**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**                                      **ACADEMIC SENATE**
**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION**
**VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES**
**FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2022**

**Attending:** Jingsong Zhang, Chair (UCR), Eileen Camfield, Vice Chair (UCM), Sarah Freedman (UCB), Yuming He (UCD alternate), Daniel Gross (UCI), Bruce Hayes (UCLA), Amanda Solomon Amorao (UCSD), Katherine Saltzman-Li (UCSB), Sarah Michals (UCSC alternate), Madeleine Sorapure (BOARS representative, UCSB), Jennifer Reifman (Graduate Student Representative, UCD), Maryam Amin (Undergraduate Student Representative, UCSD), Jon Lang (AWPE Committee Chair), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Executive Director, Undergraduate Admissions), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions), Laura Hardy (Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions), Dana Ferris (Co-Chair, ELWR Task Force), Karen Gocsik (Co-Chair, ELWR Task Force), Trish Serviss (Associate Director, Entry-Level Writing, UCD), Robert Horwitz (Chair, Academic Senate), Susan Cochran (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I.        **Update on the work of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Task Force**
   - *Dana Ferris, Co-chair, ELWR Task Force (UCD)*
   - *Karen Gocsik, Co-Chair, ELWR Task Force (UCSD)*

The Entry Level Writing Requirement Task Force co-chairs joined UCOPE to offer a brief update on the group's work including when it will report to Academic Council. The Task Force was created in March 2020 in response to a recommendation from UCOPE that Senate Regulation (SR) 636 should be reviewed and updated. The first phase of the effort focuses on ELWR courses and curriculum, so the Task Force has been gathering data about how ELWR is managed at the campuses and about student experiences. This data is being analyzed through the lens of both best practices and research in the field, and it is being used to articulate principles and purposes of the ELWR and to make recommendations about revising or clarifying the language of SR 636.

The second phase of the Task Force's work will focus on placement and the various mechanisms being used since 2020 will be assessed. The impact of these placement mechanisms on students will be evaluated and the administrative structures will be reviewed. The Task Force may recommend the formation of a standing subcommittee of Writing program directors to report to UCOPE. The first draft of the phase one report is almost finished and should be finalized by March 1st. The Task Force will then begin developing the recommendations and report on placement which should be done in May.

In addition to reviewing previous reports on the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE), the Task Force collected new data from campus ELWR coordinators, and surveyed students in ELWR classes at the end of the fall 2021 quarter or semester about their experiences. The co-chairs analyzed data from a 2014 survey of UC Writing instructors about the ELWR and AWPE as well as the data from the recent surveys of ELWR coordinators and students. The main thesis of the report is that, far from being a barrier to equity, the ELWR is an instrument of equity for UC's increasingly diverse student body.

The Task Force looked at the number of students who have not fulfilled the ELWR before they come to campus and need to be evaluated for placement in an ELWR course. The curriculum and ELWR fulfilling courses vary across the campuses, ranging from a single course to specialized courses for multilingual students, multi-level courses and stretch courses. In spite of the differences, the data on the course goals and learning outcomes shows that the underlying goals are relatively consistent across the different campuses and programs. Outcomes data showed that pass rates are quite high at several campuses for ELWR courses and a bit lower at others. Some coordinators reported having a hard time getting data, thus one recommendation will be to create a standard template for use by all campuses to regularly collect data about what is occurring with their programs and students. That some campuses had more

data than others has made it difficult to generalize, but data from the coordinators suggests students are satisfied with the overall experience in ELWR satisfying courses.

The Task Force surveyed students and received almost 1500 responses across seven campuses. The survey asked how students felt at the beginning of the ELWR course and if their feelings changed by the end of the course. Students placed by more traditional exam-based methods were more likely to be initially frustrated compared to those placed by alternate methods, but even students who were initially frustrated felt better about the course by the end. Across all the campuses, students generally had a positive reaction to the ELWR courses, with 66% indicating they found them valuable, 28% reporting having mixed feelings, and only 5% saying the courses were not a good use of time. Students were asked if they had improved twelve common skills, and 75% indicated improvement in areas like critical reading or supporting an argument but under 50% of students reported improving other skills.

In addition to confirming that ELWR courses are no longer remedial, the data shows that they close opportunity gaps and operate as instruments of equity. The diverse curricula utilized across the campuses does not undermine the notion of a coherent systemwide requirement because programs share many of the same objectives. The Task Force has started articulating several principles that should continue governing ELWR courses and a central principle from which others derive is that the ELWR is an important instrument of access, equity, inclusion, and opportunity. The next step is to formulate specific recommendations based on the data and principles.

**Discussion:** Chair Zhang and UCOPE members thanked the co-chairs for the presentation of the draft report. The requirement in SR 636 that students pass ELWR courses with a grade of C or better might be less of a focus for the Task Force than the fact that students who do not fulfill the requirement may be dismissed from UC. The passing grade requirement may be a vestige of when ELWR courses were remedial. SR 761 states: "Remedial work in English is defined as work primarily focused on topics in spelling, punctuation and usage, and in the basic structures of sentences, paragraphs, and short essays." Currently, ELWR courses focus on the rhetorical strategies and critical thinking skills that will transfer to work students will have to do moving forward at UC. Courses are endangered if they are considered remedial but even pre-ELWR courses for multilingual students are not remedial since they focus on different features of academic writing. The Task Force report will have a detailed information about the courses at each campus and will note when data is unavailable. Some data will be broken down by campus and each campus can be provided with its data.

## II.      Updates and Announcements

Chair Zhang explained that UCOPE's chair serves on the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICASC) and Chair Zhang was asked to chair the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) Standards Subcommittee. The main issue for ICAS this year is responding to Assembly Bill 928 which requires the California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU) and UC systems to create a singular general education (GE) transfer pathway. Every year, the IGETC Standards Subcommittee reviews the information about general education courses required for transfer students and updates it as necessary.

## III.      Consent Calendar

**Action:** UCOPE's October 29, 2021 videoconference minutes were approved with one correction.

## IV.      Consultation with the Academic Senate Office
   ● *Robert Horwitz, Chair, Academic Senate*
   ● *Susan Cochran, Vice Chair, Academic Senate*

Chair Horwitz reported that the retirements of Provost Brown, Vice Provost Carlson, and Senate Executive Director Baxter this academic year will be a significant loss of leadership at the Office of the President. At the Regents meeting last week there were discussions about Governor Newsom's proposed budget for UC and enrollment growth. Although the budget includes much of what UC requested, it will provide less one-time funding for things like deferred maintenance and seismic retrofitting. The budget allocates $5M toward climate oriented research, particularly projects aimed at improving infrastructure.

The governor's budget also proposes a five-year compact involving a 5% annual increase to the permanent budget for five years as long as UC increases enrollment. The budget requires the campuses over the 18% maximum threshold for non-resident students (UCB, UCLA and UCSD) to decrease the enrollment of these students to the cap, but they will be reimbursed by the state. The President has established an enrollment management workgroup comprised of the chancellors to consider how to increase enrollment by 20k students at all campuses by 2030 (16k undergraduates and 4k graduate students). There will not be a new campus to accommodate this growth, and the alternatives include expanding summer session, taking over an underutilized CCC or CSU campus, and increasing online instruction.

UC reached a settlement with the UAW on the contract for graduate student researchers. The main disagreement had been the definition of a graduate student employee and thus who is in the bargaining unit, and President Drake was adamant about maintaining a distinction between student and employee. UC also reached a five-year contract with AFT Unit-18 lecturers that will raise full-time lecturers' salaries by 20% by the end of the contract and begins to establish more security for continued employment for them. AFT leadership has an expectation that their members will be members of the Senate in the future.

UC clinicians are again discussing Senate membership, and Chair Horwitz noted that the Senate considered and rejected a request from clinicians for membership ten years ago. Faculty in the Health Sciences Clinical (HSC) series are not Senate members and there are a lot of faculty in this series. Senate leadership has created an ad hoc work group comprised of people who understand the HSC series to explore how some of the faculty have been incorrectly placed in this series and ways to move them to an appropriate series.

Chair Horwitz has discussed the Senate's concerns about the theft of faculty intellectual property by third-party social learning websites with President Drake and the Regents. If UC cannot address the violations of academic integrity occurring in online courses, it will be difficult to ensure the integrity of online undergraduate degree programs. The idea of creating an automated institutional takedown request system, based on the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, is sunder consideration by UC Legal. There is currently a conflict related to teaching modality, and who controls the modality and what is required of faculty to accommodate students are complicated issues. The Committee on Academic Freedom is investigating demands by disabled students at UCLA that all courses be recorded. Recording classes is an accommodation that meets requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but it also compromises an individual faculty member's ability to control their pedagogy and whether they want to be recorded.

ICAS has created a special committee comprised of faculty representatives from the three segments to work on establishing the singular GE pathway required by AB 928. There is a tight timeline for completing this work and if ICAS does not approve the plan, administrators from the segments will be responsible for devising the pathway. The senates of each segment will need to approve the proposed pathway, and Chair Horwitz noted that the law does not provide any flexibility around getting this work done by May 2023.

**Discussion:** A member inquired about efforts in the legislature to address basic needs of students who are homeless or dealing with food insecurity, noting that a new bill proposes financial support for CSU students for basic needs. Chair Horwitz is not aware of the proposed support for CSU students but indicated that the Regents' Academic and Student Affairs Committee receives reports about basic needs. Last year, the Senate issued guidance about returning to campus during the pandemic which stated that the decision about course modality is a matter of shared governance and should be negotiated by an individual faculty member with the department chair, relevant divisional Senate committees and campus administration.

## V.      Consultation with the Office of the President
- *Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Executive Director, Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Laura Hardy, Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Jon Lang, AWPE Committee Chair and Chief Reader*

Coordinator Lind announced that the final administration of the systemwide AWPE will be on May 21st and the exam will again be given online. Only students who submit a Statement of Intent to Register at UCB, UCLA, UCR, and UCSD will be invited to take the AWPE. Last year, only a few students planning to attend campuses not participating in the AWPE took the systemwide exam and it is hoped that clear messaging by Admissions will again minimize this. The current operations vendor's contract runs through September, so the four campuses using the AWPE will continue to use the online payment system. Admissions is working with the vendor to transition any materials UC wants to retain, and the vendor has agreed to turn over any system code or specifications that campuses using the AWPE may want to take over. Coordinator Lind has given UCR's Writing program director the high level system design documents so the campus can determine the feasibility of taking on some of the components.

AWPE Chair Lang is working on obtaining the copyright for online use of the exam passage, noting that the passage was previously utilized for an in-person administration of the AWPE. The four campuses still using the AWPE have not started developing the protocols needed once the exam is only administered locally. UCR is taking the lead on figuring out if the vendor's systems can be transferred to the campuses and this campus is the natural home for this new process because it has the highest number of students who take the AWPE. Faculty from the four campuses would be involved with finding and developing passages appropriate for the exam, but a way to pay for this work will need to be identified. One issue UCOPE will need to address is whether the Test Development Committee will continue to be its subcommittee. There is also a question about how readers for the May exam will be recruited and paid.

**Discussion:** With students from only four campuses taking the systemwide exam, it is possible that the fees will not cover all of the costs, and Executive Director Yoon-Wu indicated that UCOP will cover the program's deficit. AWPE Chair Lang stated that the four campuses considering offering the exam locally will need to decide how much students will be charged for it. A member asked if the goal is to eventually forbid campuses from using placement exams. Chair Zhang explained that the campuses have different views about how placement should be handled and each campus is assessing what works best for their students, but UCOPE is not thinking about forbidding exams. However, it was noted that the Senate determined that the SAT and ACT should no longer be used for admission to UC, and it is possible that the ELWR Task Force might recommend against using a particular mechanism for ELWR satisfaction or placement based on research and best practices.

Coordinator Lind informed the committee that the funding for the AWPE Chair's position will end after June 2022, so the future of this position will need to be determined. AWPE Chair Lang indicated that the four campuses still using the AWPE should figure out the responsibilities of the AWPE Committee should be going forward. The AWPE Committee met once a year to generate new exam passages to

forward to UCOPE, but there has not been funding to support this work for the past two years due to the program's deficit.

## VI. Values and Principles for Writing Placement

UCOPE discussed the draft values and principles document the committee started working on at the end of last year. Vice Chair Camfield collaborated with five other members to identify the values that should undergird placement protocols and procedures in anticipation of the report from the ELWR Task Force. The point was made that the ELWR is separate from but connected to placement but both should be guided by shared values. A preamble explains that the ELWR threshold is not about an essential set of college-level writing skills that incoming students do or do not have but is instead about the support that students want and need. Committee members were asked for feedback on the draft.

**Discussion:** There was discussion and a divergence of opinions on topics ranging from the way we define ELWR itself, to the value of student agency in making placement decisions, and to the types of feedback most likely to engender student success.

## VII. Honoring ELWR-Satisfaction by Alternative Placement Processes

The committee will vote on whether satisfying the ELWR by way of the alternative placement processes being used at UCD, UCI, UCM, UCSB and UCSC will be honored if a student transfers to another campus. Chair Zhang suspects only a small number of students will be in this situation.

**Discussion:** The UCLA representative consulted with the campus's Writing program director who is willing to accept ELWR satisfaction by the alternative processes.

**Action:** The motion to accept ELWR satisfaction by alternative placement mechanisms was made and seconded. Members voted unanimously to accept ELWR-satisfaction by alternatives to the AWPE.

## VIII. Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Assessment (SBELAA)

UCOPE considered whether campuses should be able to use the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Assessment scores in combination with other data for placement decisions after students have matriculated to a campus. Admissions needs to know if there is a commitment from the campuses to using the SBELAA scores so UCOP can begin negotiating with agreement with California Department of Education (CDE), a process which can take multiple years. Last year, UCOPE looked at an analysis of the SBELAA conducted by the Institutional Research (IR) unit at UCOP but at that time, the question was whether the SBELAA score alone would be used for ELWR satisfaction in the way that SAT and ACT scores are used.

**Discussion:** UCSB looks at the student's score on a survey, their high school GPA and other factors when deciding on the placement, so it would be worthwhile to have the SBELAA score to use in conjunction with other data points. The SBELAA should not be used as a single measure to make placement decisions for reasons that include it is not controlled by UC and is partly multiple choice. There may be an interest in having the SBELAA scores from previous years so Writing programs could look at placements and the SBELAA scores as a way of gauging what the campus cut scores should be. UCI would find it useful to have the SBELAA scores as one more data point to consider in combination with other measures. Unlike other standardized tests, the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) is mandatory and taken during the school day, which means that an entire demographic group of students takes this test in comparison to other standardized exams.

Members agree that the SBA would need to be carefully studied before it is used as a single measure analogous with the SAT and ACT. Since UC does not use the SBA for admissions, high school students may not take it seriously but Chair Zhang noted that the SBA is used by the CSUs for admission. Executive Director Yoon-Wu explained that the CSUs get the SBA scores directly from the test administrator, Educational Testing Service (ETS). ETS and the CDE would probably be eager to give UC access to the SBA scores but Admissions needs a few campuses to commit to using the SBELAA scores in the Writing placement process. UCOP will need to establish a data exchange agreement with the CDE and obtain students' consent to have the data provided to UC.

The committee debated whether additional analysis of the SBELAA by IR should be requested and if the issue should be discussed again in April. Executive Director Yoon-Wu proposed that campuses ask students to self-report their SBELAA scores so programs can see if they add information to the local process. The UCI program plans to ask students to report the SBELAA scores but it is ideal when the scores are in the admissions data that is available at an earlier date. One question is whether UC can request the disaggregated score for the English Language Arts Assessment portion of the SBA. The UCSB, UCM and UCI representatives expressed support for requesting the SBELAA scores so the Writing programs can begin studying if this additional data will be useful. Members agreed that this matter will not require further discussion in April. The committee will need to make it very clear that the SBELAA scores will only be used by the Writing programs for placement.

**Action:** The chair and analyst will draft a memo requesting that Admissions obtain the SBELAA data.

### IX.    Data Reports on Alternative Placement Processes from UCD and UCI
- *Trish Serviss, Associate Director, Entry Level Writing, UCD*
- *Daniel Gross, Director of Composition, UCI and UCOPE member*

The Associate Director of UCD's Entry Level Writing in the University Writing Program (UWP), Trish Serviss, joined UCOPE to report on the campus's Writing Placement System (WPS). The system began as a pilot in 2020 and was used again in 2021 after substantial changes were made based on what was learned in 2020. Between May and September, students who have not satisfied the ELWR before enrollment are identified and asked to complete the WPS which is administered in a rolling fashion and reviewed by faculty each week. Students go through the process in three waves, and in the fall first year students who did not complete the WPS and not in an ELWR satisfying course are identified. Associate Director Serviss explained the components of the WPS and reported that the process was completed by 4k students in 2020 and almost 7k in 2021.

The UWP is working with the campus Institutional Research and assessment units as well as Writing experts at UCD to look at the results of the first two years of the WPS. About 730 students satisfied the ELWR as a result of the WPS. The WPS has four course pathways and a student who places in the first pathway has to take the next three pathways. About 12% of students placed into pathway three and 18% placed into pathway four were moved to a course higher or lower than their preferred placement, so there may be a mismatch between students' perceived ability and the faculty evaluation. Some Generation 1.5 students who wanted support in academic English were moved from path one, which was their preference, to path two.

More than 80% of students expressed a placement preference that matched the faculty recommendation. In fall, 863 students responded to a survey about the WPS, and almost 700 students felt their placement was appropriate and 573 felt their placement experience was positive or somewhat positive. The primary feedback was about campus infrastructure. The UWP plans to assess the gaps between student and faculty assessment of readiness, student responses in relationship to demographics and cohort groups, and grades in the first year courses in relationship to the placement. The survey will be revised to include questions to gauge student interest in co-curricular or bridge

programs. Associate Director Serviss reported that administering the AWPE on the campus cost about $15k more a year than the WPS, which is free to students.

The UCI representative explained that the ideal collaborative placement process would involve regular interaction with students and Writing experts, but the campus does not have the bandwidth to implement this for the 3k to 4k students who would need that kind of support. UCI's Writing program is in the process of figuring out what can be done given the financial resources and availability of faculty. Two years ago the process started with a default placement based on available data including standardized test scores and the English proficiency designation in the admissions files of students whose first language is not English. Students then submitted a writing sample, completed a survey, and were interviewed by a faculty member. Fifty percent of the students agreed that their placement was right and the other half felt they belonged in either an accelerated or decelerated course.

The process was changed in the second year with students being asked to produce a direct writing sample which was a summary and a comparative analysis. Students then completed a survey and wrote about their experiences with this process. A team of readers used a rubric to review the 3k files and place students. The program found that timed direct writing works for some students and not for others, with 75% of students producing writing that was legible and 25% having problems such as not completing a section. The process in the third year will be a combination of what was done in 2020 and 2021, starting with the default placement followed by either the process initiated in the second year or the submission of a portfolio. Data shows that the distribution of students across courses was similar to that of previous years which is helpful for budgeting and planning purposes. The representative indicated that the placement process entailed fixed costs in terms of the institutional commitment of expertise and personnel contributing to the project and these costs are significant. In the first year, it cost $25k to pay readers to review the work of 400 students.

## X.      New Business

There was no New Business.

## XI.      Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.


Videoconference adjourned at: 2: 55 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Jingsong Zhang