

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE  
ON  
EDUCATIONAL POLICY  
2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT**

**TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:**

The University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) met seven times in Academic Year 2016-2017 (including twice by videoconference) to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in [Senate Bylaw 170](#) and in the Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, and Research Units (the “[Compendium](#)”). The major activities of the committee and the issues it addressed this year are outlined briefly, as follows.

**State Budget Framework Initiatives**

This year, UCEP completed its work on several components of the June 2015 [budget framework initiatives](#) announced by Governor Brown as part of his May Revision to the 2016-2017 budget for the University. Over the course of this past year, the committee considered the issue of alternative credit, primarily through the use of Credit by Examination and the awarding of Advanced Placement (AP) credit, and the committee assisted with the Major Requirements initiative.

Credit by Examination

Last year UCEP members gathered information from their campuses about policies and practices related to credit by examination. Information about campus policies was put into a memo that was available to the committee for the May 2016 UCEP meeting. The issue was further discussed at this meeting, including that the credit-by-examination option is used infrequently across the campuses and that students need to have a very good understanding of their level of proficiency in a particular subject in order to take advantage of this mechanism. Members investigated the campus practices further over the summer, and considered if any of the restrictions on credit by examination should be removed and whether students should be encouraged to take this option. Based on this information, a draft report was submitted to the committee at the October 2016 meeting and approved. [UCEP’s final report on the use of credit by examination](#) was submitted to Academic Council and forwarded to the Provost in late October.

Advanced Placement Credit

UCEP had multiple, in-depth discussions about the awarding of Advanced Placement (AP) credit in spring 2016 and the consideration of AP credit was organized in terms of application to university requirements, departmental (major) requirements, and General Education (GE) requirements. Two main issues regarding reexamining AP credit were identified. The first issue was whether the general policy of requiring a 4 or above on AP exams for major credit is justified, particularly in foundational courses. The second issue was the differences in awarding AP credit for GE courses among campuses and how awarding AP credit, or not, aligns with the pedagogical goals and philosophies of the GE programs at the different campuses.

Before UCEP’s October 2016 meeting, members collected information from their home campuses about current policies and discussed the awarding of AP credit with academic advising staff. The committee also reviewed data on the average number of AP units among incoming freshmen. A supplementary report on AP credit and first-generation status was offered by Institutional Research, which revealed some equity questions of interest to local representatives for campus-level dialogue. A draft report was reviewed by the committee at the November 2016 meeting and approved. [UCEP’s final report on the awarding of Advanced Placement credit](#) was submitted to Academic Council and forwarded to the Provost in December 2016.

### Major Requirements

The budget framework initiative emphasized efforts to support student progress and improve time-to-degree and UCEP assisted the Provost's Office with the evaluation of Major Requirements across the UC campuses. Department faculty at all campuses were tasked with reviewing major requirements to determine whether the number of upper-division units required to complete a major can be reduced without compromising quality, with a goal of not exceeding one academic year's worth of coursework (generally the equivalent of about 45 quarter units). When it was determined that the requirements for majors could not be reduced, departments submitted rationales to the Provost's Office to justify not making changes. From October to February, UCEP reviewed a portion of these rationales in order to decide if the reasons for the required number of units were valid or if the justifications were not sufficient. The Provost's Office sent UCEP's written requests for clarification or additional details back to the departments which provided revised rationales that UCEP also reviewed. UCEP completed its work on this component of the budget framework initiative in February.

### **Innovative Learning Technology Initiative**

At the end of the last Academic Year, too late in the year to obtain comprehensive and meaningful feedback from campuses, UCEP received a set of policy questions related to the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative's (ILTI) online courses. ILTI wants to expand the use of online courses and policies established without online courses in mind may be impediments. This year, members consulted with their campus committees to gather input in response to the policy questions. At the March meeting, members discussed the input from the campuses as well as issues of broader concerns related to online courses such as underprepared students, differences between hybrid and fully online courses, the value of face to face time, multi-campus courses, and testing centers including how to test students who are not on physically on campus. A memo outlining the committee's feedback about the policies and describing UCEP's more basic concerns was submitted to the ILTI Coordinator in mid-June. UCEP's feedback will be discussed by the ILTI steering committee and it is likely that UCEP will be asked for guidance related to implementation of any new policies and procedures.

UCEP also spent time in March discussing possible definitions for "online" and "hybrid" in the belief that defining these terms will be helpful during future committee discussions about courses under the umbrella of ILTI. The members agreed to the following general guidelines: less than one hour per week in person would be an online course and more than one hour in person (where the faculty member is there for lectures or discussion, excluding office hours) would be a hybrid course. A course can be called online even if the students are required to take the exam in person at a specific place.

### **Student Led Courses**

In October, the committee was asked by the Chair of the Academic Senate to investigate current policies and practices for student led courses. This request came about as a result of questions from President Napolitano and some Regents about a UC Berkeley student-led course on Palestine. UCEP members investigated campus policies and procedures and discussed this matter in February. It was determined that student-led courses must go the established course approval processes at the campuses and that faculty are closely involved with them. [UCEP submitted a memo to Academic Council](#) in February which included brief descriptions of the practices at each campus.

### **Policy on Readmission of Students**

In an effort to clarify and centralize information, the Academic Planning Council asked UCEP to propose generic language for campus readmission websites about catalog rights for students who interrupted their education for various reasons and want to return to UC to finish their degrees. While the number of students who may be interested in returning to UC may be small, the goal is to create more consistent and complete information for them. The committee recognized the importance of distinguishing between the re-enrolling students in good academic standing and the re-admission of those who were not in good

academic standing when they left. UCEP also focused on reassuring and encouraging students with concerns about changes in the requirements for their majors. In May, the committee settled on language that emphasized working with academic advisors to develop a course plan that integrates the requirements stated in the catalog at the time of original enrollment with current course offerings. In the fall UCEP will help with reviewing the new language on campus websites.

### **General Education**

Chair Knowlton represented UCEP and the UC Academic Senate on the California State University System's (CSU) General Education Task Force at several meetings in the spring. The Task Force is primarily comprised of CSU faculty representatives and also includes a representative from the Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges. The Task Force is charged with examining and offering suggestions concerning general education programs across all CSU campuses. Chair Knowlton will continue to serve on the Task Force which will have additional meetings in the fall to produce a report. It is anticipated that UCEP will be invited to opine on the Task Force's report next year.

### **UC's Analytical Writing Placement Exam**

In the spring, UCEP had several discussions about UC's systemwide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE), which is one significant way to satisfy the UC's Entry Level Writing Requirement. The University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) oversees the AWPE but because several Senate divisions do not have Preparatory Education committees, it is likely that local education policy committees or undergraduate councils would provide input about this matter. It is also the case that both UCEP and the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools contributed to reviews of the exam, most notably in 2002. UCEP considered its role with Senate Regulation 636 and ELWR, affirming to focus on how these campus and system-wide writing competency policies relate to the success of matriculated students. This year, UCOPE requested a comprehensive analysis of the AWPE by UCOP's Institutional Research unit which will be completed in late August and shared with BOARS and UCEP for continued dialogue.

UCEP agreed that it should discuss the analysis and identified several preliminary questions for consideration next year. One question is how university credit is assigned to ELWR courses, with some campuses giving it "workload" credit (e.g. UC Davis) and others offering full university credit. How the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) is satisfied varies across the campuses and UCEP may want to consider what an appropriate balance might be between localized decision-making and system-wide guidelines. General writing proficiency, the appropriateness of the Entry Level Writing Requirement itself with maintaining baseline writing proficiency, the range of composition requirements in the first year, whether the AWPE is measuring what should be measured, and the impact on international students or students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields are a few of the issues that might be discussed in the coming year.

AWPE completion rates probably vary by campus, with some campuses having a particularly high degree of need to satisfy ELWR. A member commented that there is a significant issue with the exam as it relates to diversity. Students in underrepresented minority groups, particularly in the STEM fields, are impacted by having to take basic writing and math courses, so any data by major would also be valuable. The report from Institutional Research will be available for UCEP's review in the fall.

### **Other Issues and Additional Business**

In response to requests for formal comment from the Academic Council, UCEP also issued views on the following:

- Proposed Revisions to Senate Bylaw 182
- Proposal for UCI School of Nursing

UCEP touched on a variety of other issues related to the business of the Academic Council, Academic Assembly, ICAS, and the work of campus Committees on Educational Policy/Undergraduate Councils.

### **UCEP Representation**

UCEP Chair Barbara Knowlton represented the committee at meetings of the Academic Council and the Academic Assembly. Chair Knowlton also participated on the Provost's monthly budget briefing teleconferences and the Academic Planning Council. Vice Chair, Ed Caswell-Chen attended several ICAS meetings. Finally, UCEP was represented by John Tamkun (UCSC) and Stephan Miescher (UCSB) on the UC Education Abroad Program Governing Committee.

### **Committee Consultations and Acknowledgements**

UCEP benefited from consultation and reports from Aimee Dorr, Provost and Executive Vice President, UCOP; Pamela Brown, Vice President for Institutional Research and Academic Planning, (IRAP); Todd Greenspan, Director, Academic Planning, IRAP; Kimberly Peterson, Manager, Academic Planning, IRAP; Ellen Osmundson, ILTI Project Coordinator, UCOP; and Steve Handel, Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions.

In addition, UCEP consulted the Academic Senate chair and vice-chair, who updated the committee on issues facing the Academic Council and Senate.

Respectfully submitted,

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