

January 15, 1992

Many questions and concerns have been raised about the implications of the actions on 5000-level courses taken by the Graduate Council on November 18, 1991. This statement is designed to give our understanding of what the Graduate Council did and did not do.

First, 5000-level courses are special courses taught by graduate faculty that can be taken for both graduate and undergraduate credit. Each 5000-level course must have two sets of requirements, one for graduate students and the second for undergraduate students. To count toward an undergraduate degree, the course and the undergraduate requirements must be approved by the Faculty Senate. To count toward a graduate degree, the course and the graduate requirements must be approved by the Graduate Council. If the two bodies disagree, the course cannot be offered as a 5000-level course but it can be renumbered to fall entirely within the domain of the body that approved it and offered as a 4000- or 6000-level course. This position was adopted by both the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council last Spring.

The actions concerning 5000-level courses taken by the Graduate Council on November 18, 1991 were primarily editorial and designed to make the catalog consistent with the action taken last Spring by the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate. Two changes will occur because of the action. First, all undergraduates would have to have departmental approval to take 5000-level courses. Before, senior majors were exempt from this requirement. The Dean pointed out that departments were free to develop whatever criteria or standards best served their program and that none were being imposed by the Graduate Council. This change would make departments aware of any undergraduates who were enrolled so that professors could be informed of the need to have separate requirements. Given the fact that a department could decide to admit any senior major, this change seems fairly minor.

Second, by removing the sentence that states, "Senior undergraduate majors may be required to take 5000-level courses," the Graduate Council is clearly indicating that it will not approve any NEW 5000-level courses that are required for undergraduate programs unless there is a compelling justification for the course being at that level. NO EXISTING COURSES OR PROGRAMS ARE COVERED BY THIS CHANGE.

It is also our understanding that the Graduate Council is objecting, in general, to undergraduate programs that require specific 5000-level courses and does not object to undergraduate programs that require students to take 5000-level electives. This seems to be part of a general move by the Graduate Curriculum Committee to require that all new 5000-level courses be designed primarily to serve the needs of graduate programs.

Everyone should notice that the Graduate Council did not say that 5000-level courses cannot be required. Such a policy could only be enacted in cooperation with the Faculty Senate since it applies to undergraduate degrees. We hope that the University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Curriculum Committee will be able to work together to develop a common policy.

Finally, we should note that this item of business was not listed on the Agenda of the December 18, 1991 meeting of the Graduate Council but grew out of a request by the Graduate Curriculum Committee for direction from the Council in dealing with proposals for 5000-level courses. Consequently, faculty whose programs would be affected were not consulted in advance and a lot of confusion arose after the fact.

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For Information Only!