

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION (UCOPE)  
ANNUAL REPORT 2003-04**

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

The University Committee on Preparatory Education held two meetings during AY 2003-04 to conduct its business with respect to its duties outlined in Senate Bylaw 192. Committee activities engaged in and issues that were considered this year are outlined briefly, as follows:

**Senate Bylaw 192. Preparatory Education.** As a result of actions taken by the Assembly last year, this year the Senate Chair and Vice Chair were added to UCOPE's membership as *ex officio* nonvoting members. Also, UCOPE's amended and expanded charge now includes advising on "the language needs of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds." Next fall UCOPE will include a Vice Chair position from within its membership of divisional representatives.

**Name changes for writing exam and writing requirement.** The former Subject A examination is now named the University of California Analytical Writing Placement Exam, and the former Subject A Requirement is now named University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement, as proposed by UCOPE and UCEP in 2002-03, approved by the Academic Council and passed by a special Assembly E-mail ballot in February 2004.

**Writing Examination Administration.** Pursuant to its charge of oversight of standards for administering UC's writing examination, UCOPE received updates and discussed with its regular consultants from UCOP Student Academic Services many writing exam-related issues, including competing of bids for the exam administration contract, concerns about exam fee increases, and preliminary electronic testing models and electronic scoring alternatives being considered as possibilities for future efficiency and/or cost-savings. UCOPE members share concerns about the cost of exam administration, including the significant costs associated with the annual exam reader weekend; however, the Committee deems the reader sessions to be important for norming process and for programmatic accuracy and consistency, and favors retaining these sessions. UCOPE also favors retaining (for an indefinite period) existing hard copy readings simultaneously with any new pilot electronic exam reading or scoring that might be adopted in the near future.

**2004 Writing Examination Essay/Prompt Selection.** UCOPE completed its annual selection of the essay/prompt to be administered in the 2004 Subject A examination [Note: the former exam name was used because booklets had been printed well in advance of Assembly approval; however, the new exam name will be used hereafter] by accepting unanimously one passage from among a selection of six passages presented by Subject A Examination Chair George Gadda that were selected previously by the Subject A Examination Subcommittee. This exam essay/prompt selection is a confidential committee action.

**2004 Subject A Examination Passing Standard/Norming the Subject A Examination.** UCOPE members discussed pretest essays provided by the Subject A Examination Committee Chair and agreed unanimously on all pretest essay scores assigned by that Committee. Norming sets a pass/fail standard that is used by readers in scoring exams.

**Collection of data on how students satisfy UC's writing requirement.** It is difficult to retrieve and separate data on how students satisfy the writing requirement, since there are multiple ways to do this. It is thought that all the ways in which a student satisfies the requirement should be reported, as well as the student's success in subsequent coursework that requires writing. The main question is whether students are placed correctly in writing/English courses so they can function. There is no systemwide policy on how many times a student may repeat a course until a passing grade is achieved, nor data on the effect on GPA of including both non-passing and passing grades.

**Honors credit for Standard Level International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses in writing/language arts.** UCOPE did not come to a conclusion or make a recommendation on whether a score of 5 in the Standard Level IB exam is acceptable for satisfying the UC Entry Level Writing Requirement, as is the score of 5 in the Higher Level IB exam. A subcommittee was charged with reviewing materials and drafting a recommendation for the Committee to consider by E-mail. This awaits receipt of additional information to be sent from IB.

**English as a Second Language (ESL) Subcommittee.** A consultant from the ESL Subcommittee will attend UCOPE meetings to participate in discussion and consult when UCOPE reviews essay prompts and selects essays and to advise on other ESL issues and language diversity issues, to present the ESL perspective and a report from any ESL Subcommittee meeting. UCOPE would like to see ESL as well as writing expertise among its membership; however, only a few Senate members systemwide are involved in ESL programs.

ESL Subcommittee held one meeting this year; ESL Subcommittee Chair Jan Frodesen (who also serves on the IMPAC Project ESL Subcommittee) reported on its deliberations to UCOPE. Individual campus reports on ESL issues, enrollment trends, program achievements and developments, and problems and concerns were provided. ESL Subcommittee's scope includes both lower and upper division undergraduate students and also those who teach undergraduate students (including TA certification). The ESL Subcommittee is concerned about a growing population of students (called Generation 1.5) who have been educated in the US and whose families speak a language other than English at home, who exhibit writing difficulties and need special attention from writing program courses. Their special needs are being discussed throughout higher education systems and on the national level. ESL Subcommittee remains concerned about outsourcing ESL courses to Community Colleges. While many Community College programs are well articulated with the UC ESL programs, courses with variable quality and unworkable high enrollments remain in some colleges. Students seem quite adept in

seeking these out and circumventing the system. Just how substantial this problem may be should be evaluated by IMPAC, with possible safeguards suggested.

**Class Size for Writing Classes.** UCOPE wrote an advisory to the Academic Council [5/21/04] on Class Size in the UC system. Its report addresses and provides information on national standards on writing class sizes, data on comparison institutions, and recommends a cap of 20 students for first year writing (the national standard), and no more than 15 students for basic writing. UCOPE emphasized the importance of maintaining and monitoring this standard as a budgetary priority. At UCOPE's request, the issue of class size was referred to UCEP.

**Math competencies and evaluation of mathematics placement practices—campus practices.** UCOPE received reports from its campus representatives on how math placement is handled at the campus level. It is difficult to obtain individual campus information. Additional campus numerical data about test use and cutoffs (adjusted) would be useful to have. Most campuses administer a math diagnostic test (e.g., MDTP); however, the passing grade is different on every campus, as are the courses that students are assigned to meet math requirements.

**Additional business.** UCOPE received and discussed the following reports that are outside its specific charge and duties:

- Report of the International Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Literacy Panel, "Digital Transformation, A Framework for ICT Literacy" from Educational Testing Service.
- iCampus MIT Online Assessment Tool (iMOAT)—part of a preliminary examination of the possibility of electronic administrative work for writing exams in the future.

**UCOPE Representation.** UCOPE was represented on additional Committees, Task Forces and Work Groups this year, including ICAS, and ICAS ESL Subcommittee. UCOPE Chair Arvan Fluharty was a member of ICAS, attended an IMPAC meeting, and also sat in on an IMPAC ESL group session. UCOPE approved slates of members of the ESL and Subject A Subcommittees (to be completed where vacancies occur). The Subject A Subcommittee will discuss a name change that will better reflect changes in writing exam and writing requirement names.

**Acknowledgement.** UCOPE benefited from regular consultation and reports from the following consultants: George Gadda, UCLA Writing Director and Chair of the Subject A Examination Committee; Susan Wilbur, Director of Undergraduate Admissions; Jeanne Hargrove, Subject A and High School Articulation Coordinator, Student Academic Services; and UCOPE's ESL Subcommittee Chair Jan Frodesen, who is an Academic Senate member from UCSB. UCOPE also consulted with Academic Senate Vice Chair Blumenthal on issues facing the Senate this year and Academic Council Executive Director María Bertero-Barceló on Senate office procedures and Committee business. UCOPE thanks Lecturer M. Cecilia Freeman (UCSC) who represented the ESL Subcommittee at one UCOPE meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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