BACKGROUND

September 28, 2012

Background on Naval Science Courses Offered through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC)

In response to a news media inquiry, Assistant Provost and University Registrar Chris Derickson has reviewed academic data between spring 2006 and spring 2012 for three courses offered in the Department of Naval Science – NAVS 201 (Leadership and Management), NAVS 301 (Naval Engineering or Naval Ships Engineering Systems) and NAVS 302 (Principles of Naval Weapons or Introduction to Naval Weapons Systems).

Enrollments in the 19 courses asked about are broken out by five categories – all students; neither current nor former student-athletes; all student-athletes; football players; and men’s basketball players – and displayed in this chart (http://tinyurl.com/calk6o8), along with the average grades for each class. (Enrollments are for each course; not unique students.)

The data showed average grades ranged between 2.88 (spring 2009) and 3.78 (fall 2006) on a 4.0 grade-point scale in NAVS 201 during the review period. For NAVS 301, the variation was between 2.69 (spring 2011) and 3.8 (spring 2009). For NAVS 302, average grades were between 1.93 (fall 2011) and 3.85 (spring 2006). (At UNC-Chapel Hill, an “A” equals 4.0, a “B” 3.0, a “C” 2.0, a “D” 1.0 and an “F” 0.0.)

Derickson concluded that variations in student grades over the six-plus-year period appeared to be attributable to who the instructor of record was for these classes. In Naval Science, the instructors are active duty officers assigned by and paid by the U.S. Navy or Marine Corps. Those instructors rotate through Naval Science at UNC-Chapel Hill (and other campuses) every two years.

During the six-plus-year period, eight instructors taught the three courses. Some instructors gave higher grades than others. In 2006 and 2007, for example, grades ran higher in NAVS 201, dipped in 2009 and increased starting in 2010. Grades dropped sharply between fall 2007 and spring 2011 in NAVS 301. The difference was most evident in NAVS 302, which posted a 1.73-point grade decline between spring 2006 and fall 2011.

These courses had meeting location and meeting times. They were taught in a lecture format. No independent study courses were offered.

About NROTC at UNC-Chapel Hill

All registered students at the University are allowed to take Naval Science classes. The Naval Science Department, part of the College of Arts and Sciences, offers courses in everything from naval history to leadership and ethics. (See the Undergraduate Bulletin for additional details,
Naval Sciences instructors actively encourage students who are not in NROTC to enroll in their classes. Any UNC-Chapel Hill student may earn a minor in Naval Science.

The relationship between the University and the Naval Science ROTC program is common with ROTC units across the country. The University provides a physical space (the Naval Armory Building; refer to http://afrotc.unc.edu/armory-history/), covers some utility needs and provides a small operating budget for office supplies and some services. Two University staff members provide support to the University’s three ROTC programs.

The federal government provides the books and materials for students who take the courses; students return those at the end of the course. The government pays the active duty officers who serve as instructors. The curriculum is developed by military headquarters and is standard among all NROTC units. The government also covers phone bills and equipment like a photocopier, as well as vans for transportation.

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