

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

During the 2014-15 academic year, the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) met twice and the UCOPE 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 (ELWR); monitor the development and use of placement examinations in mathematics; and work with the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (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 2015 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. UC expected to test about 15,000 students at the May 9<sup>th</sup> administration. The number of students paying the full fee without a waiver or reduction continues to drop slightly, down from 48% in 2013 to 45.4% last year. The decrease in those students paying the full fee is slowly having an impact on the resources for the program. Currently, the program is in good financial shape. The increase in fee waivers and available revenue will be carefully monitored in order to avoid any surprises. At the April meeting, under the guidance of AWPE Committee Chair Gadda samples of student exams were read and calibrated in advance of the May administration.

**UC Systemwide Math Diagnostic Test**

This issue came to UCOPE in 2013 from UCSD and the Math Diagnostic Testing Project. UCLA had used the MDTP test for many years but wanted to eliminate the paper exam and not require the physical presence of students. UCLA asked MDTP to develop the online exam and MDTP approached UCOPE's immediate past chair Ross Frank about potential interest in using the online test systemwide. UCLA is going through field testing of the online exam which will continue for about two more years. UCOPE will monitor the field testing at UCLA in the years ahead.

**ELWR/AWPE Task Force**

The UCI representative and Consultant Gadda reported on the work of the ELWR/AWPE Task Force in April. The group found that the AWPE is effective in screening for ELWR placements and is less effective for anything beyond that. A concern is that the current policy climate, and the rise of the Common Core and its assessments, could eventually result in an encroachment on UC's values in determining these placements. It is recommended that UCOPE should be much more diligent in managing the statistical information about reliability. The task force suggested that UCOPE might initiate campus participation in a study looking at the question of whether students in the subsequent course are identified by instructors as needing entry level writing. The study would then look back at how the students satisfied the ELWR.

The idea is to conduct a validity study to be overseen by a workgroup constituted with various kinds of expertise. These studies require significant campus participation so funding will be necessary in order to undertake this effort. Another option would be to find a researcher focused on this area who could publish the results. The questions UCOPE is attempting to answer need to be carefully defined. One basic question is whether there are particular populations of students, and means of satisfying the ELWR that are allowing under prepared students to fall through the cracks. Consultants from Undergraduate Admissions indicated that the request for the available data can be made to UCOP's Institutional Research Unit.

### **The New ACT Enhanced Exam**

In April, Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions at UCOP, consulted with the committee about a draft implementation plan related to the new ACT enhanced exam to be utilized starting September, 2015. The change is primarily to the writing component, which is called the "enhanced writing exam." In the past, UC has used the combined English writing score as a criterion to pass out of the ELWR, but the new ACT will have a different score, called the English Writing Arts. BOARS has already stated that for UC the essay is required. Additionally, BOARS has indicated this will only be used to fill the test requirement but no scores on the redesigned SAT will be used for clearing the English subject area or to calculate the statewide index eligibility.

UCOPE members agreed to adopt a position consistent with BOARS' regarding the ACT, which is that the current combined English writing and the new English language arts score would substitute for each other in the current cut off for the ELWR requirement and that for any student applying for for Fall 2016 admission the new SAT essay scores, will not be used for satisfaction of the ELWR. Subsequent to the introduction of the new SAT, UCOPE will review data from the exam. More information, including some data, should be available for the committee's Fall 2015 meeting.

### **Smarter Balanced Assessment**

UCOPE was joined by Monica Lin, Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions and Nina Moore, Executive Director of P-20, Teaching and Leadership, Department of Diversity and Engagement to discuss the development of a plan for faculty decision making on how UC will treat student scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessment. This assessment is currently being administered in California. UCOPE will eventually be asked to provide recommendations but no decisions have to be made at this time. The Office of the President has made efforts to support the transition to new assessments.

BOARS has been engaged in discussions about intersegmental decisions and statewide planning efforts to ensure that UC has a voice in this matter. A national research agenda is being developed for how Smarter Balanced scores align with long standing SAT, ACT and other exams. A UC specific study might be possible and UCOPE can contribute to the design of the research agenda. Next year, UCOP will provide additional information for UCOPE about the Smarter Balanced Assessment development and implementation.

### **AWPE Committee Chair and Chief Reader**

The committee's April 2015 meeting included a discussion about the retirement of UCOPE consultant, George Gadda, as lecturer in writing at UCLA and a plan for him as to continue as Chair of the AWPE Committee and Chief Reader for a period of up to three years. UCOPE submitted a memo to the Academic Council in July requesting that it endorse this proposed plan and the committee's recommendation that a search be initiated during this period to recruit a successor with the candidate chosen sufficiently in advance that he/she is able to "apprentice" for a year in order to learn the flow of the responsibilities as well as the difficulties and challenges of the position.

UCOPE will initiate and lead the search and will call upon the UC Council of Writing Programs to help identify and recommend to UCOPE leading candidates for appointment as Chair. UCOPE will have final approval over who is appointed to be the new Chair and Chief Reader. Once appointed, it is anticipated that the new AWPE Committee Chair and Chief Reader will need several years to develop the level of expertise required for the position. Consequently, UCOPE recommended that the appointment of the new AWPE Chair and Chief Reader Committee Chair and Chief Reader be offered a long-term contract after a probationary period. Finally, for the purposes of planning, UCOPE strongly recommends that campus Preparatory Education committees begin identifying and nurturing future leaders to oversee the administration of the systemwide AWPE. A specific plan for expanding this pool of individuals should be created.

The Committee on Preparatory Education was pleased that the Academic Council endorsed this transition plan on July 29, 2015.

### **EMS Advisory Group**

Chair Scarcella joined UCOPE by phone in April to report on this group's recent meeting. Influxes of international students at some campuses have been leveling off. The Group's activities include drafting a paper on support services for international students. Many members of the EMS Advisory Group are retiring and Chair Scarcella announced that Dana Ferris from UCD will be taking over as chair of the EMS Advisory Group.

### **UCOPE Representation**

UCOPE Chair Bruce Cooperstein represented the committee at meetings of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates.

### **Acknowledgements**

UCOPE gratefully acknowledges the contributions of these UCOP and campus consultants over the past year: UCLA Writing Program Director and Chair of the Analytical Writing Placement Examination Committee George Gadda; EMS Advisory Group Chair Robin Scarcella and all members of the EMS Advisory Group; Director of Undergraduate Admissions Michael Treviño; AWPE Coordinator Julie Lind; Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions Han Mi Yoon-Wu; Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions Monica Lin; and Executive Director of P-20, Teaching and Leadership, Department of Diversity and Engagement Nina Moore. The committee also thanks the numerous faculty members who, as alternates, kindly represented their respective campuses at UCOPE meetings this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Cooperstein, Chair (SC)  
Robert Newcomb (D)  
Sholeh Quinn (M)  
Benjamin Brecher (SB)

Caroline Streeter, Vice Chair (LA)  
Bradley Queen (I)  
John William Gary (R)  
Gabriel Elkaim (SC)

Mary Gilly ((I), Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*)  
Dan Hare ((I), Vice Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*)  
Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst