

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2019

Attending: Darlene Francis, Chair (UCB), Debra Lewis, Vice Chair (UCSC), Deborah Willis (UCR), Jeffrey Gagnon (UCSD), Jesus Sandoval-Hernandez (UCM), Eric Prieto (UCSB), Bruce Cooperstein (UCSC), Madeleine Sorapure (UCSB BOARS representative), Matthew Stratton (UCD), Steve Clayman (UCLA) (videoconference), Brandi Catanese (UCB), Elena Kozlova (Graduate Student Representative-UCR), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Director, Undergraduate Admissions) (telephone), Jon Lang (AWPE Committee Chair), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions), Laura Hardy (Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions), Evera Spears (Associate Director, Advocacy and Partnerships, Undergraduate Admissions), Kum-Kum Bhavnani (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Announcements

Chair Francis welcomed everyone to the meeting and members introduced themselves and indicated the divisional committee to which they report. President Napolitano asked the Senate to study the use of standardized tests for UC admissions and Chair May has established a task force which will be chaired by the immediate past chair of Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools and will include Chair Francis. The Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) will be among the assessments considered and Chair Francis will ensure that the task force members understand that the AWPE is a placement exam. The analyst will send a poll to the committee to identify a date in late June.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: The October videoconference minutes were approved.

III. AWPE Review and Selection of Essay Prompts

In keeping with past practice, no minutes were taken during the review and selection of essay prompts.

IV. Consultation with the Academic Senate Office

- *Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Vice Chair, Academic Senate*

Vice Chair Bhavnani updated the committee on current issues facing the Academic Senate. The governor's budget for UC proposes a funding increase of \$240 million in ongoing funds to the University's educational budget along with one-time funding of \$153 million for other pressing needs. Much of the proposed budget is comprised of line items which limits UC's flexibility to increase faculty and staff salaries. The represented librarians have asked for their contract to include academic freedom but the Senate's position is that academic freedom cannot be negotiated. A small work group co-chaired by Provost Brown and Senate Chair May has been established to devise a policy that provides academic freedom protections for individuals with non-academic appointments. The Regents have established a Special Committee on Students' Basic Needs and Vice Chair Bhavnani will participate.

V. Consultation with the President's Office

- *Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Laura Hardy, Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions*

Coordinator Lind reminded the committee that UCOPE's immediate past chair issued a clarification last summer that the new SAT without the Essay could be used for purposes of satisfying the ELWR, but for admission, students are required to take the ACT Writing or the SAT with Essay. Admissions found that a small number of students who took the SAT without Essay and had a high score on the Evidence Based Reading and Writing section could have satisfied the Requirement. The new SAT is currently approved by UCOPE on a pilot basis until there is more data that will allow the committee to confirm if it will be a permanent method for satisfying the ELWR.

Since students were able to use the SAT to satisfy the requirement last year, the number of students taking the AWPE dropped from over 15k in 2017 to 13k in 2018. The pass rate was 48% in 2016 and 44% in 2017, but dropped to 33% in 2018. It is not clear if this is a one-time occurrence, if it signals a trend or if it is related to the cut score set for the new SAT. From one perspective, a low pass rate could suggest that the AWPE is being taken by the students who will need the most help with their writing. For the first time in ten years, UC was able to raise the reader pay rate to bring it in line with the AP reader pay rate. UCOP encourages campus faculty to participate as readers which is an opportunity for professional development and to interact with colleagues from across the campuses. Next year, UC hopes to increase the pay for the high school test site supervisors. The AWPE is always the second Saturday in May and there will be about 130 test sites across the state. Associate Director Hardy shared that UC expects only 4,500 more California residents to enroll in UC in 2019 over 2018.

Discussion: AWPE Committee Chair Lang reported that Graduate Student Instructors are rarely readers for the AWPE and most readers are lecturers from across the campuses. Some campuses send far more readers than other campuses. A request for readers is sent to the campuses and the campuses provide information about each individual's role on campus. A small number of readers are from high schools and community colleges.

VI. Satisfaction of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) at the Campuses

Most of the campuses provided information regarding how the ELWR is satisfied by students who have not passed the AWPE. The committee will need to distill the key points from this information in order to compare what is happening at the campuses.

Discussion: One goal is to understand the issues arising from the campuses processes and identify strategies that reduce negative outcomes for students. UCD is following the consensus of national experts on college writing on best practices and the sentiment at this campus is that the AWPE's continued use is only due to history and tradition. A study conducted by UCD characterized the way this campus has handled the ELWR as immoral especially with respect to vulnerable student populations. UCD still sends students to a community college to take an ELWR-satisfying course but the campus is conducting pilot programs to determine how to end this practices. It was agreed that outsourcing the ELWR courses to community colleges is problematic.

Information about the strategies campuses plan to use or to move away from should be shared. The point was also made that campuses are dealing with different student populations and these differences drive the local curricular choices. There is a question about the logic of having a systemwide exam and standard that is then handled locally. Members agreed that each campus should create a flow chart that clearly illustrates the process for satisfying the ELWR. The flow charts will be prepared in time for the April meeting. Administrators believe that outsourcing courses is a money saving strategy, so having information about the negative consequences of this approach is helpful.

Another issue is whether or not students receive units toward graduation for the ELWR-satisfying courses. The outsourcing and the lack of credit can contribute to students feeling stigmatized and

marginalized from their campus community. UCR writing faculty were able to make the case that the entry level courses are primarily preparatory rather than remedial and should have college level units assigned to them. UCSD's entry level writing courses are workload credit only but the campus is transitioning away from this. Many students who did well in high school writing courses overestimate how well they will perform in a UC writing course and later understand the challenges they did not anticipate. It would be helpful to have a publicly available document with an overview of the most current information about ELWR satisfaction at each campus as well as information about studies conducted by the campuses. Members are encouraged to also provide information about the resources available to students to help them satisfy the Requirement.

VII. Proposed Revision to Senate Regulation 636.E

The UCSB representative briefly described the division's proposal to change SR 636. E, which came about as a result of administrators concerns about the fairness of how transfer credit is granted. California Community College (CCC) students who transfer to UC are given credit for having taken a CCC course that satisfies the ELWR. However, a former UC student is not allowed to satisfy the ELWR with that same CCC course if he re-enrolls at the original UC campus. The revision will give campuses discretion to allow students to petition to allow the credits from the CCC course to count. The individual who reviews the petition would determine if the student left UC and enrolled in a CCC to get easy credit. The concern is related to students who temporarily leave UC for a valid reasons, but not for students who leave for academic reasons.

Discussion: Members agreed that the revised language is reasonable.

Action: The committee unanimously voted to approve the proposed revisions. The proposal will be submitted to Academic Council for consideration and eventually undergo systemwide review.

VIII. AWPE Specifications

UCOPE developed the specifications for the AWPE many years ago and the committee is asked to consider if the specifications should be updated.

Discussion: Suggested changes to the exam specifications will be shared via the listserv and discussed in April. Some specific suggestions discussed include ensuring students are told that it is acceptable to disagree with the point of the passage they are given. Members would be interested in seeing outcome data from writing programs. Members are interested in reviewing the literature on different placement mechanisms and the UCD representative will forward the information that has been gathered by colleagues at that campus. In addition to responding to written texts, some writing courses include exercises which ask students to respond to visual texts. Another strategy is for students to reflect on their experience with writing.

A member noted that research has found a weak correlation between timed writing tests and success in subsequent writing courses, and perhaps UC could administer the AWPE over the course of several days, giving students a chance to reflect. However, another member expressed concern that students would wait until the last minute to begin the exercise or it could result in a different type of anxiety for students who think their essay must be perfect. The committee should consider what students are reading in current freshman courses and what the expectations of faculty are. There are UC faculty who believe that the AWPE is an effective placement tool; any alternative would need to be shown to be as or more effective using widely accepted benchmarks. UC campuses have the leeway to experiment with additional placement tools after students have taken the AWPE to learn what might or might not work on a larger scale. A member remarked that instructors in disciplines outside of writing need to take responsibility for

teaching their students what is required for writing in that specific discipline. As a result of changes made to UCSD's writing program, the AWPE is regarded as a very effective placement mechanism.

Meeting adjourned at: 4 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Darlene Francis