

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION  
ENGLISH FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS (EMS) ADVISORY GROUP  
MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2015

**Present:** Robin Scarcella, Chair (UCI), Margi Wald (UCB), Kathie Levin (UCI), Linda Jensen (UCLA), Liz Galvin-Lew (UCLA), Kelly Crosby (UCD), Kimberly Turner (UCR), Jan Frodesen (UCSB), Belinda Braunstein (UCM) (telephone), Sarah-Hope Parmeter (UCSC), Kimberly Helmer (UCSC), Jane Stanley (UC Berkeley College Writing Program Director), Dawn Takaoglu (UCD), George Gadda (Consultant, Director UCLA Writing Programs), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP) (telephone), and Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

### I. Welcome

Chair Wald reviewed the charge of the English For Multilingual Advisory Group to UCOPE and welcomed members to the meeting.

### II. Consent Calendar

**Action:** The agenda was approved.

### III. Campus Updates/Member Reports

**Berkeley:** More people sat in May for the exam and while the numbers are down, there is a dramatic drop in the number of students taking the class that fulfills the entry level writing requirement and the first half of first year writing. The campus does not have classes just for ESL students. The Berkeley International Office has been making an effort to support the international students. The member worked individually with graduate students on particular issues and has created a number of modules for this instruction. UCB was asked to pilot a pre-fall semester administration of the AWPE and 57 students took the test. A group was able to score the tests in 24 hours but the students were unable to meet with counselors the following day in order to adjust their schedules so there was a lot of work without much payoff. The division has a new interim dean who is not against assessments. It is unclear what the impact of President Napolitano's cap on international students for this campus will be. There has been a dip in tutorial support for one of their courses and it is not clear why students are having this problem.

**Discussion:** The 24 hour turn around to get the AWPE scores was very labor intensive but without the support of advising there is no point in the quick turnaround time. International students do not necessarily know that they can change their schedules based on their scores which is why they meet with their advisers. UCLA provides opportunities during the summer for international students to speak to an adviser.

**Los Angeles:** The campus has had a huge decrease in the number of students in the program. While this raised the question of what to do with the program's faculty, it also gave the program the opportunity to teach more electives which had not been offered in many years. A big change is offering oral skills classes for the first time since 1995 and the ability to offer electives has been significant. Many of the Chinese students have figured out that they should enroll in a community college first and enter UCLA as upper division transfer students. The reading course is intended for freshman but is filled with upper division transfer students.

UCLA departments now require a GPA of 3.9 and as a result there has been a huge drop in the number of transfer students in the program, from 97 two years ago to 19. In contrast, the number of graduate students increased this year. The decision has been made that if graduate students have a certain IB score those exams will not have to be read. The program taught more students in fewer courses which did help generate revenue. A number of people hired specifically to teach ESL are now also teaching in the broader program. The electives offered

during the summer do not have to be approved by the Senate because there is a "special subject" course number. UCLA Writing Programs hired ten lecturers last spring however only one is specifically ESL trained.

**Discussion:** Members discussed the need to plan for allocating lecturers as the numbers of international students varies from year to year.

**Davis:** The representative highlighted some of the data about the program. The online placement tool developed in house was used and the program conducted diagnostic tests. The tests found that students' skill levels increased significantly which required a shift in the curriculum. The program hired a number of new faculty this year. Because many of the students who indicated their intent to enroll did not end up enrolling, the ESL faculty are teaching in other places such as first year composition or upper division advanced writing. The curriculum for students is being evaluated. The international students are felt to be the least served and the program hopes to serve this population better. An in-house reader is being developed. The campus found that the majority of international students are economy majors. The summer program which was started a couple of years ago continues to grow.

**Discussion:** There was a question about authenticating the identity of the students taking the online test. There was a warning in advance that told students that if their diagnostic tests are not similar in style, the student will be taken to judicial affairs. The campus did not have to act on this with any students this year. The placement test has a directed self-placement component at the end and the correlation with the placement has been very accurate.

**Merced:** This campus has 130 international students including seven graduate students. The program hopes to add international students to the summer courses because these students do not pay extra fees. By 2020 the graduate student population is to grow to one thousand. A long range plan for serving these students will be developed. About 75 students take the AWPE and the campus still does not offer the AWPE in-house. With all of the programs available, all UCM undergraduates end up taking one writing course regardless of major. UCM does not have ESL and more supplemental writing instruction has been made available. Thirty-five percent of the UCM undergraduates speak a language other than English at home or who speak English and another language.

The writing center is serving students in writing 1 and 2 but will eventually grow to serve students in other programs. The tutoring program does not help with non-native speaker issues and students in need of particular help with grammar are not being served. The representative is the only person at the English Language Institute and she is also responsible for coordinating the summer bridge program. In 2016 the summer bridge program will be under the purview of the writing program which will free up some of the representative's time. A new dean of the graduate division is interested in offering more support for international students and is supporting the representative's work which is greatly appreciated.

**Riverside:** Two make up AWPE exams are offered in July and again in September when most international students come to the campus. The international students are found to have lower writing skills. A class on public speaking and orientation to college life does include a writing component. Non-native speakers who attended two years of high school in the U.S. are not as skilled as the international students. The class cap is fifteen and the dean provides the funding to keep the cap low. Students have up to five quarters to get through the basic writing class and the program gives them another opportunity to test out, but these students do not fare well. Many of these students are failing in other academic areas as well. Admissions is looking more closely at who is enrolled.

**Irvine:** The numbers of international students at the campus stabilized this year. The percentage of students speaking a language other than English at home has grown. The representative described the program's current staffing. The program found that the international students coming from an exam driven country do not focus on preparing the portfolios so the program has made curricular adjustments to address this. The program has used more unified rubrics so instructors have more standardization in scoring. Students are being engaged more in

reading. An instructor is assisting economics faculty with tips on teaching international students and they even tutor some of the economics students. A week long orientation will be developed.

**Santa Barbara:** The campus has seen growth in the number of immigrant students, not in the population of international students. The program does have a process where the students can skip levels if they attain a certain score and many of these highly motivated students are able to skip ahead. The enrollments of graduate students have remained steady. Most of the courses for undergraduates are funded by the Executive Vice Chancellor. The UCSB graduate division has instituted a policy that after 2015, non-resident graduate students will not have to pay the non-resident tuition.

The program has a problem with having enough instructors available. A pool of qualified instructors is trying to be identified but it is a challenge to find someone willing to teach just one course. In past years, tutors were available outside of class but this year the program was not given any tutors. The representative thinks establishing a writing center (separate from tutors) may be a solution to this problem. One campus has strict parameters for how tutors are utilized which makes it difficult for the program to involve them.

**Santa Cruz:** The program experimented with a week long orientation for international students but only 3-4 students would show up for a session. The program makes sure that the students' visa status remains intact. One college experimented by postponing the comp class until after the writing course and students fared better. An assessment process that looks at the core work of students in other courses compared to the program's expectations is being developed. A research component has been integrated into the curriculum. A series of four courses designed for EMS prior to Composition 1 is being proposed and the courses will not be writing heavy until the end. The program is also concerned about the students' connections to the community. The program is using more linguistic types of offerings.

#### **IV. Justification for Revisions to Bylaw 182: University Committee on International Education (UCIE)**

Committee members have the opportunity to comment on the proposed bylaw change for the systemwide Committee on International Education. UCIE assists with coordinating the study abroad program but it does not appear to do much related to language programs. The Advisory Group may want to find ways to support UCIE's work. Chair Scarcella suggests that the EMS Advisory Group may ask for opportunities to provide input or send a memo to UCOPE.

**Discussion:** The members who are lecturers are not included in the discussions about what support is needed for international students. Members of the Advisory Group who are not part of the Senate did not receive information about the proposed revisions directly. Reportedly at UCSB, Unit 18 lecturers are appointed to some Senate committees including the undergraduate council. Perhaps the Advisory Group could recommend that people from the ESL programs are included in various Senate committees, at least as consultants. In the past, UCIE focused primarily on EAP students and the revised bylaw will mean this committee will focus also on international students coming to UC.

It may be possible for lecturers to be more involved with the campus international education committees. There is some concern among members that UCIE is not aware of the Advisory Group. A member recommended asking for the EMS Advisory Group chair to be added as an ex officio member to UCIE. The proposed changes seem ambitious. Members asked for additional time to review the proposed revision.

**Action:** Chair Scarcella asked members to send comments to her by April 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **V. International Students and Support Services**

An initial draft on support services for students was created but the environment has changed enough that the Advisory Group may need to rethink the white paper states and what is requested systemwide. Writing programs are discussing how to view international students as assets. Assessment may be where the EMS Advisory Group

can play a bigger part. The Group could comment on whether everyone should take the AWPE and questions about eligibility for ELWR waivers. What is working and what is not working at the campuses to support students could be identified. The paper may focus on best practices.

**Discussion:** The white paper could start with an overarching discussion about globalization and viewing international students as assets. It was suggested that the paper describe the larger context before honing in on specific campus issues. The paper could address which services are sustainable. Members suggested and discussed a number of different categories to discuss in the paper. Professionalization and professional development should be discussed. There should be data collection to monitor progress on the program efficacy. There are no regular reviews of the ESL programs and academic reviews of these programs are recommended. Some campuses conduct satisfaction surveys of the orientations. The chair and UCB representative will work on outlining the categories and members will work on divide up the work.

## **VI. Writing Assessments: Placement Exams, Sit-Down Essay Exams, and Portfolio Assessment Issues and Concerns**

The Advisory Group has discussed developing assessment guidelines in the past. Topics have been revised to be extra culturally neutral and there has been a more careful examination of what students are assumed to know. The program has thought about the connection between what kind of language will be assessed and if the prompts will lead to that. The program has worked carefully to come up with clearer benchmarks. As the department expanded and the student body became more diverse, more norming is being done. Recently, the inter-rater reliability has been included. The program is discussing how to get the types of responses you want to assess while at the same time setting benchmarks and guidelines that lead to good inter-rater reliability. The prompts have been changed in an effort to limit the types of responses.

**Discussion:** The characteristics of the immigrant writers are different from the international students and this can be a challenge. Many immigrant students do less well with rhetorical writing. Members have an interest in electronic assessment systems. The Advisory Group discussed how test development is done at the campuses.

## **VII. Oral Language Assessments**

The UCSB representative will create a chart that will have information about each campus. A number of campuses have oral skills classes. Sample syllabi, summary information about the number of classes and whether they are upper or lower division courses will be posted on a wiki. The ways the exams are administered are different. UCSB is the only campus still conducting graduate student assessments. The proficiency of the international students has increased in recent years.

**Discussion:** Members agreed that it is important to find out exactly what the policies are and who established them.

## **VIII. Teaching California Students Who Enter the UCs Requiring English Language Assistance**

Chair Scarcella reported that California students at UCI are being admitted to a separate track. The chair would like all programs to find ways to identify students in need of language support and see how they are performing in composition classes. The focus is on students from California schools who have not received the language instruction. The campuses are doing different things and offering different types of support, and the Advisory Group should explore if enough is being done.

**Discussion:** It may be difficult for programs to determine if there is a language issue based on the data collected. The Advisory Group should request that campuses look at the California students and determine if they are being served. One approach might be to meet with the writing programs and ask them to report on the types of problems students are having. The transfer students are falling through the cracks in terms of getting the support they need. A member indicated that the number of California students that do not take the AWPE and at UCD

these students come from second language households. It was suggested that the EMS Advisory Group should send UCOPE a memo stating that the campuses should investigate if they are serving these students appropriately or not.

#### **IX. Analytical Writing Placement Exam**

- *George Gadda (UCLA)*

There was a survey last summer of people's experiences with and opinions about the AWPE and a report proposing further research that might be done was sent to UCOPE. Some respondents had reservations about the effect the exam has in settings where it becomes the primary means of satisfying the requirement at UCD and UCSD for example. Even if this is not policy, this will lead to an implicit focus of instruction on the timed writing exercise. The report suggests potential areas for further study. The focus might be broadened from the AWPE to the ELWR.

A possible next step is to survey instructors in the course following entry level writing and asking them about two-thirds of the way through the term to identify students who needed a preliminary course. Using this information, how those students satisfied the requirement is determined. This is how UCLA determined that the 680 on the SAT writing was not the predictor of competence for international students in the same way that it is for domestic students. The AWPE for May is in-print, about 115 testing centers have been set up and the reading has been staffed. There are about 140 readers. The UCSB representative has agreed participate on the test development team next year. Consultant Gadda announced that he will retire from UCLA at the end of this year but he will be recalled by his program to teach two courses. He will also continue as chair of the AWPE Committee and the chief reader.

**Discussion:** AWPE Coordinator Lind commented that UCOP is not opposed to moving the AWPE online and when this becomes more feasible or economical, this will be considered more seriously. UCOP is waiting to see how the Common Core is going to impact UC's ability to offer tests online.

#### **X. Membership of EMS Group, Term and Related Concerns**

Chair Scarcella wanted to discuss the appointment process for the EMS Advisory Group including identifying suitable alternates.

**Discussion:** Members would like to receive appointment letters that indicate the term of their appointment. It seems like there has not been a formal process at any of the campuses. Ideally, alternates should work with EMS students and have background in composition and applied linguistics. The people should be members of the Senate and continuing lecturers if possible. Chair Scarcella has chaired the committee for five years. According to the UCB representative, the UCD representative has reportedly expressed her willingness to chair the Advisory Group next year. The analyst will follow up on how the chair's appointment should be made. Last minute invitations to the meeting should be avoided and the analyst should be notified when an alternate will be sent. Some people have been told by administrators that they should attend the Advisory Group meetings.

#### **XI. Meeting Dates**

Chair Scarcella asked the members to consider the date for next year's Advisory Group meeting.

**Discussion:** After some discussion, members settled on April 29, 2016 for next year's meeting.

#### **XII. New Business**

There was no New Business.

Meeting adjourned at: 3:30 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams  
Attest: Robin Scarcella