent concentrations, all of which had previously been approved by the UCC subcommittee on independent concentrations. The titles of the concentrations, followed by the names of the student

petitioners are: Human Development- Melissa Halbridge; Logic and Computational Cognitive Science- Kristofer Bouchard; Public Policy-Adina Stein; Chinese Language and Culture Studies-Jordan Brandt and Adam Frost; and East Asian Studies- Aran Lavi and Victoria Chan.

Committee members also endorsed a recommendation that independent concentrators should be represented by an undergraduate “departmental” representative, and reaffirmed the requirement that all independent concentrations consist of at least 12 courses, one of which may be a “98” or independent study, or two of which may be “99” or senior honors courses.

Dean Owens reported that the UCC’s proposal to utilize the terms “major” and “minor” was slowly gaining approval from school council and departmental chairs, the faculty senate, faculty senate council, the student union, student senate, interdepartmental program chairs and faculty meeting. Given this change in terminology, it seems appropriate to change the name of the “Independent Concentration” to something else (e.g., Independent Interdisciplinary Major?). The committee will make a final decision on a new title at its next meeting; until then, committee members are asked to think about appropriate titles and to research terms used at other universities to describe similar majors.

Appointment of the Subcommittee on Concentration Requirements

In addition to Stephen Berns and Mark Hewitt, Emily Dudek and William Flesch will serve on the subcommittee to review concentration requirements.

Terminology: Major/Minor or Concentration/Program

Dean Owens noted that substantial amounts of time are often spent explaining such Brandeis terms as “concentrations” and “interdepartmental programs” and “minors” to members of the community. In preparation for continued discussion of this terminology, Dean Owens asked each member of the UCC to “surf the web” or otherwise review the catalogs of three different universities, to learn how each institution names concentrations or majors, minors and interdepartmental options. Any change in terminology would require eventual consultation with the faculty senate, departmental and interdepartmental chairs, and students.

UCC members returned to their discussion of “major, minor, concentration, and program” terminology by reporting on how these terms are utilized at other colleges and universities, as evidenced on the institutions’ web pages. To summarize, the word “major” is used at American, Haverford, Northwestern, Rice, Roosevelt, Stanford, Tufts, Vanderbilt, Wellesley, UCLA, and University of Washington. All of the above institutions also employ the word “minor”, excepting Haverford and Rice, which do not offer this curricular option. Rice also discusses “areas of concentration” in majors.

The term “concentration” is used at the University of Chicago, Brown, Harvard, and Rochester. Columbia appears to refer to both “majors” and “concentrations”. Brown refers to “interdepartmental programs” of the university.

UCC members noted that web pages are not a completely reliable source of information.

For example, information on Brandeis’s own web pages is not completely consistent with information in the Brandeis University Bulletin.

At Brandeis, an interdepartmental program is both a field of study and an administrative unit. In the current Brandeis terminology, Islamic Studies, Italian Studies, and Latin American Studies are both interdepartmental fields of concentration and interdepartmental programs. Some departments offer multiple concentrations and minors. For example, the Romance and Comparative Literature department offers both concentrations and minors in French Language and Literature, and Spanish Language and Literature, and also a concentration in Comparative Literature. In reviewing Bulletin text, committee members noted several inconsistent uses of terminology. Classical Studies actually offers four concentrations, which are not individually noted in the section listing fields of concentration by school. There are “tracks” in some concentrations (such as Anthropology, Music, Fine Arts, and NEJS), and in some minors (such as Philosophy), but the word “track” is sometimes explicitly stated and sometimes not, and also refers to slightly different concepts.

To reduce confusion and simplify the terminology, UCC members unanimously approved a recommendation that the university consider two changes: to employ the term “major” in place of “field of concentration” and “concentrate”, and to employ the term “minor” for participation and enrollment in both departmental and interdepartmental fields of study. This recommendation will now be referred to the Faculty Senate, Student Senate, School Councils, and departmental and interdepartmental chairs for their reaction and consultation.

Committee members strongly recommend that the Bulletin be reformatted to list: 1. all of the departments, with associated minors and majors; 2. all “majors”; 3. all “minors”, which would now include interdepartmental programs; and 4; all interdepartmental programs, which would now include both majors and minors. Each section should be accompanied by appropriate text explaining the differences and similarities in groupings, and why some units are listed in more than one place. Mark Hewitt, the University Registrar, volunteered to draft this new text for UCC consultation.

Terminology: Independent Concentration to ...?

Committee members returned to their discussion of an appropriate name for the “Independent Concentration”, now that the proposal to use the term “major” in place of “concentration” has been approved by the faculty. Stephen Berns reported on terminology used by other institutions to describe similar majors. Some of the names used at schools such as UCLA, Pomona, Rice, and NYU include “individual field”, “interdisciplinary studies”, “special major”, “area major”, “individualized study”, and “individualized major”. After several straw votes on the terms “special major”, “individual major”, “independent interdisciplinary major”, “interdisciplinary major”, “independent major”, “individualized major”, and “individualized interdisciplinary major”, the committee agreed to adopt the term “individualized interdisciplinary major” in place of “independent concentration”. It is assumed that the major will informally be referred to by students as the “I-major”.

Review of Major/Minor Bulletin Text

Committee members reviewed different ways of presenting information about majors, minors, departments, and interdepartmental programs in the Brandeis University Bulletin. Suggestions for improving the drafts included adding department and office addresses, course abbreviations, and more page number references. The presentation of this information matters, because it affects the way one thinks about the curriculum. The UCC asked to see the final draft of the text, which will merge the various versions. In the meantime, the drafts will be discussed by the Dean of Arts and Sciences at the next departmental chairs meeting, and with school council chairs and interdepartmental program chairs, and the Faculty Senate.

The new Faculty Handbook defines the membership of a School Council to include representatives from “each School’s departments and concentrations”. Some interdepartmental majors (and minors) are composed of courses from departments in one school, but others require courses from more than one school. In which school should an interdepartmental major such as Latin American Studies participate? The majors in General Science, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature are not currently treated as interdepartmental programs. For example, they are not reviewed by the UCC for continuance, and their governance is self-appointed. Should there be a separate Council for interdisciplinary programs?

Review of Data on Four Year BA/MA Programs

UCC members reviewed data on the number of students participating in four year Bachelors/Masters programs. In 2001, 14 students completed these joint degree programs. In 2002, 13 students are expected to graduate with joint degrees.

Credit/No Credit Grading for “92” and “98” courses

Members of the committee reviewed confidential grade distribution information for courses numbered 92, 94, 97, 98 and 99 from the fall of 1994 through spring of 2001, before deciding whether to recommend credit/no credit grading for courses other than SPE94 courses. The distribution of “A” grades for courses other than peer assistantship courses ranged from 80% for 97 courses to 87% for 99 courses. Changing the grading option for these courses from letter grades to credit/no credit would have little effect on the number of students receiving Dean’s List recognition; only 40 students would have “lost” the recognition, primarily because they would not have completed a sufficient number of letter graded, full credit courses (three).

92 or internship courses include both “independent” internships (in which a student must identify a faculty member to sponsor credit) and internships attached to formal courses that meet regularly during a semester. Should these two experiences be distinguished from one another, for grading purposes?

Because 99 or senior honors courses are a full year requirement for receiving departmental honors, and often require departmental approval and/or some committee or other review process, the UCC agreed to exclude these courses from credit/no credit grading consideration. 97 or senior essay courses lasting one semester were also excluded.

98 or independent study courses have different standards for different students, and are purely an option in the curriculum. Some faculty members believe that even the brightest students enrolled in 98 courses do not work as hard in these courses as they do in other courses. Would students work even less hard if there were no letter grades in 98 courses? Perhaps fewer students would request this option. Some departments have allowed students to satisfy requirements for the major by completing a 98 version of a course if the required course were not available for scheduling or other reasons, but in these cases, the departments could waive the requirement that all courses completed for a major must be taken for a letter grade.

Members of the committee reviewed e-mails from faculty expressing both support and opposition for Credit/No Credit grading for “92” and “98” courses. One e-mail suggested that the category of “Honors” be added to the Credit/No Credit grading option. “Honors” would also count as a passing grade that would not be used in the calculation of a student’s cumulative grade point average, but would enable an instructor to indicate that a student had produced outstanding work. Faculty who support letter grades for “92” and “98” courses wish to set high academic goals for their students, and to reward those who achieve those goals; they fear that the quality of their students’ work might decline without letter grades. Faculty who support Credit/No Credit grading do so for reasons already discussed by the UCC. The committee members also reviewed data prepared by the Office of the University Registrar on

letter grades assigned for courses from Fall '94-Spring '01 numbered 1-89 (40% A's), for courses numbered 100-199 (51% As), and for courses numbered 92, 94, and 98 (84%- 98% A's).

Members of the UCC unanimously approved a motion to revise the current Credit/No Credit grading option to include Honors/Credit/No Credit grades, and passed by a vote of six yeas and one nay the motions to propose Credit/No Credit grading for all "92" (internship) courses and all "98"(independent study) courses. Emily Dudek and Sarah Lamb were asked to present the motions at the next faculty meeting.

Proposal for an Interdepartmental Program in Linguistics

Ray Jackendoff, Professor of Linguistics, presented a proposal to officially designate Linguistics as an interdepartmental program. The academic field of Linguistics and Cognitive Science has existed at Brandeis for many years, in fact predating the establishment of interdepartmental programs. It was originally housed in English, and then, since the early 80's, in Psychology. A major was first offered in the mid 70's, and a minor reintroduced in the early 90's. Faculty from Computer Science, Anthropology, Philosophy and Germanic and Slavic Languages will contribute courses to the new interdepartmental program. The curriculum would remain essentially the same, although it makes sense to drop Cognitive Science from the title of the program because of the retirement and subsequent loss of courses by Edgar Zurif.

The UCC unanimously approved the designation of Linguistics as an interdepartmental program; the program will be reviewed again in seven years.

Clarification of Policy Regarding Credit for Academic Work Completed in Secondary School

Daniel Greisokh presented a petition to amend the current transfer credit policy, which states that college level work completed while in high school will not be processed as transfer credit toward the Brandeis degree if it is also applied toward high school graduation requirements. This policy does not account for differences in high school graduation requirements, some of which require students to earn a certain number of credits over time spent in high school, and some of which require students to earn a certain number of credits during each year of high school (the rationale for the latter is to prevent students from graduating in only three years time, to ensure that students attend summer school if they fall behind in annual credits, and to guarantee that students do not "slack off" by completing fewer courses in the senior year). In the first case, earned college credits beyond those required for graduation would be allowed to count toward the Brandeis degree, and in the second case, those same credits would not be allowed.

By the end his junior year, Greisokh had completed four AP classes and all of the available math and physics courses offered by his high school. He was allowed to enroll for free at any public institution of higher education, and thus entered a dual enrollment program at UMassachusetts-Boston, where he completed four college courses beyond the total number of courses he needed to graduate. However, these courses also counted toward his senior year residency requirement and are thus ineligible for credit evaluation.

The Office of the Registrar suggested that this matter be brought to the attention of the UCC as a potential change in policy, since there would be no reason for the Committee on Academic Standing to grant an exception to the clearly delineated and easy to interpret existing policy. A change in policy would also ensure equity among students in the same situation. A motion to change the current policy to enable the university to consider credit for elective courses taken by students in dual enrollment programs if the courses exceed the total number required for high school graduation passed by a vote of six yeas, one nay and one abstention. The UCC asked the Office of the Registrar to draft appropriate language for inclusion in the Brandeis University Bulletin.

Fine Arts Proposal to Allow Students to Double Major in Art History and Studio Art

Charles McClendon, the Chair of Fine Arts, presented a petition which his department supports to allow a graduating senior who has completed the requirements for both Art History and Studio Arts to have both "majors" formally recorded on her transcript. Historically, the department has offered only one major, Fine Arts, although different sets of requirements exist for tracks in Studio Art and Art History. The department originally thought this matter might be decided by the dean as an exception to policy; however, the Registrar and the UCC do not believe that students should have to individually petition for this option, which should ideally be listed in the Bulletin and available to all students.

The UCC asks the department to prepare new Bulletin text redefining the two tracks within the current Fine Arts major as two separate majors. The School Council and the UCC would then review this text.

The Fine Arts faculty believe that double majoring in Studio Art and Art History will be relatively rare because double majors would have to complete 18 different courses, with only six course requirements overlapping. Both majors require 12 courses, but the types of courses required are very different. Two years ago, one other student completed both sets of requirements before completing the post bacc program. She fully deserved recognition for completing two majors, but decided not to press her case.

For this year only, graduating seniors in the department will be allowed to choose the title of their major: either Fine Arts, or more specifically, Studio Art or Art History. This change is really one of nomenclature, as both tracks already exist and each set of requirements will remain the same.

Independent Interdisciplinary Majors

The UCC approved four petitions for “independent interdisciplinary majors,” previously approved by the UCC Subcommittee on Independent Concentrations. The term “independent interdisciplinary major,” a new name for independent concentrations preferred by the petitioners, was also unanimously approved by the UCC. The titles of the majors and the names of the student applicants are: Philosophy of Law and Economics - Taylor Agisim; Socio-Cultural Development - Ada Obrea; East Asian Studies - Caryn Sackman; and Community and Public Health Studies - Julia Szymczak.

UCC members asked if limits have been set on double counting courses toward both an independent and a departmental major. There are currently no restrictions, but this matter could be referred to the subcommittee.

Update from the Faculty Meeting

After extensive e-mail correspondence and consultation with members of the UCC, three of the committee’s motions (Dean’s List, Honors/Credit/No Credit grading, and Credit/No Credit grading for internship courses) were withdrawn from discussion at the last faculty meeting. The motion to grade all peer assistantship (SPE 94) courses on a Credit/No Credit basis was approved on first reading. The motion to grade independent study (98) courses on a Credit/No Credit basis was withdrawn and returned to committee after lengthy discussion by the faculty did not achieve a consensus. There appears to be some interest in creating different course numbers for internships and independent studies: one number for courses graded with letter grades, and one for courses graded Credit/No Credit.

New Business

A UCC member proposed that committee members be informed that those who know in advance that they will have to miss a significant number of UCC meetings each semester (e.g., three) should be asked to resign from the committee to enable other individuals who can attend a higher percentage of scheduled meetings to be appointed in their places. This motion was unanimously approved.