

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

**ACADEMIC SENATE**

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2015**

Attending: Bruce Cooperstein, Chair (UCSC), Caroline Streeter, Vice Chair (UCLA), Bradley Queen (UCI), Carrie Wastal (UCSD), Carol Miller (UCSF), Bill Gary (UCR), Michelle Fregoso (Undergraduate Student Representative), George Gadda (Assistant Director, UCLA Writing Programs and AWPE Committee Chair), Sholeh Quinn (UCM), Phill Conrad (UCSB alternate), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Manager of Admissions Operations Coordinator, UCOP), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP), Mary Gilly (Chair, Academic Senate), Dan Hare (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Analyst)

**I. Introductions and Announcements**

Chair Cooperstein welcomed members to the meeting and reviewed the committee charge. Members were reminded that the committee's discussions are confidential. The analyst explained the UCOPE listserv and recommended that the committee vote on adding the student representative.

**Action:** Committee members voted to add the student representative to the UCOPE listserv.

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

- *George Gadda, UCLA Writing Program*

AWPE Committee Chair George Gadda, reviewed the process for selecting the AWSE essay prompts, including related elements such as testing and pre-testing and administration.

Note: Meeting notes were not recorded for the UCOPE discussion in keeping with past practices specific to the committee's deliberation on this specific topic.

**III. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership**

- *Mary Gilly, Chair, Academic Council*
- *Dan Hare, Vice Chair, Academic Council*

Chair Gilly thanked the members for their service on UCOPE. The dynamics at the Regents meetings have changed since the governor regularly attends. The compliance office is looking at ways to combine the new sexual assault prevention training with the state mandated the two hour sexual harassment prevention training already required for faculty. One presentation to the Regents focused on the progress made on recommendations from the Commission on the Future. President Napolitano and Governor Brown will comprise a committee of two that will examine the governor's budget proposal for UC. The governor's budget proposed a four percent increase contingent upon no increase in tuition or fees and no increase in non-resident students. These discussions are expected to end in March. Faculty have received a letter about the sustainability plan which includes resources for any faculty interested in advocating for UC.

Legislation has again been introduced that would take away UC's autonomy. The community colleges are slated to offer bachelor's degrees at fifteen of their campuses and the law requires that the degrees are not ones offered by UC. The Senate is working diligently on the transfer issue. The AB 1440 degrees called for the community colleges to develop AA degrees with the CSUs. This has caused some unintended consequences for the CSUs because of the unit requirements. The AA degrees have become the main way transfer students consider getting into UC. Vice Chair Hare reported on the current status of UC Cares.

The Senate is doing what it can to make sure that any future changes to UC Cares are based on rational discussion.

**Discussion:** A member commented that UC will be better off if it is aligned with the AA degrees so students can more easily transfer. There are currently seventeen majors and these are limited to STEM field majors. A concern is that transfer students in the STEM fields are not well prepared. Vice Chair Hare emphasized the importance of streamlining the requirements for potential transfer students. If students satisfy IGETC, they will still be two years behind. It is politically beneficial for UC to work on this before the state begins mandating changes. The CSUs cannot require more than sixty units, which creates problems for students and the CSUs.

#### **IV. Standardization of the Awarding of Advanced Placement (AP) Credit Across the UC System**

Chair Cooperstein described the survey UCOPE conducted to assess how advanced placement credit is awarded by the campuses. This applies specifically to writing. The committee should discuss whether there should be standardization and whether it is appropriate to place students out of advanced courses. One question is how permissive the rules should be.

**Discussion:** A member asked if Senate Regulation 636 actually states that AP credit cannot be used to place students out of course work. The chair found that this policy does not have language prohibiting a campus from using the AP score to exempt a student from a particular course, so this decision is now left to the individual campuses. Regardless of how flexible the policy is, it is worth considering if this is a good or bad practice from the perspective of preparing students for the type of writing expected for university level work. The UCI representative pointed out that students at comparable institutions on the semester system have thirty weeks to satisfy the writing requirement while UCI students satisfy the same requirement in 20 weeks and UCI faculty are now concerned that students are not receiving enough writing instruction. UCI's international student population has spiked, necessitating multiple adjustments to the curriculum. The UCI representative, who was also a member of the ELWR/AWPE Task Force, has concluded that it is generally a good idea to not allow any students to place out of the lower division writing requirements.

UCLA has always used AP scores of (currently scores of four or five) to give credit for the course following the entry level writing course and changing the systemwide policy would have major resource implications for this campus. In the past, about 40% of UCLA's entering freshman had AP scores of four or five and did not take the first course past ELWR. The number of international students at the campus has become a factor and about 1/3 of the students are passing the first class past ELWR with AP scores. A small percentage of students submit IB scores. Since AP credit is used to place students out of classes in many disciplines, it is not clear why English should be treated differently. The representative indicated a change in this policy would be disruptive to UCSB. Consultant Gadda shared that AP credit was created to give highly qualified students a way to finish their programs more quickly and move onto more advanced work. AP credit was intended to go beyond a high school course and to really address the first year of college introductory work while still in high school. Chair Cooperstein proposed asking the local committee's to solicit feedback from the writing programs to questions whether a change in policy would overtax campus resources or retard students' progress toward a degree. This issue is complex for UCSD which has six undergraduate colleges, each having its own writing requirements. Two of the programs require students to take a two quarter writing sequence right away and writing is embedded in the core program of the other four colleges. These programs are distinct and UCSD faculty would not support a change in policy. Chair Cooperstein underscored that the question is whether UCOPE should be permissive and allow some campuses to use the AP to exempt students, or should UCOPE make a statement that every campus should follow the same practice so all students have rich writing and

experience and therefore campuses should not exempt students on the basis of AP exams.

One member strongly supports deferring to local campus autonomy and suggests that UCOPE should simply provide guidance instead of the language currently in the memo. The UCSB representative agreed to provide alternative language for the memo, and the memo will be co-signed by the UCOPE chair. The memo will indicate that concerns have been raised about the consistent use of the policy. It was suggested that campuses should be asked if they are aware of how AP credit is used and if the results of these policies have been investigated. The current draft suggests that how the campuses are using AP credit is wrong. Chair Cooperstein will meet with UCEP's chair to discuss revisions to the memo.

Vice Chair Streeter suggested using the UCSB response as a model for other campuses so that UCOPE can gather more information to help identify any common ground in the current campus practices. At least one campus uses an AP score of five to place students out of one upper division course. Chair Cooperstein proposed contacting the campuses that provided limited information with a request for additional details. A member asked if there is data that suggests that students who are given AP credit are less skilled than other students. UCOPE may encourage the campuses to examine their policies and practices. The analyst clarified that this matter was first raised by UCOPE last year and UCEP was asked to help with the investigation. Members expressed frustration about students' inability to write. One member indicated that many students submit personal statements which demonstrate poor writing skills despite high AP scores. The AP program is no longer elitist, which is a positive development, but it has grown so much in the past twenty years that there is now concern about the equivalency of the work. The AP courses are often now just thought of as regular high school courses. Also, the quality of AP classes differs by school but many high schools do not offer AP courses. Several years ago online AP courses were created in an effort to address this, especially for students in rural schools.

**Action:** The chair will draft a revised memo for the committee's consideration.

## **V. 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. The campus created an online exam that essentially plagiarized the MDRP, so UCLA then asked MDTP to develop the online exam. 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 take about two more years of field testing. It would be very difficult for one exam to be used to place students out of different levels of math. Chair Cooperstein will provide an update at the next meeting

**Action:** The chair will report on the UCLA online course at the next meeting.

## **VI. ELWR/AWPE Task Force**

The chair invited the UCI representative and Consultant Gadda to report on the work of the ELWR/AWPE Task Force. 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. UC may soon be asked to provide data especially in light of President Napolitano's expressed support for the Common Core.

Additional types of data that might be gathered are suggested in the report. It is important for UCOPE to

remember that more students satisfy the ELWR with means other than the AWPE than satisfy with the AWPE. Consultant Gadda outlined the opportunities students have to satisfy the ELWR before the AWPE. The AWPE is for many students the last opportunity to satisfy the ELWR if they do not have the AP or IB certification already. The task force suggests 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 needed entry level writing. The study would then look back at how the students satisfied the ELWR. A score of 680 on the SAT does not work well for international students. The next step is to gather more data about the ELWR. UC needs to regularly validate the exams.

**Discussion:** In the past more data was collected. About ten years ago, ETS provided a statistical summary. Consultant Lind indicated that UCOP's Institutional Research Unit may be able to collect this data. Consultant Gadda will be interested in seeing how well the new SAT test relates to other tests in terms of being a reliable predictor. Consultant Gadda stressed that the AWPE exam is specifically for UC faculty to use to determine the writing skills. The Smarter Balanced exam does not work as a predictor of the students' ability to do the work at UC. The committee was informed that high school students will be taking the Smarter Balanced exam in 11<sup>th</sup> grade (there is no 12th grade exam). If used for placement, such assessments would be certifying students readiness to go into UC courses on the basis of performance a year before. The Smarter Balanced exam is not currently being administered but there is a good deal of fear about attempts to impose it on UC.

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 would be needed to undertake this effort. Another option would be to find a researcher focused on this area who could publish the results. Manager Yoon-Wu indicated that the request for the available data can be made to UCOP's Institutional Research Unit. The questions UCOPE is attempting to answer should be defined. A basic question is whether there are particular populations of students for whom particular methods are not doing what the requirement is supposed to do. A goal would be to identify where students are slipping through the cracks, potentially to their detriment. It is important for faculty to learn about the pathways students have taken. Consultant Gadda recommends surveying instructors late in the course about who was or was not appropriately placed. Next steps are to explore how to conduct this or several studies.

## **VII. Executive Session**

No minutes were taken during Executive Session.

## **VIII. Consultation with the President's Office**

- *Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Manager of Admissions Operations Coordinator, UCOP*
- *Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP*

Coordinator Lind reported that the next exam is on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> (noting that it is always scheduled on the second Saturday in May), exam scoring is scheduled from May 24<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>, and results will be at the campuses the week of June 8<sup>th</sup>. The AWPE program is still self-supporting and the number of students not paying the full fee increases some each year. Students not paying the full fee went from 51.8% in 2013 to 54.5% last year.

No exam fee increases are planned at this point in time. The committee was reminded that UCOP released two RFPs and an RFI for the operations contract. UCOP is now in final negotiations with the successful bidder. The program's finances will be examined again once the contract is settled, which will include a fresh review of the fee schedule. There are discussions about lowering or restructuring the exam fee. The full fee is currently \$110, a little more than the cost of the AP exam. A portion of the students pay \$20 as a reduced fee and another portion have no exam fee. The operations contract should be resolved in the

next month or so.

The last exam was taken by 15,521 students. 7,600 students satisfied the requirement based on their performance on the AWPE and the pass rate was 49.3%. This is a slightly higher pass rate than in the past. UCOP is working on the legislative report sent to Sacramento annually and UCOPE will receive this at its next meeting. Manager Yoon-Wu reported that UC has received multiple inquiries from the Department of Finance about the University's remedial courses. Although it has been stated that UC does not have remedial courses, the Department is very interested in campus entry level writing courses. Coordinator Lind may be contacting writing programs to learn more of the specifics about the curriculum in these courses.

**Discussion:** The committee was reminded that Subject A was considered remedial until 1996. Remediation courses in mathematics were specifically defined well before a specific list of topics considered remedial for English was created. UC grants credit for these courses. The pass rate varies significantly from campus to campus but this data is not collected now. A number of things impact the applicant pool that make year to year comparisons difficult to make. Some campuses, such as UCI, have additional sorting mechanisms. Consultant Gadda indicated that the purpose of the AWPE is to create a standard measure of a particular kind of competence for everyone but he stresses that placement is determined locally by the course structure.

#### **IX. New Business**

There was no New Business.

Meeting ended at: 3:30 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Bruce Cooperstein