UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA   **ACADEMIC SENATE**
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION
VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

Attending: Jingsong Zhang, Chair (UCR), Eileen Camfield, Vice Chair (UCM), Sarah Freedman (UCB), Rebekka Andersen (UCD), Daniel Gross (UCI), Yinsheng Wang (UCR), Amanda Solomon Amorao (UCSD), Brian Dolan (UCSF), Katherine Saltzman-Li (UCSB), Tanner WouldGo (UCSC), 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), Robert Horwitz (Chair, Academic Senate), Susan Cochran (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I.   **Welcome and Introductions –** *Chair Zhang*

Chair Zhang welcomed everyone to the first UCOPE meeting of the 2021-2022 academic year and members introduced themselves. Members should familiarize themselves with the committee's charge and with systemwide Senate Regulation (SR) 636 which will be referred to frequently. The analyst reminded the committee about the confidentiality of the discussions and explained that UCOPE will likely meet by videoconference on January 28th because the Office of the President (UCOP) will still be closed due to construction.

II.   **Consultation with the Academic Senate Office**
  - *[Robert Horwitz](), Chair, Academic Senate*
  - *[Susan Cochran](), Vice Chair, Academic Senate*

Senate leadership participates in a variety of meetings with the Board of Regents; President Drake, Provost Brown and other senior administrators at UCOP; and the systemwide Senate committees. The Smarter Balanced Study Group report was transmitted to the president and it will be discussed by the Regents next month. The workgroup on mitigating the effects of COVID-19 on faculty careers has completed its first report which has been sent to the campuses by Provost Brown. The key concept in the report is achievement relative to opportunity with regard to merit and promotions. The workgroup also looked at efforts to restart research through grants, some of which would go to funding graduate students.

Chair Horwitz explained that UC is hosting the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senate (ICAS) this year and this group will focus on complications related to transferring from the California Community Colleges (CCC) to UC. Data shows that transfer students perform well at UC, graduating on time for the most part, but the message that UC makes transfer difficult persists, particularly among the legislature and several Regents. In the past, responsibility for engaging in the work on transfer has largely fallen to the Senate leadership but Chair Horwitz wants to share this responsibility with Senate committees or some working group with members from various committees, including UCOPE and the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS). ICAS and UC has to respond to Assembly Bill (AB) 928 which was just signed into law by Governor Newsom this month. AB 928 calls for the creation of a single transfer pathway to the California State University (CSU) and UC systems through the Associate Degrees for Transfer. This law will make it more difficult for UC to focus on the preparation of transfer students for particular majors through UC's Pathways Plus program.

The contract negotiations with Unit 18 Lecturers entered into impasse and mediation. Academic Council decided to re-endorse a January 2020 memo to the president that states that lecturers should be treated fairly and paid a fair wage, and notes that lecturers are not ladder rank faculty or members of the Senate. Last week UC made its last and final offer to the lecturers, declaring an impasse from the University's side, and this led the parties to return to the bargaining table. Chair Horwitz indicated that the governor recently signed AB 1550 into law, and this law allows bargaining unit members who enter the Senate to retain union membership, which poses a long-term problem for the Senate.

The Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Task Force is reaching the end of the first phase of its work and is preparing a report to Council. Senate leadership met with the task force co-chairs in September, and UCOPE's vice chair, a member of the task force, will update the committee later in the meeting. The committee might want to think about expanding the ways students can satisfy the ELWR before matriculation such as with scores from the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Assessment. In September, the Regents approved UCB's initial plan to build student housing on the People's Park site and UCSC's long range development plan. UCOP has established that 500 buildings across the system require seismic safety work at a cost of $20B, of which only 10% has been allocated.

The Regents will require campuses whose non-resident student population exceeds the 18% cap to reduce the population in the next five years. The legislature agreed to backfill the lost money from this cutback on a year to year basis, but UC has been shortchanged in the allocation of funds from the state over the last several years. This may be related to the lower rates of satisfaction among students due to the higher student to faculty ratio, with some 40% of students saying they do not know a professor well enough to request a letter of recommendation. The Regents and President Drake are discussing how to increase enrollment at UC to accommodate the growing population in California and the growing demand to attend UC. The idea is that UC will add about 20k new California students by 2030 (16k undergraduates and 4k graduate students). This would not entail building a new campus, but instead involve strategies such as expanding summer session, reorienting UC extension, creating satellite campuses in conjunction with an underutilized CCC or CSU campus, and increasing the use of online education.

The Senate is focusing on the global climate crisis by helping organize climate activist faculty at their campuses. Another important issue for the Senate is the troubled Retirement Administration Service Center and the new vice president for Human Resources at UCOP is learning more about the center's problems and how to fix them. In meetings with President Drake, the Senate is pushing back against the suggestion that new master's degree programs should be approved by the campuses instead of by the systemwide Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs, and this matter will be addressed by a joint Senate-Administration workgroup. Senate leadership and the president have also discussed problems with the financial accounting systems that are supposed to give faculty access to data on their grants.

Senate leadership is consulting with UC Legal about creating an automated institutional takedown process to remove faculty intellectual property posted by students on third-party social learning websites. The Regents have an Innovation Transfer and Entrepreneurship initiative and want faculty to receive greater credit for engaging in patent and startup activities, and the Academic Personnel and Research Policy committees will be tasked with responding to the Regents' recommendations. Chair Horwitz has charged the Committee on Academic Freedom with studying the issue of faculty posting political statements on department websites in an effort to both protect academic freedom while also adhering to UC policy and avoiding creating the impression that

individual faculty or departments are speaking on behalf of UC. Finally, Chair Horwitz reported that many students are requesting that all classes are recorded which conflicts with faculty governance over how they teach. Faculty understand students' desire for flexibility, but at the same time, the Senate is striving to protect faculty from being overburdened by having to teach a course in multiple modalities.

Discussion: Chair Horwitz remarked that financial problems contributed to UCOP's decision to eliminate the systemwide administration of the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE). In addition, Chair Horwitz noted that there are no alternatives to the SAT/ACT to use for admissions purposes and UC will remain test-free for the time being. Since the SAT/ACT scores may not be available for ELWR satisfaction, the committee is encouraged to investigate using the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Assessment to meet this requirement and for writing placement. Executive Director Yoon-Wu pointed out that students may choose to report their standardized test scores but UCOP only release the scores to the campuses after admissions decisions have been made, thus they will be available for the purposes of clearing the ELWR. Last year, many students could not take the SAT or ACT due to the pandemic but the executive director thinks the numbers taking these tests this year will possibly be higher.

III.   **Update on the work of the [Entry Level Writing Requirement Task Force](#)**
   - *Eileen Camfield, UCOPE Vice Chair and ELWR Task Force Member*

The ELWR Task Force was charged by Academic Council to examine the requirement and UCOPE's vice chair is a member of task force. SR 636 defines the ELWR but some of the language, such as "respond adequately" and "communicates effectively," is not precise, and the requirement has not been updated in nearly two decades. Additionally, there are concerns about equity and inclusion as it relates to the ELWR amid the changing demographics in California. The first phase of the task force's work is to consider how the ELWR should be defined, what it means for UC students, and best practices, vision, and values. In the second phase, the task force will look at how the requirement is operationalized with respect to how students satisfy it before and after they matriculate to UC.

One thing that has become clear is the degree to which Writing placement has been conflated with satisfaction of the ELWR and these are not the same except on campuses like UCM that only have two Writing courses. But most of the campuses have multiple Writing courses first year students can take so placement is a finer grained process. The task force has held two meetings and has launched a survey of Writing programs on the nine undergraduate campuses in an attempt to learn about the outcomes and goals of those programs. The survey data shows that there is commonality across the campuses. The task force is now developing a survey of students to see how the information gathered from the survey of programs is communicated or delivered to students and to learn about the student experience. The members are beginning to draft its first report to Council which will discuss the values and definition framework and the focus will be on operationalizing the ELWR.

Discussion: The vice chair was asked about the task force's thinking in terms of the basic idea of preparatory education and proficiency given that the concept of universal preparatory education is outdated and conflicts with curricular independence. The task force acknowledges that much of the language about ELWR satisfaction is deficit-oriented and focused on what students lack. The group has been exploring the research from Writing experts on models of development related to how novice writers approach writing tasks compared to expert writers. This leads to the idea of using

expertise development as a framework or definition for the requirement. The timing of the survey is a concern to UCSC since the courses at this campus do not begin until winter.

Another question is whether the survey can be adapted by each campus or if it recognizes that different campuses are structured differently as well as the different placement models. This issue is of particular importance to campuses like UCD that have at least five different courses that can be taken for ELWR satisfaction and the students' experiences will vary as a result. Vice Chair Camfield indicated that the timing issue has been discussed by the task force and there will be an effort to be flexible. The survey will ask students about the local context in terms of how they were placed into Writing courses, their experiences in those courses, and what they learned in an effort to gain information about experiences, overall themes, and values.

IV. Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction Opinion on UCD's Writing Placement Program

In December 2019, the chair of UCOPE asked the Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction (UCRJ) for a ruling on whether SR 636 allows a campus to use an alternative assessment instrument instead of the AWPE. UCRJ responded in March 2020, indicating that there is no leeway for a student to satisfy the requirement with a one-time assessment unrelated to an actual course. In May 2020, UCD's University Writing Program (UWP) sought a ruling from the Davis division's Committee on Elections, Rules and Jurisdiction (CERJ) about whether its alternative placement process can be interpreted as a program of study. The CERJ agreed that the UWP's process could be interpreted as a program of study, as it is not solely a test, but recommended that the systemwide UCRJ should opine on this matter since it involved a systemwide regulation. UCRJ concurred with the opinion of the divisional committee, and Chair Zhang believes UCOPE needs to consider if this ruling applies to the placement processes being used at other campuses.

Discussion: The UCD representative explained that the placement process the CERJ ruled on was viewed by the UWP as a program of study because it involved multiple elements and students completed a number of tasks over a two-week period. The process has since been refined and the UWP is not certain that it still qualifies as a program of study although it is certainly not just a test. The representative noted that "program of study" is not actually well defined in SR 636 and it is unclear if the alternative placement processes or mechanisms being used since March 2020 are consistent with that specific language. The regulation establishes that divisional Senates have authority over the placement processes that occur after enrollment/matriculation, so this decision is not under UCOPE's purview. AWPE Chair Lang questioned whether a period of two weeks gives students enough time to acquire the skills needed to satisfy the ELWR. The UCD UWP framed the program of study as an opportunity for students to learn about the curriculum and then make a decision in consultation with faculty about the best course for them.

Since the systemwide AWPE is sunsetting SR 636 will need to be amended. The ELWR Task Force will probably recommend a change to the regulation language which will go to Council. The waiver of SR 636.B allowed the campuses using their own placement processes to not have students participate in the systemwide AWPE. UCOPE will need to vote on requesting another extension of the waiver of SR 636.B and SR 636.C so the campuses can continue using their alternatives. Admissions should be notified as soon as possible about which campuses will and will not participate in the systemwide AWPE in May 2022.

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 explained that there was a problem with UCI's data in the 2020 Legislative Report. The report uses the official data from the central system so it can be replicated and audited. Admissions was facing tight deadlines when the errors in UCI's data were discovered and elected to include a paragraph about the pandemic challenges that impacted the ELWR satisfaction rate including the shift to the online AWPE and use of alternative methods to satisfy the ELWR. The report also noted the extremely low pass rate of 25% for the 2020 systemwide AWPE compared to over 40% in 2019. Admissions will work with the individuals at UCI that deal with their data to make sure it is accurate in next year's report and the report could include an amended table with the correct 2020 data.

The Coordinator shared that it is difficult to predict exam volume, noting that initial estimates of 13-14k test takers in 2021 were revised downwards to 11k, and there ultimately were 8400 test takers. Admissions assumes that the volume will be similar in 2022. The plan is to only invite students planning to attend the campuses that will participate in the systemwide exam and Admissions would like to know as soon as possible exactly which campuses are opting out of it. The next exam will be offered on Saturday, May 21, 2022, after the Statements of Intent to Register have been submitted by students.

UCOPE was reminded that the move to an online exam significantly changed the vendor's responsibilities but problems also arose as a result of the law which required the vendor to hire exam readers as employees rather than independent contractors. The vendor's revenue suffered as a result of these changes which led the vendor's decision to terminate its contract after the 2022 AWPE and the vendor's contract will end in September 2022. Director Hardy indicated that the vendor manages the call center, the scoring and payment systems, and hiring readers and Admissions would like UCOPE's input about what should be retained if possible to support those campuses still using the AWPE. The director also emphasized that it is critical to have someone managing the day-to-day operations of the program.

AWPE Chair Lang shared that questions the campuses using the AWPE have include whether the code for the scoring system can be transferred to a local mainframe and how to handle paying readers. These campuses are also considering if they should try administering the AWPE individually or collaborate and there are probably risks with either approach. UCB's College Writing Program is relatively small and it is the only unit at UCB that offers the ELWR-satisfying course. It would be logical for the program to administer any kind of placement test, but it does not have enough faculty to process all of the exams. Since the AWPE program has a deficit, AWPE Chair Lang indicated that a previously approved exam passage for which training materials already exist will be used for the May 2022 systemwide AWPE.

Discussion: The UCI representative requested that a follow-up memo to the recipients of the Legislative Report right away explaining the data error. Coordinator Lind explained that the data in the central system is frozen and cannot be updated at this time. Executive Director Yoon-Wu indicated that, although the report was widely distributed, recipients rarely submit any questions or comments to UCOP. Additionally, the report was submitted to the legislature in March and Admissions will begin work on the new report in January, therefore it makes little sense to issue a correction now. Coordinator Lind shared that Institutional Research has been notified that campuses may need to report data to the central system differently to include information on the alternative placement processes.

A member commented that it would be more equitable for all the campuses, not just those continuing to use the AWPE, to receive ongoing support from UCOP after the vendor contract ends. Director Hardy explained that the type of support needed has to be determined by UCOPE, noting that Admissions does not have the staffing required to operate some components such as the call center, but equity will be important. The committee should also discuss if it makes sense for UCOPE to make decisions related to the AWPE when only three or four campuses will be using it. The campuses considering using the AWPE after September 2022 should come up with different approaches to managing its administration.

Earlier in the meeting, Chair Horwitz encouraged UCOPE to brainstorm about other ways for students to satisfy the ELWR prior to matriculation. For example, the score from the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Assessment (SBELAA) could be used in combination with other measures. AWPE Chair Lang remarked that, in the past, SAT/ACT scores have been relied upon to lower the number of students taking the AWPE, although this has changed since UC no longer requires these standardized tests for admission and fewer students report their scores.

UCI is employing a default placement phase drawing on any relevant data that is available and it could be useful to have the SBELAA scores. Executive Director Yoon-Wu remarked that there currently is no mechanism for Admissions to get the SBELAA scores but an automated process could be developed by way of a data sharing agreement with the Department of Education. The CSU system has an agreement and the SBELAA scores are imported into their admissions application system and used in their placement process. It would take time to establish the data sharing agreement and develop the system, and working with the Department of Education can be time-consuming. Admissions could begin pursuing this once UCOPE makes a firm commitment to using the SBELAA scores for ELWR satisfaction.

Chair Zhang would like the committee to review the data on the SBELAA in January and discuss whether this test should be approved as a means of satisfying the ELWR. If UCOPE votes in favor of adding this, Council will need to endorse the decision. One question is whether each campus would need to investigate how the SBELAA scores are used or if UCOPE should study this, and Chair Zhang thinks each campus should make this decision. AWPE Chair Lang suggested that UCOPE think about whether students' preparedness could be assessed by looking at various scores and other data points in conjunction rather than looking at them sequentially.

Chair Zhang decided that the campuses that would like an extension of the waiver of SR 636 to continue using their alternative placement processes should submit brief proposals to the committee. The campuses should indicate if they will participate in the May 2022 systemwide AWPE and whether they will use alternative placement processes for students after they have matriculated. UCOPE will request that Council approve a waiver for summer and fall 2022. The committee members should notify their Writing Programs about submitting their request to UCOPE, and it was noted that the use of alternative placement processes requires approval by the divisional Senate. The requests should be submitted to UCOPE by the end of November and UCOPE will vote by email on sending the waiver request to Council. Admissions will be notified as soon as possible about which campuses will opt out of the systemwide AWPE so it can plan appropriately for the May 2022 exam. Finally, the campuses using alternative, locally designed processes should prepare data reports, including information about costs and budget, for UCOPE's January meeting.

VI.   Writing Placement Principles and Values

Last year, the chair of UCOPE proposed that the committee delineate principles and values for Writing placement. One question is what will be done with the principles.

Discussion: Vice Chair Camfield explained that the ELWR Task Force is discussing the values that undergird having a shared Writing requirement for the system and what a UC graduate should be capable of as a writer. This is distinct from Writing placement which relates to the metrics used to measure students' capabilities, and UCOPE is trying to get at how students are evaluated in an equitable and accurate way. It is unlikely that the task force will consider values for placement. A member stated that it is important to have these discussions and identify values. As UCOPE continues thinking about the different mechanisms and exams used to place students, the committee can return to the values and consider how they are operationalized.

One value that came up last year was that Writing programs should help students appreciate their opportunities to write instead of dreading them. Another issue is that good writing instruction is expensive and students at big universities like UC may not receive the instruction they need. In light of the use of different, locally designed placement processes, UCOPE may want to focus on accountability. Campuses should submit reports that assess how their placement processes promote equity, for example. The committee should also do what it can to prevent campuses from outsourcing entry-level Writing courses to local CCCs in an effort to cut costs. Vice Chair Camfield agreed to lead a small team of UCOPE members to work on the values and principles and the document will be discussed in January.

VII.   New Business

The analyst explained that the committee's listserv does not include the student representatives but members can vote to add them to it.

Action: Members voted to approve adding students to the listserv.

VIII.   Executive Session *(if necessary)*

There was no Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 2:00 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Jingsong Zhang