

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

During the 2013-14 academic year, the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) met twice and the UCOPE-EMS (English for Multilingual Students) Advisory Group met once. Both groups considered matters in accordance with their duties as set forth in Senate Bylaw 192, which states that UCOPE shall advise the President on matters relating to preparatory and remedial education (including the language needs of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds); monitor and conduct periodic reviews and evaluations of preparatory and remedial education; supervise the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement; monitor the development and use of placement examinations in mathematics; and work with BOARS to communicate these standards to all high schools and colleges in California.

A summary of the committee's activities and accomplishments follows below:

Review and Selection of Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) Essay Prompts

Under the leadership of consultant George Gadda, UCOPE members selected the essay to be used in the 2014 UC-AWPE administration, in accord with Senate Regulation 636B.1. This annual event involved UCOPE members reviewing sample essays to ensure that norming procedures used in evaluation of the exam would be consistent with SR 636A and SR 636B.1. Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions, reported that the program is expected to remain in good financial health. The exam revenue will continue to slowly drop as the number of test takers with fee waivers slowly rises. Income last year was down \$30K from the previous year. The number paying the full fee is still under 50% but it is not decreasing rapidly. It was noted that over 4000 exams were given on campus this year, up from 3600 the year before. The number of exams has gone up as expected with the increased focus on international students.

Transfer Issues

In November, President Napolitano announced the formation of a team charged with recommending ways to both raise the number of students who transfer to UC from community colleges and improve their success at the university. The team was led by Provost Aimée Dorr and co-chaired by Judy Sakaki, UC vice president of student affairs, and George Johnson, chair of UC's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools. It included the chairs of UCOPE and UCEP, a former transfer student, and a number of campus leaders in transfer services across the system as well as key individuals at UCOP who would conduct research and implement the plan. The team was divided into four areas: admissions and articulation, outreach and preparation, transitions and orientation and enrollment growth and impact. Chair Frank briefed the committee on the team's progress and the team's report "Preparing California for its Future: Enhancing Community College Student Transfer to UC" was presented to the Regents in May. UCOPE will monitor the implementation of the team's recommendations.

AP Credit

Last year, UCOPE surveyed the campuses to see if there is uniformity in following Senate regulations in terms of the writing requirement. The regulation requires campuses to count SAT, AP and other tests towards the satisfaction of the Entry Level Writing Requirement even if the students have failed the AWPE. UCOPE found that AP scores were appropriately used on all campuses to exempt students from lower division writing requirements that satisfied the ELWR. However, the committee was concerned that some of the campuses reported exempting students from other non-ELWR and upper division writing courses. The committee agreed to investigate this matter with UCEP and Chair Frank discussed this matter with the Educational Policy committee in April and May, and UCEP agreed to take the lead on this

matter. A draft memo was approved by UCOPE and UCEP and forwarded to BOARS in June for feedback.

English Content Expert Workgroup

The International Baccalaureate (IB) English language exams used to satisfy UC's Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) were changed in 2013. UC was initially notified that only the names of the exams were changes. However, the campuses eventually became concerned about whether there were more substantive changes. A content expert workgroup was formed at the request of UCOPE and BOARS to review the exams. UCOPE was asked by Undergraduate Admissions Director Michael Trevino to consider whether the IB English Language Exams qualify for fulfillment of the ELWR. The new exam is called Language in Literature in the IB. It is not clear whether this new exam will be as demanding as the literature exam and UCOPE hopes to review more samples before making a determination. UCOPE provided the Undergraduate Admissions Department with a memo stating that this new exam counts for the ELWR and nothing else, and that UCOPE accepts the old IB 1A as equivalent to the new IB literature. The memo additionally stated that these IB scores should not be utilized for the satisfaction of other lower or upper division composition courses on the campuses. The memo noted that UCOPE and UCEP will have future discussions regarding the appropriate use of student AP scores beyond satisfying the ELWR. Finally, UCOPE will consider requesting data to review at some time between now and next year to see how the students are performing.

SAT Changes and BOARS/UCOPE/UCEP Statement

In March the College Board announced major changes to the SAT, including a substantial revision to the writing test that was added in 2005 in the last major overhaul of the admissions test. UCOPE reviewed information about proposed changes specific to the SAT English language exam which are to go into effect in about two years. The essay will be optional and two other components of the SAT will be changed. UCOPE discussed previous changes to the SAT and various writing tests over time and it is hoped that there will be opportunities for UCOPE to critically evaluate what is now proposed. UCOPE may have to decide whether to mandate the writing part of the test as part of the score that will be considered as part of the ELWR satisfaction or to go with the two parts and allow the essay score to be added if the student takes it. There is a question about how useful this type of exam is as a general stand in for more general UC expectations of what students will be able to do.

The committee discussed concerns about how the SAT will be scored. UC faculty may find it challenging to know how to interpret the new scores. Faculty will not know what the curve is and useful information will not be available to examine until this exam is put in place. UCOPE looks forward to having the opportunity to review data on the new SAT. Finally, UCOPE may consider meeting with the College Board in the next academic year. To prepare for that discussion, several committee members will draft a series of questions for the College Board including asking about how it will be scored.

Validation of AWPE

UCOPE has previously discussed whether there should be some effort to validate the AWPE in terms of considering what it assesses, how well it does this assessment and if it assesses what UC wants it to. Such a validation has not occurred since the AWPE was designed in the 1980s. AWPE is an assessment for placement that serves specific functions. It is one approach to doing this work but UCOPE has an opportunity to consider the alternatives. The goal is to have information available in time for the committee's January meeting. Several members of UCOPE agreed to investigate the issue of validation, in consultation with the divisional BWP directors.

EMS Advisory Group

As the members noted last year, there has been a change in the student population and instructors have suggested anecdotally that the international students have different needs. Several group members agreed to work together to identify and recommend best practices for things like support services or curriculum. The Advisory Group resumed its discussion about a multitude of preparatory and assessment issues for

the new demographics to which the divisions need to respond. Three members of the group agreed to revisit its earlier white paper and write a preliminary new version for next year with recommendations for best practices for assessments. The group would like to explore whether one campus could develop something that could be used by other UC campuses. Members of the Advisory Group also intend to work on issues related to assessing students' oral skills as well as possible recommendations for providing English language support services to transfer students.

UCOPE Representation

UCOPE Chair Ross Frank represented the committee at meetings of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates. Chair Frank also participated on the President's Transfer Action Team.

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