

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING
February 15, 2001**

Members present:

Mary Albrecht, David Anderson, Mary Dale Blanton, Richard Bayer, Chris Cox, Catherine Dalton, Tom George, Fred Gilliam, Laura Howes, Bob Jackson, Faye Julian, Buck Jones, Suzanne Kurth, John Lounsbury, Robert Maddox, Johnnie Mozingo, Mike Mullen, Robert Peterson, Paul Pinckney, Max Robinson, Harold Roth, Margie Russell, Jean Skinner, Delores Smith, Frank Spicuzza, Linda Tober, Michael Ware, Robert Woodruff, and John Zomchick.

Members absent:

Heather Collins, Robert Hinde, Andrew James, Carol Seavor, Rita Smith, and Allen Taylor.

Julian called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

I. Policies

A. Contract Honors Courses

Julian reported a clarification of Contract Honors courses. She noted the "H" designation is attached to the student's record and not to the course number.

Tom Broadhead, director of the University Honors Program, said there is a requirement that honors students complete four formal honors courses and a one-credit honors seminar by the end of the sophomore year. This minimum requirement is below that recommended by the Collegiate Honors Council. The proposal is to increase the number of honors credit and to engage students in a higher level of intellectual experience in an upper-division course in the student's major. Discussion involved whether or not contract honors credit should be earned in departments that already offer upper-division honors courses, the length of time in the term students have to complete a contract, and whether the contract honors option be limited to honors students. Broadhead stated that the proposal was similar to the programs already in place at other universities. Lounsbury added that the program should remain flexible, be tried, and revised as necessary. Broadhead noted that at first the contract honors option would be limited to honors program students. Julian noted that the statement "Restricted to students in the University Honors program" be attached to the original proposal approved in April 2000. The goals and procedures follow p. 13098.

B. Honors Categories for Graduation

Broadhead requested a statement be added to the catalog statement of honors categories and the "University Honors" appears on diplomas and the academic record of honors students. Council approved the proposal as it appears on p. 13101.

II. Communications

Haley presented consideration of alternatives to raising the grade-point average to 2.8 for progression into the College. It appears on pp. 10395-10397. Tober noted that the current progression requires a 2.5 in 30 hours of prescribed course work, but that the College does not recalculate the grade point average to include only the prescribed

coursework. Discussion focused on the enrollment management needs in the College and the use of overall grade point averages to meet these needs. Mozingo noted that in the College of Nursing students apply once a year for the number of openings available in the program and that the grade point average is determined by specific criteria. Mayhew suggested that the proposal be returned to the College to specify the courses to be used in the calculation of the grade point average and that the College reconsider the number of hours permitted before students can progress into the major. Howes made the motion, Blanton seconded, and it passed by a vote of 15-0.

III. Policies

A. Mayhew presented a clarification of the Incomplete grade policy. With little discussion, Council passed the material as it appears on p. 13099.

B. University Student Status

Julian proposed that the length of time a student may remain a University Student be changed from completion of 30 hours to 43 hours. She noted that the 30-hour rule has never been enforced and the number of undecided students is increasing. A 45-hour policy, mid-way through the sophomore year, is a more reasonable policy. Lounsbury made the motion that at the completion of 45 hours, University Students must associate with a college or officially declare a major prior to the next term of enrollment. Mullen seconded. The motion carried without dissent. The policy appears on p. 13100.

There being no further business, the Council adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

All material requiring Faculty Senate approval appears on pp. 13093-13094.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda M. Tober
Secretary to the Undergraduate Council

January 31, 2001

To: Linda Tober and the Undergraduate Council
Re: College of Communications Admission Criteria
Fr: Eric Haley, Associate Dean

Last meeting the Undergraduate Council requested additional information regarding the College of Communications' vote to raise the progression GPA from 2.5 to 2.8.

In addressing the enrollment management crisis within the College, the College's departments, undergraduate studies committee and administrative committee considered several alternatives. In light of flat resources and increased student demand, we had to do something to stem the demand in order to deliver a quality experience to our majors.

Also, accrediting standards dictate that many of our classes be taught with a maximum 16/1 student/teacher ratio.

The Recommendation:

Raise the admission GPA to 2.8 for all majors in the College of Communications while maintaining the criterion that progression to a major must happen between 30 and 80 hours.

See attached sheet for a detail on the admissions GPA distribution by major.

Impact on # of majors:

Major	2.5 < 2.8 / Total # Majors	% Reduction	# Majors 2.8+
Broadcasting	58/189	31%	131
Public Relations	84/244	34%	160
Speech	11/37	30%	26
Advertising	97/241	40%	144
Journalism	16/75	21%	59

The Alternatives Considered:

1. Keep the 2.5 GPA at 80 hours, but place a specific grade requirement on an entry-level course:

We felt that this would not be an effective system in that students may repeat courses up to three times in order to meet the required grade in the course; It is extremely difficult to establish consistent grading standards given that we can seldom staff the courses with full-time faculty and teachers for the courses change often; Finally, teachers in these courses would be subject to extreme lobbying by students – given that these classes are often 100+ students, such lobbying would be an unacceptable additional burden to the teacher trying to effectively manage the course.

2. Keep the 2.5 GPA but only figured on a select group of courses:

While we know this system has been instituted effectively by the College of Business, we feel that we do not have the staff and time resources to effectively administer this system. Given that we represent several creative disciplines, the type of courses that may predict success in our College is extremely varied. When considering this option, it was very difficult to even agree on what courses should constitute such a core.

3. Reducing progression from 80 hours:

Many students do not discover a passion for a communications major until their sophomore or junior year. We feel that many students need the 80 hours in order to settle on a major.

4. Portfolio admission:

Our programs have portfolio assessment components in the senior year. It is unrealistic to think that our students would have portfolio materials in their sophomore or early junior year given that the courses that prepare students to develop such materials are not delivered until the junior and senior years.

5. Re-instituting the typing and/or grammar proficiency tests:

Prior to the semester transition, the College required applicants to complete a typing and grammar test. This was dropped several years ago due to lack of staff to effectively implement and grade the exams.

6. Capacity-based admissions:

This option would maintain the 2.5 GPA as a minimum but allow each department to set admissions for the major at a GPA based on the number of applicants in relation to ideal capacity for the major. This would lead to a floating GPA and different GPAs for majors within the college. This would require limiting admissions to once a semester or once a year. Faculty felt that students would not have a concrete goal to work toward and that the moving bar was not particularly fair to students.

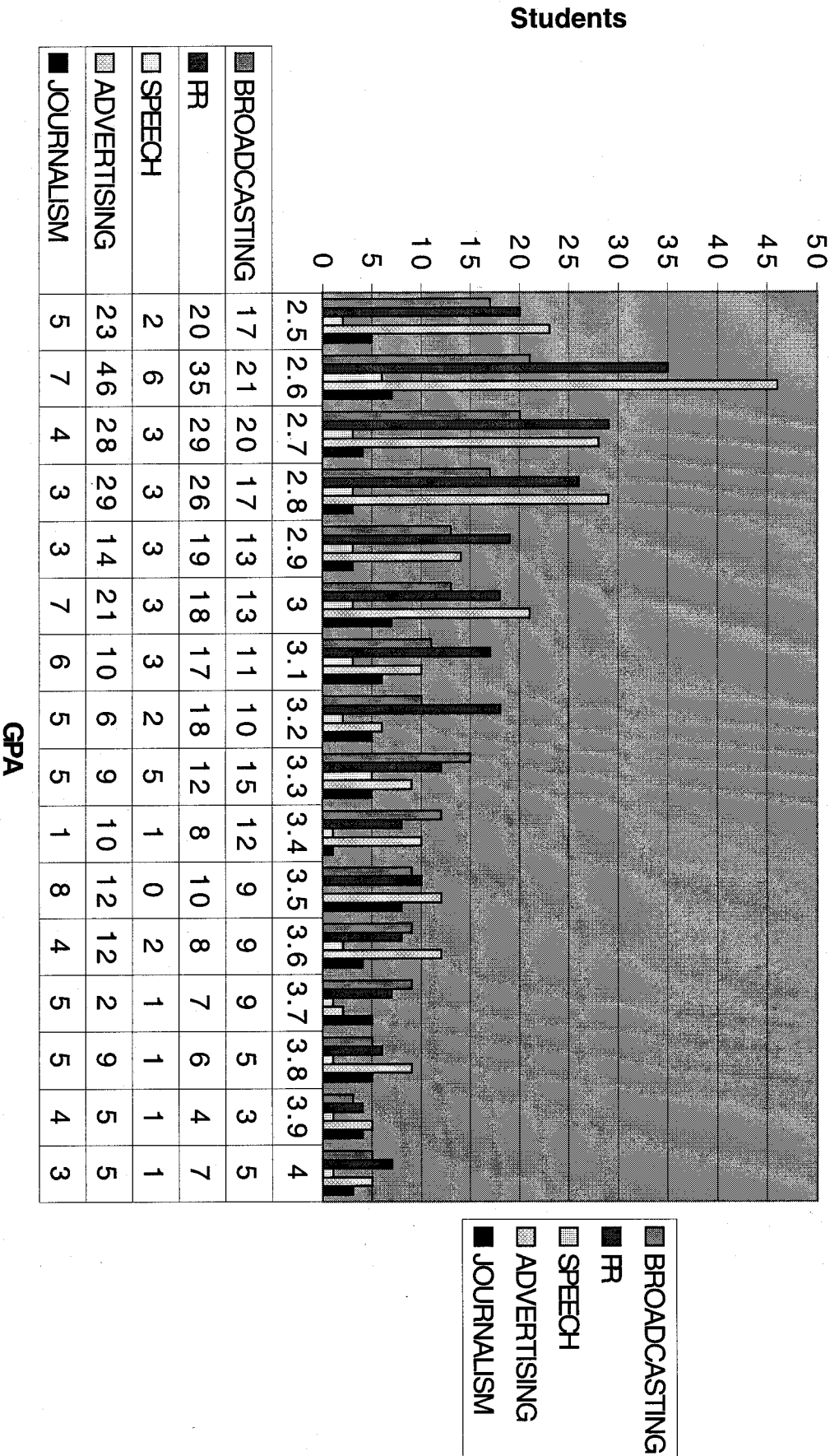
GPA if by Capacity

Major	Ideal Capacity	GPA Cut-off based on current majors
Broadcasting	120	2.9
PR	120	3.0
Speech	40	2.5
Advertising	120	3.0
Journalism	60	2.8

Capacity for speech reflects the extremely heavy service load the department bears.

Capacity for journalism reflects the writing-intensive nature of courses and the accrediting standards of 16/1 student/teacher ratio required for writing courses.

GPA's admitted to majors



Contract Honors Courses

Contract Honors Courses, involving a written agreement between the instructor and the student that specifies additional or more sophisticated effort by the student in the class, are an approach utilized at many universities to the problem of earning sufficient Honors Credits to meet the recommended standards of the National Collegiate Honors Council. Contract Honors Courses to be offered at UT were approved in the spring of 2000 by Undergraduate Council, and the structural components of this course option are now being developed.

Goals:

1. Introduce the student to additional content or content at a higher level in an area of the student's academic interest
2. Enhance student interaction with faculty that may lead to a mentoring relationship
3. Provide an introduction to research or creative activity that may lead to a potential senior honors project
4. Increase the number of Honors course credits toward the minimums indicated by the National Collegiate Honors Council for "Fully-Developed Honors Programs." ("The program requirements themselves should include a substantial portion of the participant's undergraduate work, usually in the vicinity of 20% or 25% of their total course work and certainly no less than 15%." NCHC characteristic 5)

Procedure:

1. Student has completed requirements for Lower Division Honors
2. Student approaches faculty member teaching an upper division course about pursuing an Honors Contract
3. Student and faculty member agree in writing on the nature of the additional work or the higher level of sophistication to be pursued.
 - a. Agreement must be reached and submitted to the Honors Office not later than the end of the third week of class.
 - b. Additional work completed is not factored into the course grade, but validates the receipt of Honors Credit for the course.
4. On completion of the course and the Honors contract work, the faculty member certifies to the Honors Office that the contract has been fulfilled, and an "H" will be added to the student's transcript.

Implementation:

Contract Honors Courses are an integral part of the "Two-Tier" Honors Program, which will be initiated for the entering fall class of 2001. Those students will be required to complete a Contract Honors Course during the 2003-2004 academic year. However, current students who have fulfilled their lower division Honors requirements will be encouraged on a limited basis to take Contract Honors Courses as early as fall, 2001.

On p. 26 of the Undergraduate Catalog, revise "Grades of Incomplete" as follows:

Grades of Incomplete

Under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor, the grade of "I" (incomplete) may be awarded to students who cannot complete the course for reasons beyond their control. In addition, a grade of "IW" may be assigned if a student cannot fulfill the requirements for a course because of an inability to communicate in writing. (See Writing Deficiency for more information about the "IW" grade.) The "I" grade is awarded only when there is a reasonable expectation that upon completion of the course work, a grade of "D" or better would be earned. The "I" grade is not issued in lieu of the grade "F" or "FX". The terms for the removal of the "I", including the time limit for removal of the "I", is decided by the instructor. It is the responsibility of the student receiving an "I" to arrange with the instructor whatever action is needed to remove the grade at the earliest possible date, and in any event, within one year of the assignment of incomplete. Students may not remove an "I" grade by re-enrolling in the course. The "I" grade does not carry quality points and is not computed in the grade point average. If the "I" grade is not removed within one calendar year or upon graduation, it shall be changed to an "F" and count as a failure in the computation of the grade point average. A student need not be enrolled at the University to remove a grade of incomplete.

Effective Fall 2001

On page 29 of the 2000-2001 Undergraduate Catalog revise the "University Students" text as follows.

University Students

Many students are undecided about their major when they enter UT. All undecided students are designated University Students and are advised by Arts and Sciences Advising **Services**. While it is proper to explore alternative choices, students should also pursue a course of study that culminates in graduation. **For this reason there is a limit to the length of time students may remain as University Students. At the completion of 45 hours, University Students who have entered UT as freshmen must associate with a college or officially declare a major prior to the end of the next term of enrollment.** Students who transfer from another college or university may enroll as University students. **However, transfer students may remain as University Students no longer than through the completion of 12 semester hours if the total number of hours transferred is 30 or more.** UT students who fail to progress in a given major, college, or school and are undecided about an alternative course of study may continue at UT as University Students for a maximum of **12** semester hours.

Effective Fall 2001

On page 31 of the 2000-2001 Undergraduate Catalog add the following statement to Honors Categories for Graduation:

...may not be repeated for the purpose of raising an honors category.

In addition, University Honors are conferred upon graduating students who have completed the University Honors Program.

Effective Fall 2001

The designation University Honors should appear on the diploma and on the academic record.