MEMO

To: Tih-Fen Ting, Chair
    Campus Senate

From: Harshavardhan Bapat, Chair
      Undergraduate Council

RE: New Resolution to Amend Campus Senate Resolution 31-1

Date: 10 August 2010

The Undergraduate Council met on April 30, 2010 to discuss amendments to Campus Senate Resolution 31-1, “Resolution regarding required upper division hours, transfer hours from community colleges and the course numbering & credit hour format for bridge courses,” approved on May 11, 2001. That resolution reduced the required number of upper division hours from 60 to 48. The rationale for the change was to allow more flexibility to transfer students in bringing in lower division hours, to accommodate the new population of students matriculating as freshmen, who would likely have more than 60 hours of lower division credit, and to bring UIS in line with other state institutions in the minimum number of hours of upper division credit.

Section 3 of the resolution indicated that

The minimum number of credit hours that can be transferred from community colleges should remain limited to 60 hours. The current 12 hour petition process policy should remain in effect resulting in a maximum transfer of 72 hours of community college credit.

Section 3 limited the number of hours that were transferable from community colleges and gave departments some control over 12 hours of additional credit from community colleges. The effect of section 3, however, was to maintain some elements of the 60 + 60 curricular structure that carried over from UIS’ history as an upper division institution.

In becoming a full “four-year” baccalaureate institution, UIS needs to eliminate the need to petition 12 hours. Many of our students now need to petition some or all of those 12 hours, and virtually all departments readily grant the petitions. Most other state institutions do not require petitions, and simply have a minimum number of hours of upper division credit (typically 40 or more).

The petitions for the 12 hours of additional lower division credit to be used as upper division perpetuates a kind of 2 + 2 thinking about the UIS degree, separating upper and lower divisions instead of unifying the baccalaureate degree.

At this point, petitions for the additional 12 hours of lower division credit are an unnecessary inconvenience for students, faculty, and staff. Advisors and degree audit systems must currently account for the outdated model of 60 lower division and 60 upper division credit hours. An amendment to section 3 of Resolution 31-1 would allow students who need the additional 12 hours of lower division credit to have those credits automatically accepted without the need for any additional approvals. Should departments desire to accept fewer than 72 hours of lower division transfer credit, they may do so by changing the departmental catalog copy if necessary.
The main concern related to this amendment is the potential loss of revenue that may occur if students chose to take more hours of lower division credit at other institutions. While the UGC recognizes this concern as valid, Council members argued that petitions to approve those transfer hours are already routinely approved. Therefore, this amendment merely streamlines a process that is already occurring in most departments. In addition, this amendment may actually make recruitment of and overall relations with transfer students easier and may make UIS a more attractive receiving institution.

Based on the above rationale, the Undergraduate Council voted to approve the following changes to section 3 of Resolution 31-1:

Current: The minimum number of credit hours that can be transferred from community colleges should remain limited to 60 hours. The current 12 hour petition process policy should remain in effect resulting in a maximum transfer of 72 hours of community college credit.

Proposed: The maximum number of lower division credit hours that can be transferred to UIS is 72.