

## UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

## VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2023

**Attending:** Eileen Camfield, Chair (UCM), Amanda Solomon Amorao, Vice Chair (UCSD), Sarah Freedman (UCB), Yuming He (UCD), Daniel Gross (UCI), Francois Blanchette (UCM), Po-Ning Chen (UCR), Brian Dolan (UCSF), Katherine Saltzman-Li (UCSB), John Tamkun (UCSC), Matt Reed (Analyst, Institutional Research), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Executive Director, Undergraduate Admissions), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

**I. Chair's Updates**

Chair Camfield reported that the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) continues to focus on the California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) which has been approved by the faculty senates of the California Community College, California State University and UC. ICAS has been updating its bylaws and has discussed Assembly Bill 3571-22 which relates to changes UC made to its Area C mathematics standards.

**II. Consent Calendar**

**Action:** UCOPE's October 27, 2022 videoconference minutes were approved.

**III. Entry Level Writing Requirement Task Force Report and Recommendations**

Academic Council sent the feedback from the systemwide review of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Task Force's report to UCOPE directing the committee to consider two specific issues: the language in the proposed revision to Senate Regulation (SR) 636 and the composition of the proposed ELWR Oversight Committee (EOC). The task force proposed a definition of the requirement that is related specifically to first-year Writing courses, but Council posited that the ELWR should prepare students for all first-year college courses. Chair Camfield remarked that it is a heavy lift to expect the ELWR to prepare students for all first-year courses and presented alternative language that aligned with the original recommendation from the ELWR Task Force.

In October, members agreed that "oversight" is problematic and could undermine UCOPE's authority, and the chair suggested that the EOC should be called the "ELWR Coordinating Committee" (ECC) to underscore its advisory role to UCOPE. During the last meeting, the members endorsed the recommendation that local agency be balanced by systemwide accountability through a group of expert stakeholders from each campus. The ECC will provide annual reports to UCOPE on ELWR and placement data from each campus on validity, reliability, fairness, and equity. Feedback from the systemwide review of the Task Force report indicated that ECC membership should include not only Writing program leads and Writing instructors, but non-Senate faculty, administrative staff, and other interested parties. Chair Camfield mentioned that there are logistical hurdles related to the size of the ECC as well as restrictions against uncompensated labor for unionized employees and proposed that the Council include one lead Writing faculty member or their designee from each of the nine undergraduate campuses, and others could be invited to join on an ex officio basis.

The term of service on the ECC should be renewable and long enough to ensure some continuity. The chair added language to the draft charge stating that refining the ECC's charge should be an iterative process engaged by its membership and informed by the questions posed in the Task Force Report to allow the group to be responsive to emergent needs thereby optimizing its relevance and efficacy. UCOPE will suggest that the ECC's first order of business should be reviewing and articulating the various

elements of the charge and developing a plan for implementation which will be brought to UCOPE for approval. Student fees should support placement on each campus and developing the most effective and least costly mechanism for writing placement should be part of the ECC charge. Responses to the report also raised issues that are larger than (although related to) the ELWR and approaches to placement that reveal deep ideological divides. It is recommended that the ECC members need to uncover those issues, use the principles identified in the ELWR Task Force report, and work to collaboratively resolve the issues in ways that best serve students.

**Discussion:** The committee discussed whether satisfaction of the ELWR is intended to prepare students for all first-year courses or if it is related only to first-year Writing courses. Part A of the regulation articulates the spirit and goal of the requirement, and Part B describes the specific activities used to help students acquire the skills that prepare them for their college education. One question is if any courses outside of Writing list satisfaction of the ELWR as a pre-requisite. Many faculty outside of Writing programs and especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields, are not aware of the ELWR. Faculty who do not teach Writing courses should be part of the conversation about what a well-prepared student's reading and writing looks like. A significant concern is that the definition should not set expectations that are unrealistic since the language of SR 636 will be a signal to students and faculty.

If UCOPE declares that the ELWR is designed to prepare students for first-year courses in general but then gives them a year to fulfill the requirement, it suggests that many students are not prepared to take the courses in their first two or three quarters that build on entry-level Writing courses and require satisfaction of the ELWR. This means students may be sent to courses for which they are not prepared and, rather than ensuring educational equity, it would set students up for failure. It might be better for the regulation to refer to "lower division" or "foundational" courses rather than first year to avoid the suggestion that students who have not fulfilled the ELWR before enrolling are already behind.

Faculty not involved with Writing programs should be advised that students do not necessarily satisfy the ELWR before coming to UC so faculty can think about the lower division curriculum they assign. The committee should consider how to create a bridge between what faculty in Writing programs do and what faculty who are not Writing specialists do in their courses where writing is a key component. A member expressed concern about diluting the mission of the ELWR if the committee suggests that it is related to everything a student might be doing when it comes to Writing because different departments will want their students prepared for their specific discipline.

Following additional discussion, members voted in favor of SR 636 referring to "first-year Writing courses" although the vote was not unanimous. In terms of who might read the regulation, the analyst noted that Admissions is required to report to the state legislature on the ELWR annually so the language is important. A member commented that external program reviewers will ask what is being taught in ELWR courses and there can be administrative and curricular consequences, making the language in the regulation a very serious matter. The analyst asked if "proficiency" should be defined and Chair Camfield pointed out that SR 636 indicates that a grade of C or better is required to pass an ELWR course.

Questions about the ELWR Coordinating Council include how members will be appointed and whether a member of UCOPE can also serve on this group. The analyst explained that the systemwide Committee on Committees should be involved with appointing the Senate faculty to the ECC, but it will probably be up to UCOPE members to provide the names of the Writing program people who should be appointed. A member remarked that, given the radical changes to how placement is done at some of the campuses, there should be evaluations by ECC and a way to provide feedback to help campuses do the best job possible. In addition, Writing program directors should be able to get together to share information and

coordinate with each other in ways that serve the greater good. One concern about requiring graduate students and Unit 18 lecturers to be included on the ECC is that they are not compensated for serving on such committees. Members voted to call the group the “ELWR Coordinating Council” and in support of the updates to the charge and membership.

#### **IV. UCOPE’s Charge - [Senate Bylaw 192](#)**

Chair Camfield asked members to comment on UCOPE’s purpose and for their thoughts about renaming the committee to the “Committee on Bridging Education” with the idea being that the focus is on bridging education from high school or community college to UC. A possible revision of the committee’s bylaw might be that UCOPE “advise the President and appropriate agencies of the Senate on matters relating to bridging education, including the language needs of students from diverse linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds.” The chair explained other potential changes to the bylaw that could be made, noting that it must be revised because it refers to the systemwide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) which has been eliminated. Preparatory education can be interpreted as including the general education courses students take at community college that will optimize their success at UC.

**Discussion:** The analyst indicated that the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), the Committee on Educational Policy, and the Academic Council Special Committee on Transfer Issues also deal with aspects of transferring to UC. A member proposed that, in addition to preparatory Writing and Math courses, the committee may want to identify other bridging courses such as UCM’s preparatory chemistry course. Once the committee agrees upon the changes to Senate Bylaw 192, UCOPE will send a memo to Council proposing the revisions and, if endorsed by Council, the proposal will undergo systemwide review. The revisions must ultimately be approved by the Academic Assembly. Chair Camfield suggested that the committee take up this matter again in April.

#### **V. 2017 Recommendations for the Revised SAT and ACT and the Entry Level Writing Requirement**

- *Matt Reed, Analyst, Institutional Research (IR), UCOP*

In 2017, UCOPE agreed to pilot a score of 690 on the SAT Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) section to satisfy the ELWR and the committee will consider voting to end the pilot and setting the score at 690. Analyst Reed explained that IR has updated a previous analysis of fall 2019 data for actual enrollees, not just students who submitted a Statement of Intent to Register. IR added the grades for post-ELWR Writing courses to look at the relationship between the ELWR-satisfying exam thresholds and performance in UC Writing courses. The analysis addresses the SAT threshold that has been piloted for the last few years but also looks at the other tests as a context for that decision. Overall, those who satisfy the ELWR prior to coming to UC do well in Writing courses, with more than 90% earning a B average in those courses and the average grade point average (GPA) is 3.5 although this varies by the method used to meet the ELWR. Students who satisfied the ELWR via the ACT English Language Arts exam have the highest average GPA in Writing courses at 3.69, followed by SAT at 3.61, Advanced Placement at 3.53, ACT English and Reading at 3.45, and AWPE at 3.32.

Analyst Reed described how the SAT score of 690 is holding up well relative to other methods in with respect to performance in Writing courses. Looking at these tests in general and in terms of how they relate to Writing courses, they explain a small percentage of variations in Writing grades. Systemwide, the AP, SAT and ACT tests each have a correlation with GPA between 0.24 and 0.29, and 90% of students received a C or higher regardless of their score on the test they took, including the SAT EBRW. Analyst Reed indicated that previous analyses looked at the passing thresholds in comparison to the AWPE. The pilot of the score of 690 on the SAT EBRW is performing in line with the other tests, and the analyst suggested that UCOPE may want to consider tweaking the threshold so that performance in Writing

courses is similar for different tests. Another approach would be to set a minimum goal for the share of students with a B or a minimum goal for average GPA and monitor whether these goals are being met over time. The analyses by IR suggest that these are ways the committee could go about setting thresholds, but it does not point to which of those is necessarily the right way to go.

**Discussion:** Members expressed concern about the 690 score restricting campuses from using a different threshold and it was noted the threshold does not indicate how students will perform in Writing courses. The thresholds set by UCOPE have a tremendous effect on the campuses. Chair Camfield observed that the number of students with SAT EBRW will decline but the committee's goal has been to create multiple ways for students to satisfy the ELWR. The chair recommended devoting more time in April to discussing this issue and, as UCOPE reconsiders its charge, the committee can think about the Math and Writing score thresholds.

#### **VI. Revisit Plan to Meet at UCOP on April 27<sup>th</sup>**

Chair Camfield indicated that April 27 falls during finals week for UCM and UCB and asked the committee to instead meet by videoconference on this date.

**Discussion:** Members voiced no objections to meeting by videoconference on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **VII. Report from the Math Working Group**

- *Po-Ning Chen (UCR) and Francois Blanchette (UCM)*

Chair Camfield reminded the members that one of UCOPE's priorities for this year is to pay more attention to Math than the committee has in the past few years. To this end, a working group has been convened to start looking into Math placement, and this will lead to a variety of discussions about Math. The UCR and UCM representatives sent a survey to the campus point people on preparatory Math and received responses from UCLA, UCM, UCR, UCSD, and UCSB. Most of the campuses have multiple preparatory Math courses and some campuses have different sequences depending on the placement score. Campuses indicated that most students take preparatory Math courses to prepare for Calculus or to meet a general education requirement. Campuses were also asked how preparatory Math courses correlated with time to degree or drop-out rates. The answer is not entirely clear, but UCOPE may eventually want to suggest that students take the preparatory classes in the summer before they start, rather than in the fall.

UCSD provided indepth answers because the campus has a dedicated person for Math placement and has developed tools which have been adopted by other campuses. However other campuses provided only minimal information perhaps because this is not a priority or they lack the capacity to collect it. There was pushback to responding to the questions possibly because many of the Math departments are not accustomed to having their placement processes reviewed and there was fear of being judged. The UCM representative suggested that UCOPE needs to explain the committee's goal more carefully and there should be a clear mandate that can be communicated to the people being asked for information. By asking questions that some Math departments have not thought about, there may be a culture shift which prompts departments to review their preparatory courses and placement processes. UCSD's program for Math placement could be a resource for the other campuses especially since their work started at least a decade ago.

**Discussion:** A member pointed out that campuses were given a tight deadline to respond to the working group's questions and the request was sent in the midst of the graduate student strike. Questions include whether non-credit bearing Math courses violate Senate regulations and if UCOPE should propose a coordinating council like the ECC for Math since some campuses are further along in thinking

about Math placement and the impact on time to degree. Members are interested in learning if campuses allow students to self-place into Math courses as UCSC students are allowed to do in Writing courses. Chair Camfield asked the working group members to draft a memo to send to the Math departments with a more detailed explanation about the purpose of UCOPE's inquiry.

#### **VIII. Report from the ELWR-satisfying Exams Working Group**

- *Daniel Gross (UCI) and Sarah Freedman (UCB)*

The working group is considering issues that have come up during today's meeting, but the larger context is the end of the systemwide AWPE and the responsibility for placement shifting to the campuses. This leads to questions about UCOPE's responsibility for systemwide standards for satisfying the ELWR and whether it is contradictory for systemwide standards to be imposed on the campuses that are independently placing their students. With the elimination of the SAT and ACT for admissions, another major question is what the committee thinks about utilizing standardized test scores for Writing placement. UCOPE might want to consider whether the cut scores limit access to preparatory courses for students who may need them. The systemwide thresholds and the tests used to satisfy the ELWR have significant ramifications throughout the state.

The UCI representative indicated that the Advanced Placement (AP) Seminar and AP Research courses are well developed and align with college-level Writing preparation, but they have not been recognized by UC in part because they are only six or seven years old. The representative asserted that the scores on these AP courses would be the best scores to accept and urged UCOPE to consider the power the committee has as a voice on these issues to the Senate and the state. While the UCI representative values campus autonomy over placement, he noted UCOPE ought to think about the value of the systemwide message the committee can send. The working group proposes that UCOPE stop using scores from tests that have no direct Writing, such as the SAT and ACT, and promote the tests with direct Writing which would include the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA). The SBA might be as good as the current AP English Language and Composition and English Literature and Composition.

Director Yoon-Wu explained that AP Seminar and AP Research were evaluated by BOARS when they were first administered to students, and BOARS determined that there was no way to articulate them to courses being offered at UC campuses. However, this is different from the question of using these AP scores for clearing the ELWR. The AP Seminar course is generally available to students in 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade in high school, and it is approved in the area B, the English subject area, in the A to G requirements. AP Research can be on any topic and is approved in area G, and is generally offered in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Together AP Seminar and AP Research are called the AP Capstone.

BOARS debated awarding students who complete the AP Capstone some type of bulk credit that is similar to the credit given to students who receive the International Baccalaureate diploma, but this conversation did not move forward. The Admissions directors are now interested in asking BOARS to give this more thought, and UCOPE can contemplate if the AP exams should be utilized for ELWR satisfaction. The director agrees that because the ACT and SAT do not have specific Writing components the committee might want to stop using them to clear the ELWR, but pointed out that all high school students have access to take them while not everyone has access to the AP curriculum.

**Discussion:** Chair Camfield asked why having a sample of a student's direct writing is important, and the UCI representative responded that this is connected to validity. The idea is that the data used for placement should be correlated in a way that is valid and fair, and the Writing processes used in AP Seminar and AP Research are almost exactly like the work done in college level Writing. Timed writing untethered to course content is, in contrast, not similar to college course work. How well any of the

tests correlate to Writing is questionable, but adding these two AP courses to the methods for ELWR satisfaction will at least send a signal to secondary schools that Writing is important and should be taught. The priority is to get the AP Seminar and AP Research courses on the list of exams that satisfy ELWR and UCOPE would send a memo to Council stating that the committee has studied this issue and recommends adding these AP courses to the methods for satisfying the ELWR.

The analyst asked if any analysis of these AP courses should be conducted before making the decision to add them to the methods for satisfying the requirement, and a member also raised concerns about the lack of access to the courses for students in under-resourced high schools. Director Yoon-Wu indicated that IR should have data on how many students take AP English Literature and receive a score of three and on the number of students who take AP Seminar and AP Research, along with information about the high schools offering these courses. It will be important for UCOPE to have data to support its decision about the AP courses, and the committee should consider the value of adding these tests if the same students take AP English Literature, Seminar or Research courses.

It may be useful to have comparisons of the efficacy of these different AP courses because some may be more effective than others and it would be ideal to have data about how students who took AP Seminar and Research did in their UC Writing classes. Director Yoon-Wu noted that there are some limitations on the data that is available including AP scores are self-reported by students, and the director advised the committee that adding new methods for satisfying ELWR will not negatively impact students the way removing methods could. The working group members will meet with IR, Chair Camfield and Director Yoon-Wu to discuss this matter.

Director Yoon-Wu reported that UCOP is still working with the Department of Education on access to the SBA scores. The Department of Education has reviewed the data sharing agreement developed by UCOP and inserted a number of stipulations about data security. Admissions hopes the agreement will be in place to start a pilot in the spring with the incoming class for 2023. The UCI representative remarked that further discussion is needed about using the SBA score for ELWR satisfaction. One study found that it was not effective for admissions, but it might be good for Writing placement so UCOPE would probably need to figure out if using the SBA would be acceptable to the campuses, and think about the potential consequences for campuses. The committee would also need an analysis of SBA data in order to determine the cut score.

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

There was no New Business.

#### **X. Executive Session**

There was no Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 2:30 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Eileen Camfield