To: UGCC

From: Richard Turner, Biological Sciences

Subject: Undergraduate students taking both dual-numbered courses

Date: 27 March 2015

A situation has recently come to my attention about our several BIO field courses that are dual numbered. Some students in recent years have been taking the BIO-5XXX version after having taken the BIO-4XXX version, perhaps because they want to enjoy the field experience again. The student may not use the graduate version for graduate credit here, but other institutions at which the student might later enroll are unlikely to catch the duplication, especially if the course bears different names or numbers at the two levels.

The situation to me smacks of getting double credit for similar course content. It is difficult to catch the duplication unless advisors check the student’s transcript before approving a request from an undergraduate to take a graduate course. Banner does not catch the duplication. Graduate policy disallows taking both courses only when the student wants to use the graduate version for a program plan at FIT when the student has already taken the undergraduate version (my interpretation of the poorly worded policy). The policy follows:

(Graduate Policy 4.5.3)

A special case arises when a course is dual-numbered, meaning that undergraduate and graduate students attending the same lectures are registered under two different course numbers. All dual-numbered courses must ensure there is a clear distinction in the syllabi between the course requirements for the undergraduate students and the requirements for the graduate students. Normally in such cases, the stipulations listed above will apply, just as if the undergraduate student were enrolled in the graduate course and regardless of any additional requirements placed on the graduate students relative to the undergraduates attending the same lectures. An exception is made in the case of bi-level courses, which are dual-numbered courses deemed by the academic unit to be equally appropriate at either the undergraduate or the graduate level, and hence suitable for enrollment by undergraduates regardless of grade point average, subject only to the usual prerequisites and similar requirements including permission of the instructor.

Bi-level courses will be so designated by the academic unit with the approval of the Graduate Council. These courses are the only courses in which students registered for graduate credit and undergraduates with averages below 2.75 may be in attendance in the same classroom without special permission. Once any dual-numbered course has been taken by an undergraduate student, the course may not be repeated in a later term for credit toward a graduate degree.

We restrict similar attempts to take the same course offered under different prefixes (p.34 of 2014–2015 catalog): “Courses listed under more than one prefix (i.e., Primer for Biomath, BIO-2332 and MTH-2332) may not be repeated for credit under the alternate prefix.” There is no comparable restriction for dual-numbered courses.

I recommend that undergraduate students be barred from taking both versions of a dual-numbered course. A new sentence could be added to the existing paragraph on p. 34, or the course descriptions could be amended to include an alert.

P. 34: “Similarly, dual-numbered courses [BTW, there is no definition of dual-numbered courses in the catalog] may not be taken at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.”

Course description: “(May not be taken if credit already granted for YYY-4XXX.)” or “(May not be taken if credit already granted for YYY-5XXX.)”