

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION (UCOPE)  
ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006**

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

The University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) met twice during the 2005-2006 academic year and pursued matters related to its bylaw, Senate Bylaw 192. As indicated in SBL 192, UCOPE is charged with advising the President and appropriate agencies of the Academic Senate on matters related to preparatory education, including the language needs of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, supervising the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (UC-ELWR), and establishing Universitywide standards for the University of California Analytical Writing Placement Exam (UC-AWPE). This report highlights the committee's activities and accomplishments from the 2005-2006 academic year.

**Impact of New Admissions Testing Requirements on the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (UC-ELWR) – The New SAT and the ACT Writing Components**

In response to modified nationwide standardized test evolution, UCOPE continued its discussion of the impact of the new SAT examination and the new writing component of the ACT examination. UCOPE members set the passing score for the UC-ELWR under both the revised SAT and ACT examinations at its January 2006 meeting. UCOPE will monitor the impact of the changes in the nationwide tests and their impact on the UC-ELWR.

In addition, UCOPE engaged in extensive discussion of the Advanced Placement (AP) examinations that satisfy the ELWR, articulating concerns about the passing score of "3" given the expanding number of exam-takers. With the assistance of its consultants, UCOPE will review AP scores vis-à-vis student success in the upcoming year.

**Revision of Senate Regulation 636**

UCOPE is considering a simplification of Senate Regulation 636, which empowers UCOPE to set the passing scores for satisfying the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (UC-ELWR) by taking national standardized tests such as the SAT, the ACT, AP examinations, and the International Baccalaureate Examination in English. Vice Chair John Eggers and consultant George Gadda are examining how SR 636 may best be amended, and they will report their findings to the 2006-2007 membership at its next meeting.

**Recommendation on Class Size for Writing Classes**

UCOPE continued its work to lower the maximum class-size of entry-level writing classes. Previously, UCOPE submitted a report to the Academic Council in June 2005, "Bringing Writing Class Size in Line with National Standards," which the latter endorsed at its July 2005 meeting. The report responded to the Academic Council's August 2004 request for data from UCOPE on the efficacy of writing instruction vis-à-vis class size. The issue first arose when UCOPE proposed in May 2004 that the class size for all

University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (UC-ELWR) classes, and classes designed to enable student to complete the UC-ELWR, should be capped ideally at 15 students, but in practice at no more than 20 students. UCOPE learned that the cap on class sizes for UC-ELWR classes at all campuses except Berkeley and San Diego was out of line with the national standard of no more than 15 students for basic writing classes, and was also out of line with caps on writing classes at the University of California's comparison institutions.

UCOPE held that although the University of California faces difficult and uncertain budget constraints, the Office of the President's projected costs for capping writing classes is not unduly burdensome. Nonetheless, the Provost's Office in spring 2006 voiced the concern that "while conduct of courses is the responsibility of the Senate, class size is a budget item as well as an academic policy issue...." Consequently, the Academic Council in July 2006 referred the matter back to UCOPE and the University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) with instructions to re-present the proposal in the form of a new Senate Regulation to guide campus implementation and to solicit from the campuses updated funding and implementation data. UCOPE will revisit this matter at its next meeting.

#### **Possible Systemwide Entry Level Mathematics or Quantitative Research Skills and Methods Entrance Requirement**

In December 2004, the University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) proposed a collaborative effort with UCOPE regarding the possible development of a Systemwide Entry Level Mathematics or Quantitative Research Skills and Methods Entrance Requirement, analogous to the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement. In response, a joint UCEP-UCOPE Subcommittee was formed to study the possible Requirement, poll the campuses regarding the interest in such a Requirement, and should there be significant interest, discuss the myriad details involved in instituting a new systemwide entrance requirement. The poll revealed that most campuses were satisfied with their present assessment system. No further action was taken by UCOPE or the joint UCEP-UCOPE subcommittee.

#### **Review and Selection of Essay Prompts for the 2006 University of California Analytical Writing Placement Examination (UC-AWPE)**

Pursuant to its charge, UCOPE received regular updates from its committee consultants concerning the 2006 UC-AWPE, including a review of the new vendor for the UC-AWPE, Pearson Government Solutions, and improved administration processes for the examination. UCOPE also completed its annual selection of the essay prompt to be administered in the 2006 UC-AWPE after an extensive discussion of possible essay prompts presented by the UC-AWPE Committee Chair and UCOPE Consultant George Gadda.

#### **Norming of the 2006 University of California Analytical Writing Placement Examination (UC-AWPE)**

UCOPE reviewed and discussed UC-AWPE pretest essays provided by the Chair of the UC-AWPE Committee and agreed unanimously on passing scores for them.

### **UCOPE-English as a Second Language (ESL) Subcommittee**

The UCOPE-ESL Subcommittee, with Chair Jan Frodesen, met once during the 2005-2006 academic year. The Subcommittee discussed and reported to UCOPE on the following topics: campus ESL issues, including the movement, realignment, or eradication of ESL courses on some campuses; the state of enrollment in ESL courses on campuses with ESL programs; procedures used in the placement and tracking of E-designated students; the special language needs of ESL transfer students; and the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) ESL Task Force report, which covered identification, assessment, placement, instruction and support services for ESL students on all University of California, California State University, and California Community College campuses. At the request of the Academic Council, UCOPE will review and make specific observations on and recommendations following from the ICAS ESL report at its next meeting.

### **UCOPE Representation**

UCOPE is represented on the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) by the UCOPE Chair, who is a regular ICAS member. The UCOPE Chair is also a member of the Analytical Writing Placement Exam Committee.

### **Acknowledgments**

UCOPE wishes to acknowledge the contributions of its committee consultants: Susan Wilbur, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, UC Student Academic Services; Jeanne Hargrove, Analytical Writing Placement Examination and High School Articulation Coordinator, UC Student Academic Services; Jan Frodesen, Chair of the UCOPE-ESL Subcommittee; and George Gadda, UCLA Writing Program Director and Chair of the Analytical Writing Placement Examination Committee, who has just completed his twentieth year of administering the systemwide AWPE. Their analysis, participation, and perspective have proved invaluable to the committee. In addition, the committee appreciates the exceptional work of the committee analysts, Michelle Ruskofsky and Kenneth Feer.

Respectfully submitted:

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