

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION (UCOPE)
ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007**

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

The University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) met two times during the 2006-07 academic year, and its English as a Second Language (ESL) advisory group met once. Both bodies considered matters within UCOPE's governing Senate Bylaw, SBL 192. According to SBL 192, UCOPE is tasked to advise 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, to supervise the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (UC-ELWR), and to establish Universitywide standards for the University of California Analytical Writing Placement Examination (UC-AWPE). This report highlights the committee's activities and accomplishments from the 2006-07 year.

Continuing Impact of New Admissions Testing Requirements on the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (UC-ELWR)

UCOPE continued monitoring the impact of the revised SAT and ACT examinations. Of particular concern was the inclusion in the standard SAT of the previously separate writing test. The issue, as presented by UCOPE's consultants, was whether the University should accept the highest exempting score from the writing section of the test, even if taken from a sitting other than that used to meet entrance eligibility. UCOPE concurred and communicated its recommendation to the Academic Council.

Also, UCOPE reviewed the number of additional class sections that would be needed should the University end its practice of accepting a score of "3" on the Advanced Placement examinations which satisfy the ELWR. Additional longitudinal data are necessary, and the committee, with the assistance of its consultants, will analyze that data in the coming year.

Lastly, the California State University (CSU) is implementing an Early Assessment Program (EAP), which consists of an additional battery of test questions placed at the end of the state high school exit examination. It is thought that CSU will learn where students can be placed based on their performance on the EAP. When more data are available, UCOPE will investigate whether the EAP could be used by UC as well.

Revision of Senate Regulation 636

UCOPE presented to the Academic Council an amendment designed to simplify Senate Regulation (SR) 636, which governs the ELWR. In the extant version, specific standardized tests are listed by name and certain subsections are redundant. With the assistance of consultant George Gadda, an amended SR was drafted and endorsed by the committee. This proposed amendment is currently being reviewed by local and systemwide Senate bodies.

UCOPE concurrently presented to the Academic Council an amendment to SR 636 which would “cap” ELWR class sizes at 20 students per section. This proposal comes after much hard work by previous UCOPEs, their consultants, and their analysts. In June 2005, UCOPE submitted to the Academic Council a report entitled “Bringing Writing Class Size in Line with National Standards,” which the latter endorsed at its July 2005 meeting. The report was in response 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 UC-ELWR classes, and classes designed to assist students to complete the UC-ELWR, should be capped ideally at 15 students, but in practice at no more than 20 students—a policy which would parallel both the national standard and practice at UC’s comparison institutions.

UCOPE posited that although the University faces uncertain budgetary constraints, the Office of the President’s projected costs for capping writing classes is not unduly burdensome. Still, the Provost’s Office, in spring 2006, indicated that the matter was one of “academic policy”, not just budget, and therefore was in the purview of the Senate. Consequently, the Academic Council asked UCOPE and the University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) to present supporting data on the issue, including an amendment to codify the national standard at UC. This amendment is also being reviewed by local and systemwide Senate bodies.

Revision of Senate Regulation 761

The process of amending SR 636 called into question the validity of some passages within SR 761, which governs baccalaureate credit for remedial classes. Specifically, SR 761 included a reference to an outdated legislative ruling, LR 2.85. After consultation with the University Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction (UCR&J), it was determined that the retention of reference to LR 2.85 was an error since it had been superseded by a 1996 amendment to SR 761. Consequently, the reference has been removed.

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

In accordance with its charge, UCOPE regularly reviewed the implementation of the UC-AWPE via updates from its consultants. In particular, the committee heard how the new vendor, Pearson Government Solutions, initiated improved administration processes. UCOPE also selected the essay prompt to be used in the 2007 UC-AWPE administration; the selection is an annual occurrence and follows extensive deliberation of several prompts introduced by UC-AWPE Committee Chair and UCOPE Consultant George Gadda.

Norming of the 2007 University of California Analytical Writing Placement Examination (UC-AWPE)

UCOPE reviewed and discussed sample essays written in response to the selected UC-AWPE prompt and agreed on passing scores for them.

UCOPE English as a Second Language (ESL) Advisory Group

The UCOPE ESL Advisory Group met once during the 2006-07 academic year, and Group Chairwoman Jan Frodesen presented highlights of their deliberations on several topics: 1) Transfer students' GPAs are not indicative of success with academic English at UC; the success of California Community College (CCC) transfer students is of special concern; 2) For degree-seeking international students, the advisory committee has concerns over the minimum TOEFL scores acceptable for admission; 3) UC Education Abroad Program's reciprocal students' ESL needs are not being adequately addressed by the University. This concern is compounded by the difficulty involved in parsing TOEFL scores, student self-selection for additional English work, enrollment timing, and placement below UC's ESL capacity to redress; and 4) A follow-up report on the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) ESL task force report focusing on ESL tutorial support at UC was presented.

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 Examination Committee.

Acknowledgements

UCOPE gratefully acknowledges 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; George Gadda, UCLA Writing Program Director and Chair of the Analytical Writing Placement Examination Committee; and Jan Frodesen, Chair of the UCOPE-ESL Advisory Group, as well as UCOPE Vice Chair. Their opinions, presentations, and perspectives have significantly aided the committee in its work. Also, the committee appreciates the work of its analyst, Kenneth Feer.

Respectfully submitted,

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