

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2020

Attending: Jeffrey Gagnon, Vice Chair (UCSD), Hector Rodriguez (UCB), Rebekka Andersen (UCD), Daniel Gross (UCI), Megan McEvoy (UCLA), Eileen Camfield (UCM), Jingsong Zhang (UCR), Phoebe Bronstein (UCSD), Brian Dolan (UCSF), Elisabeth Weber (UCSB), Tanner WouldGo (UCSC), Madeleine Sorapure (BOARS representative, UCSB), Paul Beehler (Chair, English for Multilingual Advisory Group), Jennifer Griffin (Graduate Student Representative, UCD), Maryam Amin (Undergraduate Student Representative, UCSD), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Interim Associate Vice President and Director of Undergraduate Admissions), Jon Lang (AWPE Committee Chair), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions), Laura Hardy (Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions), Mary Gauvain (Chair, Academic Senate), Robert Horwitz (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Gagnon welcomed everyone to the first UCOPE meeting of the academic year and members introduced themselves. The analyst reminded the committee about the confidentiality of discussions.

II. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership

- *Mary Gauvain, Chair, Academic Senate*
- *Robert Horwitz, Vice Chair, Academic Senate*

Chair Gauvain and Vice Chair Horwitz introduced themselves, and Chair Gauvain reported that the Regents meeting in September largely revolved around the UC medical centers and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Regents are having ongoing discussions about the budgets for UC and the Office of the President. The meeting also included a presentation by the three National Labs describing their engagement with graduate and undergraduate instruction and postdoctoral activity as well as their coordination with the campuses. The presentation highlighted graduate education, which is not often a focus for the Regents. The Regents' special committee on student basic needs is finalizing its report, which will be presented in November.

This year, the Senate is dealing with the decision the Regents made in May to eliminate the use of SAT/ACT scores in UC admissions over the next five years and the first step is a feasibility study. The study will look at the feasibility of adapting or devising a test that would be available for use within five years. Chair Gauvain is on the Feasibility Study Work Group's Steering Committee and Vice Chair Horwitz is co-chairing the Working Group. Provost Michael Brown has assembled an impressive group of consultants to participate in this effort. The expectation is that the Work Group's recommendations will be submitted to the Regents in January 2021.

Chair Gauvain and Vice Chair Horwitz are considering how to establish a coherent systemwide approach to the climate crisis, using what UCSD's Senate is doing as a model. Vice Chair Horwitz explained that UCSD engaged in a comprehensive process last year of thinking through how the UC system, individual campuses, and faculty can address this crisis. This goes beyond carbon neutrality to decarbonization and to changing current faculty practices and activities that might reorient research and teaching. The report from UCSD's task force has been approved by the divisional Council, and the Representative Assembly will consider it later this month. The report includes a series of recommendations to the Chancellor including creating a new standing committee of UCSD's Senate dedicated to ensuring follow through on actions addressing the climate crisis. The question now is how

to replicate this on a systemwide basis. Academic Council will ask divisional chairs to disseminate UCSD's report across their campuses to encourage discussion.

Chair Gauvain noted that the University's new president, Michael Drake, has a long history with UC. President Drake was an ophthalmologist at UCSF at the beginning of his academic career before moving to UC Health at the Office of the President. Following that, President Drake was the Chancellor at UC Irvine where he oversaw the addition of the medical and law schools before moving on to serve as the president of the Ohio State University. It is beneficial that President Drake understands the UC system and workings of shared governance, especially in light of the daunting challenges facing the University. President Drake is busy with issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic but is also interested in issues that are important to the Senate including Title IX implementation, campus policing and safety, and the climate crisis and global environmental issues.

Discussion: One question is whether the Feasibility Study Work Group will look at the subject area sections of the SAT/ACT. Interim Associate Vice President Yoon-Wu indicated that there is a lawsuit that may prevent UC from using SAT/ACT scores for placement and satisfaction of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). A member asked if Chair Gauvain's memo dated September 29, 2020 regarding the online administration of the 2021 Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) grants approval to UCD, UCI, UCSB and UCSC to use their alternatives to the AWPE for a second year. The analyst explained that the September 29th memo from Academic Council confused and incorrectly conflated the plan for the 2021 systemwide AWPE with the issue of continuing the four alternative projects. Therefore, the committee will still need to request that Council grant a waiver of Senate Regulation 636.B and C to allow the four campuses to opt out of the AWPE.

III. Response to VPDUEs' April 2019 Memo about the AWPE and ELWR

Chair Gagnon invited members to provide feedback on the draft response to the April 2019 memo from eight Vice Provosts and Deans for Undergraduate Education.

Discussion: Members suggested minor edits to the draft memo.

Action: The analyst will circulate a revised draft to the committee for approval next week.

IV. Updates on UCD, UCI, UCSB, and UCSC Alternative Placement Processes

The representatives from UCD, UCI, UCSB and UCSC were asked to provide brief verbal reports on the status of their alternative placement processes.

Irvine has completed the first round of its collaborative placement process. The campus used SAT and ACT scores to make an initial default placement of students who had not satisfied the ELWR, and Visa status and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores were used to place students who were not flagged for UCI's academic English program. About 1400 students were then engaged in a collaborative process and 140 of these students took advantage of this opportunity to potentially change their placements. Students completed a survey about the various writing courses to provide a sense of their preparedness, uploaded a writing sample from the previous year and wrote a 300 word argument about the course they want to be placed in. The 140 students then met for ten minutes with Writing Program faculty who had reviewed this packet of information.

Very few placements had to be changed and the distribution of course enrollments was as projected. Writing Program faculty as well as administrators were satisfied with the collaborative process. One challenge was that Advanced Placement (AP) scores trickled in over the summer and some students in

ELWR-satisfying courses were moved to different courses as a result. Depending on the outcome of the lawsuit regarding the use of standardized test scores for placement, the default placement component of UCI's process may need to change or the Writing Program may rely upon the survey for placement. One idea is to use the essays required for the admissions application.

Santa Cruz implemented directed self-placement (DSP), which involved an extensive survey that exposed students to samples of reading and writing assignments that are mapped to the Writing Program's course learning outcomes. Students were given two hours to complete the survey. The Program honored the scores for any students who took the systemwide AWPE. The survey was administered as part of online summer orientation to 3737 students, many of whom had already satisfied the ELWR. Based on the survey, a course was recommended, and students were offered advising and asked to make their final course selection. About 1000 students who had satisfied the ELWR before matriculating to UCSC still wanted to take the ELWR satisfying course. The administration did not provide the resources needed to accommodate all of the demand, but the Program will dedicate a set number of sections of Writing 1 to support these students. Students who were unfamiliar with academic writing when surveyed in the summer have been surveyed again to find out if their choices had changed based on what they experienced in the required College 1 course. The program is considering if it would be beneficial to administer the survey closer to fall. UCSC will have data to share with UCOPE after students have moved through winter and spring.

Santa Barbara administered a survey, based on UCSC's, that introduced students to the ELWR courses using videos from students and course materials. Students answered multiple choice questions about their familiarity and comfort level with the course materials and, based on sample assignments from the two courses, wrote reflections about their readiness. Then students indicated their preference for Writing 1 or the ELWR satisfied course and wrote about why the course would be a better fit for them. UCSB accepted scores from the AWPE, so the Writing Program only needed to test about 300 students. Half of these students selected the ELWR satisfying course, Writing 1, and the Program honored that choice. For students who selected Writing 2, the Program looked at high school grade point average (GPA) along with test and survey scores, and a group of faculty read the reflections written by students who did not appear to be ready for Writing 2 and decided whether the students should be placed in Writing 1 or 2. If students disagreed with their placement, the appeal process entailed submitting a sample of their best writing and answering a set of questions about that sample. No students appealed their placements, so the Program does not know how well this process will work. Focus groups with students who took the AWPE or went through the collaborative writing placement process are being conducted. Next quarter, a content analysis of the written reflections will be conducted to identify patterns and themes to help refine the survey and other aspects of the process.

Davis is also using a collaborative placement process beginning with a survey where students self-report their literacy and language practices, educational experiences, confidence and any standardized test scores. Based on the survey, a placement into one of five different pathways is recommended and students learn about that pathway, the course descriptions and outcomes, and then accept or reject the recommendation. Almost every student agreed to the recommended placement but they had the option of doing a challenge activity which involved submitting a sample of their best writing and write a short rationale for a different placement.

Just over 4500 students completed UCD's collaborative placement process in seven waves from May to October and few students decided to do the challenge activity. Forty-eight percent of students were placed in the first three pathways, the ELWR-satisfying courses, and the rest were placed into lower division writing requirement courses due to their test scores. Fewer students started in the English for Multilingual Students course than usual as more were placed directly into ELWR-satisfying courses. The Writing Program is happy with how the process worked but adjustments that can be made for the

next round are being considered. The Program is working to ensure that communication with various advisors on campus is clear, transparent, and consistent and advisors will also be surveyed about their experiences with guiding students through the process.

Discussion: The College Board is likely to have challenges with the AP exams because testing centers are closed due to the pandemic. AWPE Chair Lang pointed out that this year's AP exam in Language and Literature is different from prior years. The exam was scaled down considerably as it did not include the multiple choice section of the exam, and students wrote essays in response to one instead of three free response questions. Thus, the AP score this year was based on the performance of the student on a single 40 minute writing response. There are concerns that DSP allows students to game the system by taking easier courses to boost their GPA but this distrust may be more common among faculty in the Science, Engineering, Technology and Math fields who do not believe that students are the best judges of their own capabilities. Members noted the challenges related to giving students the extra support they want within a limited time period.

AWPE Chair Lang commented that it is important for students to be evaluated based on their writing rather than their GPA because of grade inflation concerns. UCSC took this into account and the UCI and UCSB representatives agree that it would be useful to add an assessment of writing rather than relying on grades alone as an indicator of success or failure. It will also be helpful to ask students about their experience with the surveys soon after they complete the placement processes as well as gathering student feedback once they complete the courses. AWPE Chair Lang proposed that a study could compare students who received a non-passing score (a 6) on the AWPE, had certain scores on standardized tests and are placed in the ELWR-satisfying course to students who passed the AWPE with the lowest passing score (an 8) with similar scores on standardized tests as the first group who are placed in a post-ELWR satisfying course. Their writing would be assessed after the first term and this might be a starting point for thinking about how to follow a specific group of students and to assess the different routes taken by small cohorts who straddled the line between passing and not passing the AWPE.

A member expressed concern about the focus on student satisfaction and suggested that it is premature to vote on these new processes without having the most basic assessment of grades and of how the students performed with these new placement methods. Chair Gagnon remarked that UCD, UCI, UCSB, and UCSC need more time to continue with their with their placement mechanisms. The UCI representative posited that the stakes of approving the continuation of the alternative processes are lower now than they will be once more data is available. Several members noted that postponing the vote until January would enable the committee to have some data to consider. The point was also made that there are long-term consequences to students if they take a class and then perform poorly or fail. One suggestion is for the committee to provisionally approve continuing the four campus projects until data is available, but it is not entirely clear what information will be available in January on which to base a decision.

Chair Gagnon clarified that UCOPE will vote on requesting that Academic Council approve a waiver of SR 636.B and SR 636.C to allow the four campuses to use their alternative processes from 2021 to early 2022 and the waiver will not apply to placement for fall 2022. The waiver will apply only to the systemwide AWPE (SR 636.B) and use of the AWPE after students have matriculated (SR 636.C), and it is unrelated to the passing grade for ELWR satisfaction and other clauses of the Regulation.

Action: The committee voted unanimously to grant voting rights to UCOPE's ex officio member for this academic year.

Action: The committee voted 10 to 1 in favor of asking Council for a second waiver of SR 636 B and C for 2021 to early 2022. The analyst will draft the memo to Council.

V. Consultation with the Office of the President

- *Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Interim Associate Vice President and Director of Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Laura Hardy, Director, Undergraduate Admissions*
- *Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions*

This item was not discussed.

V. Proposed ELWR Task Force

Chair Gagnon explained the draft proposal to establish an ELWR Task Force to take an in-depth look at the Requirement and update the language in Regulation 636. This effort will involve experts in the system including individuals who work on writing placement and assessment. Vice Chair Horwitz has reviewed background materials and it seems clear that, after several years of debate at UCOPE, it is beyond the scope of this committee to reach an acceptable determination about the Requirement and the AWPE. UCOPE should finalize the charge for the proposed task force, and Vice Chair Horwitz noted that the systemwide Committee on Committees (UCOC) will identify and appoint the members. Chair Gauvain commented that there is some urgency to examining the issues raised by UCOPE because the Senate is currently revising admissions policies.

Discussion: One question is the timeline for the task force's work, especially as it relates to the four campuses using alternative placement processes. The analyst reminded the committee that the last time the ELWR was studied was in 2002, so the new task force should not be rushed and its work should not be driven by the four campuses. The analyst also cautioned against expecting the task force to make decisions that immediately impact the ELWR and the AWPE. Chair Gauvain noted that time will be needed to gather information, including the collection of empirical data, which will inform the task force discussions. In addition, Chair Gauvain stated that the task force should plan to submit a progress report to Academic Council at the end of the current academic year. Once Council has approved establishing the task force, Chair Gauvain will ask UCOC to populate it.

The committee discussed the types of faculty who should be appointed to the task force. Suggestions include researchers with expertise in writing assessment, race and writing assessment, writing placement, and English for Multilingual Students. It is unclear if inviting experts from outside UC to participate since the task force will focus on a UC-specific regulation, and Chair Gauvain shared that outside experts typically only join the administration's task forces. A member recommended that, if the task force will look at the AWPE, it should also look at AP tests and the alternative processes being used by the four campuses but another member argued that the task force should focus on the ELWR from a systemwide perspective. Chair Gagnon pointed out that a priority is for the task force to look at the vague and broad language currently defining the ELWR in clause A of SR 636. The analyst reminded everyone that changes to the availability of standardized test scores for ELWR-satisfaction before students matriculate is among the reasons to revise the Regulation.

In addition to affirming the systemwide ELWR, the task force might consider whether writing placement should be decentralized or if it should continue to be centralized through UCOPE. It is unclear what the ELWR would mean if placement is strictly under local control and campuses are doing completely different things with writing placement and instruction. The analyst noted that SR 636.C gives divisions control over how students satisfy the Requirement once they have matriculated. One approach would be for UCOPE to use the task force's recommendations about how the ELWR should be defined to determine the mechanisms by which it can be satisfied. If the task force will look at the alternative placement processes, Chair Gauvain stressed that the four campuses should begin collecting

a uniform set of data. Chair Gagnon agreed with the members' request to get feedback on the charge from their campuses, with a goal of sending the proposal to Council for approval in November.

VI. New Business

There was no New Business.

VII. Executive Session

Minutes were not taken during Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 3 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Jeff Gagnon