

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2019

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

I. Announcements and Updates

Chair Francis welcomed members to the meeting and reviewed the day's agenda. The committee will have a videoconference the afternoon of June 24th. The chair described highlights from the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates' annual Legislative Day including discussions about state funding, transfer student admissions, time to degree, and faculty diversity. The Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) continues to gather data and other information about assessments instruments. Although the Analytical Writing Placement Exam is not used for admissions, Chair Francis has asked the Task Force to study this tool as well.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: The January 25, 2019 minutes were approved.

III. Analytical Writing Placement Exam Scoring/Norming

AWPE Committee Chair Lang led a discussion on passing the AWPE requirement. In keeping with standard practices, notes were not recorded for this portion of the discussion due to its confidential nature.

IV. Consultation with the President's Office

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

Coordinator Lind reported that the AWPE will be administered on May 11th and the scores sent to the campus Writing offices a month later. The Writing offices are able to log into the test scoring site to download the scoring reports, individual essays, and essays that have received an E-designation. It was noted that students are required to bring their specific test notification letter which includes their name and address as well as photo identification to the testing site. The exam supervisor checks the letter and ID against a roster of expected students and the supervisor will contact Admissions at UCOP when there is a concern. Admissions will contact the student, quizzing them about information from their application to UC that should only be known by the student, and will notify the supervisor that the student should be admitted. The AWPE fee is waived for students whose application fees were waived; otherwise the cost to take the exam is \$110. The test fee is waived for more than half of test takers.

Director Hardy indicated that UC expects a 3% decrease in freshman applications as a result of the smaller pool of high school graduates. Preliminary freshman admission numbers are down although this is in flux, and campuses will be able to admit students from their waitlists to reach enrollment targets. All campuses except Merced have a waitlist but UCM will begin using one next year. The admission numbers

are down for California, non-resident domestic and international students. Admissions will gain a better sense of the enrollment numbers after UC's budget is finalized in July.

Discussion: Since the stakes are higher with standardized admissions tests, there may be more attempts to cheat on them in comparison to the AWPE, especially since the latter is not utilized in admissions and has a format that does not lend itself to cheating. Reportedly, some students waiting to check in for the AWPE at UCSD were observed leaving the line after seeing that IDs were required.

V. Preparedness of Transfer Students

- *Madeleine Sorapure, BOARS Representative*

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) met a week ago and State Assembly Bill 705 was briefly discussed. This bill requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) to use multiple assessment measures to place students in transfer level courses whenever possible and to reduce placement in prerequisite or pre-transfer courses. The overall high school grade point average (GPA), GPAs in writing and in math courses and information about other high school course work are among the measures that will be utilized. The idea is to quickly enroll CCC students who want to transfer into transfer level courses as quickly as possible and offer them extra support, and the bill recommends basing placement on GPA. A separate plan for multilingual students will be forthcoming.

Discussion: Placement tests can no longer be used by the CCCs. Justification will be required for placement into pre-transfer courses. How this change will impact the UC and California State University (CSU) systems is unknown at present. How the CCCs will help students satisfy the writing and math requirements and whether transfer students will be better prepared for UC remains to be seen. Each campus will develop its own process for providing the additional support.

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

Committee members were asked to provide information about the process for satisfying the ELWR at their campuses. It is essential that the committee discuss the differences across the campuses and to understand how the current criteria and processes impact students and what happens to students who do not satisfy the ELWR. Ideally, UC should have a broader discussion about the value of and commitment to the writing requirement before delving into specifics about the AWPE. The campus flowcharts clearly illustrate how the processes vary but additional information about the curricular structure may be needed.

Discussion: In response to a 1980s budget crisis, UC eliminated remedial courses throughout the system. UCB responded by combining its Subject A course with the first half of the reading composition course, creating an accelerated and intensive six unit course, College Writing R1A. Students take the College Writing R1A course in their first or second semester and, if it is passed with a grade of C or higher, it fulfills the ELWR and the first half of the composition requirement. Students who complete College Writing R1A end up at same point as students who tested out of the ELWR and were enrolled in an R1A course in another department, which are only four unit courses. The College Writing R1A course is more demanding than the other R1A courses but it does not add to time to degree. From a budgetary perspective, the College Writing R1A course is seen as cost effective.

Some of UCB's athletics programs appreciate this course because it helps athletes meet the academic requirements. UC is invested in increasing access for students from under resourced high schools and it is problematic to assume that students from these schools, who may predominantly be from underrepresented minority (URM) groups, are able to write at the same level as students from schools with more resources and who have wealthier parents. It is also noteworthy that, as a result of the budget crisis, UCB's instruction for multilingual students was eliminated. When the University subsequently

increased the enrollment of international students, it was mistakenly believed that these students would not need language instruction. To address the needs of this international students, UCB has had to recreate programs for English language learners. Students self-select into these credit bearing.

UCD is the last remaining campus with ELWR satisfying courses outsourced to the CCCs and the campus is in the process of bringing these courses back under UCD's control. The campus found that the Workload 57 courses were disproportionately affecting URM students. Courses are being piloted in a number of departments and summer courses for URM students are being offered to help improve their performance. A streamlined sequence of courses for multilingual students has recently been approved. At UCM, students must pass Writing 1 to satisfy the ELWR in order to enroll in Writing 10. Some students defer the Writing 1 course until the spring semester and if they do not pass at that point, they can petition for more time. Last year, of the eight students did not satisfy the Writing 1 by the spring, one was dismissed for academic reasons beyond ELWR satisfaction and seven were granted extensions for more time. Writing 1, in the Merritt Writing Program, is the only UCM course for ELWR satisfaction.

The committee will continue reviewing the campus information during the June videoconference.

VII. Consultation with the Office of the President

- *Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Interim Associate Vice President & Director of Undergraduate Admissions*

Interim AVP Yoon-Wu explained that, for undergraduate freshman admissions, there are 15 a-g college preparatory courses and there is no minimum standardized test score but student must take either the ACT with Writing or SAT with Essay. The California Master Plan requires UC to admit from the top 12.5% of high school graduates in the state and BOARS developed a rubric to identify the top 9% statewide based on high school GPA and standardized test scores. Another top 9% is identified through eligibility in the local context (ELC). There is overlap between these two groups so together the "9 by 9" composes 10.5% of students, and campuses then have flexibility to admit more students who meet the minimum 3.0 GPA and the a-g requirements, referred to as the entitled to review category. Through comprehensive review, these two pools yield the 12.5% and a recent study shows that UC practices are actually yielding about 15-16% of the top students in the state. There is no pressure to raise the requirements to get to the 12.5%. Test score and GPA requirements would have to be raised or the ELC percentage reduced to reach the 12.5%. In the early 2000s when UC moved to comprehensive review, the GPA requirement was 2.8 and in 2005 the GPA was raised to 3.0.

Standardized test scores come into play with the "9 by 9" statewide index. When the use of standardized tests was challenged in the mid-2000s, BOARS devised the UC score which is a scale of zero to one hundred. SAT and ACT scores are each converted to the UC score seen in the statewide index. The UC score was based on the old SAT scores and after recent changes to the SAT, the sub scores had to be concorded to the old SAT Reading and Writing sections. It is hoped that the STTF will lead to simplification of this process. A student could have a weighted 3.0 GPA based on 10th and 11th grades and a UC score of 277 to meet the statewide index of the top 9%. When BOARS changed the admissions policy in 2007, the "9 by 9" policy was silent on admission by exam so it is still in place but a student would have to take two SAT subject tests to take advantage of this process. Most campuses do not use admission by exam since there is enough demand by students who meet eligibility through comprehensive review. Admission by exam would be used by students who were home schooled and did not take a-g courses or were otherwise in non-traditional settings.

UC campuses use the same application and every campus reads each application received. Campuses have slightly different approaches to how their admission criteria is set based on divisional Senate policies and they can use different pieces of information from the application. Comprehensive review

asks campuses to use up to 14 measures of achievement for freshmen, and applicants cannot be denied admission on the basis of a single criterion. UCOP compiles information for the campuses about the number of students from a particular high school that applied to UC in the past three years and the scores and admission rates for that high school. Test scores are more meaningful when the readers are able to see them in the context of the high school. This contextual information is also provided for GPAs, the number of a-g courses, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses and other factors. This information, referred to as percentile rankings, allows a campus to see that a student with a 4.0 GPA at a competitive high school may not be one of the best students in that school. Likewise, it will show that a student from a less well-resourced high school, who may not look like a high ranking student overall, is the best qualified applicant UC has seen from that school.

BOARS eliminated the use of SAT subject tests as a requirement starting in 2012 but some Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics departments will recommend they be taken. Students may also use test scores to meet the a-g subject area requirements. The test scores demonstrate to the public how UC is non-resident students compare favorably to California students. The tests are also used to show English proficiency for students in educational systems where English is not the language of instruction. The campuses determine the cut scores for these exams.

UCOPE and BOARS decided that the optional SAT Essay and ACT Writing components are required to signal the importance of writing to success at UC. Currently, the nine undergraduate campuses are among the thirteen institutions nationwide that require these two optional sections and none of UC's comparator eight institutions require them. The College Board claims that the SAT Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing component is comparable to the old Writing portion. The Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), administered to 11th graders in California, provides summative assessments of Math and English Language Arts. CSU and CCC have stated their intent to use the scaled SBA scores for placement into Math and English because their remedial courses have been eliminated.

Discussion: A student with a 3.0 GPA would need nearly perfect test scores. Admission decisions at one campus are not used for admissions decisions by other campuses but this information is used to predict the yield. As UCOPE considers feedback critical of the AWPE and the ELWR, it is important to understand how standardized tests are used at UC. It is not necessarily clear what the sub scores from the SAT mean. The cost of the SAT has increased significantly and how this will impact who takes the exam is a question.

Chair Francis remarked that the STTF is considering whether the SBA will be utilized, a decision which would also impact the ELWR. AWPE Chair Lang was asked by SBA to participate in a study of the assessment and shared that the SBA multiple choice section looks much like the SAT. The SBA writing section differs from the SAT and AWPE in that students are asked to write a synthesis of information from a number of sources. It is shorter in duration and appears to be more challenging than the AWPE. There is pressure on UC to use the SBA since many students are reportedly not taking it seriously because it is not a UC requirement. The nature of the SBA and what is taught in K-12 schools will change should UC make it an admissions requirement. UCOPE may eventually wish to consider whether AP research and seminar courses might be used to satisfy the ELWR.

VIII. AWPE Specifications

During the January meeting, members discussed updating the AWPE specifications as well as bringing passages that might be used for the Exam.

Discussion: One member is concerned about the request to bring passages to use for the AWPE since this is the responsibility of the AWPE Subcommittee, but it was noted that other members wanted the

opportunity to make suggestions. Many of the passages used seem to relate to Sociology and Psychology, so drawing from other disciplines should be considered. One example Gould's famous essay using the evolution of the Hershey bar to illustrate the paleontological theory of punctuated equilibrium. There is interest in making sure the essay topics are not based on life experience or educational background but are more inclusive. More consideration could be given to the source material and the demographics of UC applicants. AWPE Chair Lang agrees it would be useful to see the pre-test results of essays considered more inclusive.

IX. VPDUE Concerns about the AWPE

UCOPE has received a letter from eight Vice Provosts and Deans for Undergraduate Education expressing their concerns about the AWPE. It is not clear if the VPDUE memo was informed by any consultation with the divisional Preparatory Education committees. Chair Francis proposes that BOARS, the Committee on Educational Policy and UCOPE conduct a joint study of the AWPE as has been done in the past. Divisional committees should be actively engaged with their respective VPDUEs and the Senate should have a broader discussion about how the ELWR is operationalized.

Discussion: One suggestion is to consider the makeup of UCOPE and whether the members should have writing expertise, and the chair noted that campuses decide who is appointed. Perhaps some Writing Program Administrators could be added to UCOPE as ex officio members. A member responded negatively to the VPDUEs' memo in part because it seems there was no input from local Preparatory Education committees and also because faculty are responsible for making decisions about standards and courses. The VPDUEs do not seem to understand the authority of the Senate and did not follow standard protocol by sending their memo either to their campus Preparatory Education committees or to the Academic Senate Chair rather than to Chair Francis directly.

It is possible that only UCD faculty were consulted by the VPDUEs and the campus representative remarked concerns articulated in their memo are based on discussions involving various UCD faculty groups. It is puzzling why the VPDUE memo was not transmitted through the UCD Senate and AWPE Chair Lang reported that some Writing Program faculty at other campuses were shocked by the memo. UCOPE acknowledges the frustration expressed by the VPDUEs, which is shared by some faculty. The memo seems to make an argument for local control of the ELWR when in fact campuses control placement decisions and processes and the curriculum used in their entry level courses. It underscores the importance of distinguishing between the Exam and the Requirement. UCOPE members should do a better job of communicating with campus administrators on an ongoing basis.

UCOPE also oversees math placement, so a member recommended that its membership should be drawn from a variety of disciplines. There is a possibility of moving towards more coordinated math placement; when comparing the placement processes for different subjects, we should avoid tacit assumptions regarding their relative efficacy and efficiency. It is incorrect to characterize the AWPE as a standardized, normed, off the shelf test because it is criterion referenced test and each student is considered separately. Members discussed how UCOPE could respond to the memo. Chair Francis recommends a forward thinking and deliberate response and the development of a plan for an in-depth study of the ELWR and AWPE. Campus Writing programs as well as the VPDUEs need to be engaged with their divisional Preparatory Education and Educational Policy committees or Undergraduate Councils. Members are encouraged to share their thoughts about next steps on the listserv and the committee response will be discussed on June 24th. The analyst clarified that UCOPE's response will be transmitted to Chair May.

X. New Business

There was no New Business.

XI. Executive Session

Executive Session was not held.

Meeting adjourned at: 4 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Darlene Francis