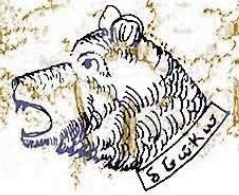


Order of the Golden Bear



The topic of tonight's discussion concerned Undergraduate Education, in terms of its purpose, its current state, future trajectories, and other angles.

Fellows first brought up the inquiry as to why computer science classes are not a part of the overall campus-wide curriculum due to the state of the technological age today and also due to the University's location and standing in regards to computer science and tech industry. The current Breadth Requirement system was seen by some as needing updating in this regard. Other Fellows questioned the relevance of breadths with their lack of a mandatory computer science class.

Fellows also discussed the philosophical purpose of education in the first place. Considering the University as a top-tier research institution, some Fellows wondered whether the educational resources and priorities here could prepare students for the workforce in the private sector, or if they more heavily learn toward preparing students for graduate education. In response, other Fellows remarked that undergraduate education has been a major priority at the University for some time, and that there is a mutually beneficial relationship between increasing the world of knowledge through research and in excellent teaching for undergraduates.

In examining the priorities to consider as to what is gained by undergraduates from their education here, many Fellows agreed that the University primarily teaches students how to think critically. Learning how to adapt and thrive in the real world was an attribute commonly cited as one which most all students gained from their experience, and one which proves essential regardless of field of study or career path. Along this line, Fellows suggested ways to capitalize on this 'critical thinking skill' in the arena of undergraduate education.

Some Fellows noted a need for 'citizenship education' in the undergraduate curriculum here, where students would learn how to participate and engage in discourse within a broader, more diverse community. Fellows pointed out a severe lack of opportunities available for students at the University to engage in such discourse. Fellows noted that incoming students' idea of Berkeley as an institution ripe with cross-cultural dialogue and understanding is not the case in reality, and many then urged the Fellowship to think of ways to make this idea a reality by bringing awareness to our respective communities.

In evaluating current efforts of undergraduate education reform, Fellows pointed out the Interdisciplinary Major as a solution which may offer promise of a less rigid and more well-rounded curriculum. However, such programs often make class registration difficult, as many upper-divisions have most seats saved for students declared in the major, leaving interdisciplinary majors on the waitlist.

The state of advising at the University was also addressed. The Advising Steering Committee within the office of the ASUC AAVP has been looking for ways to improve the advising system, and has heard a widespread need from students for “contextual advising,” where advisors would look at a student’s extracurriculars and other experiences in order to suggest more relevant and enriching courses to compliment the student’s education both in and out of the classroom. In addition, many Fellows remarked that there is no lack of resources here at the University, but students are left largely to their own devices in order to locate and seek out the resources for themselves.

Finally, the public identity of the University was discussed in regards to the priorities of undergraduate education. As Fellows asked how students can embody the public mission of the University through their education, some responded with a perceived obligation of students to get involved in local, state and federal government in order to advocate for the benefits of public higher education. Others responded by describing the responsibility of students to give back to the University after graduation, to ensure that accessibility remains a reality despite changing public funds toward the University.