

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021

Attending: Jeffrey Gagnon, Chair (UCSD), Rebekka Andersen (UCD), Daniel Gross (UCI), Megan McEvoy (UCLA), Eileen Camfield (UCM), Jingsong Zhang (UCR), Phoebe Bronstein (UCSD), Elisabeth Weber (UCSB), Tanner WouldGo (UCSC), Madeleine Sorapure (BOARS representative, UCSB), Jennifer Reifman (Graduate Student Representative, UCD), Maryam Amin (Undergraduate Student Representative, UCSD), Tongshan Chang (Director, IRAP), Matt Reed (Analyst, IRAP), Han Mi Yoon-Wu (Director, 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. General Updates and Announcements

Chair Gagnon welcomed members to the videoconference. The Chair was unable to attend the recent meeting of the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) but an ongoing focus is how to make it easier to transfer from the California Community Colleges (CCCs) to the California State University and UC systems. There are issues related to advising students about various majors and helping them adapt to different campus cultures and expectations. ICAS also discussed academic integrity and the various websites operated by for-profit companies which students are using to cheat.

Discussion: The analyst reported that the Committee on Educational Policy will meet with Chegg representatives next week. When faculty discover that their course materials have been uploaded by students to social learning websites, the burden is on the individual faculty member to send take down requests.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: UCOPE's January 29, 2021 videoconference minutes were approved.

III. Consultation with the Academic Senate Office

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

Chair Gauvain described the plans under discussion for reopening the campuses this fall, and indicated that the Senate will issue a set of guidelines and considerations to be shared with campus administrators. If the University mandates that students receive the COVID-19 vaccine or follow other public health measures, it would be problematic to make faculty responsible for enforcing such requirements. Now that the SAT and ACT will no longer be used for admissions at UC, a Senate workgroup will begin exploring use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Academic Council is also working on a follow-up survey of faculty on their experiences with remote instruction. The survey data will be useful for discussions with administrators and the Regents about the role of remote and online teaching at UC.

Vice Chair Horwitz shared that Council has been discussing UC Health's affiliations with Catholic hospitals, which have ethical and religious directives, and just voted to oppose these affiliations.

The Senate leadership has been considering how to work on climate crisis issues either by setting up new campus committees or through the sustainability committees that already exist. One goal is to generate a bureaucratic and organizational channel to deal with climate crisis issues, both on the campuses and at the Office of the President. Provost Brown has formed a post-COVID-19 impact committee, to be co-chaired by Vice Chair Horwitz and former Senate Chair Mary Croughan, to figure out how to move ahead, especially as it relates to faculty salary, benefits, and advancement. Some of the campuses are holding webinars focused on the recent data breach, and now there is a call for employee benefits to include credit monitoring services.

The transfer process for CCC students has been a central focus over the past several years, yet in spite of making improvements, UC is regularly criticized and put on the defensive. Chair Gauvain stated that the 2021-2022 budget outlook is positive both in respect to proposed State funding as well as potential Federal funding. The University anticipates using some of this money for seismic upgrades, campus sustainability projects, and cost-of-living-increases for faculty and staff. Line items in the State budget are problematic, however, because this is a way for the Legislature to dictate priorities to UC.

Chair Gauvain and Vice Chair Horwitz joined the beginning of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Task Force's first meeting this week and the work this group will do shall be very helpful, especially since the Requirement has not been studied recently. The UC Police Policies were just reviewed and it was disturbing to read about riot gear, carrying guns on campus, and use of force with everything that has happened this year. Council discussed the policing policies with President Drake who agrees with the need to rethink and improve these policies.

Discussion: A member questioned why the ELWR Task Force includes two representatives from one campus while the other undergraduate campuses each have only one representative, and the analyst explained that the Committee on Committees determined the composition of the Task Force. Concerns were raised about the Proposed Presidential Policy University of California Research Data and Tangible Research Materials, and Senate leadership reported that Council did not endorse this policy.

IV. Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium English Language Arts

- *Tongshan Chang, Director, Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP)*
- *Matt Reed, Analyst, IRAP*

Chair Gagnon welcomed Director Chang and Analyst Reed to the videoconference and explained that the committee received a general presentation on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in 2018. Director Chang and Analyst Reed have been invited to the meeting today to talk about an analysis of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium English Language Arts (SBAC ELA) and whether this Assessment could be considered by UCOPE as a means to satisfy the ELWR in the future. The elimination of the SAT/Act for admissions is a reason for UCOPE to contemplate adding new ways of meeting the Requirement, but the committee will not vote on this question today.

The Consortium, which is housed at UCSC, developed a test that is aligned with the Common Core standards that California and many other States have adopted. The Assessment is used in the third, eighth and 11th grades in California public schools. IRAP obtained 2016 SBAC ELA data from the California Department of Education for the 11th grade to consider the question of ELWR satisfaction and this data was compared to 2016 AWPE, SAT, and ACT data. Previous analyses showed that students taking the SAT/ACT would have passed the AWPE at a rate of 75% or higher. Entering

students scoring 2760 or above on the SBAC ELA in fall 2016 passed the AWPE at a rate of 75%, and although 2760 is near the top of the range for SBAC ELA, 26% of test-takers achieved this score or higher. Previous analyses have also shown that 25 to 30% of test-takers on SAT/ACT tests have scored at or above the threshold for ELWR. This suggests that it may be feasible to set a threshold for the SBAC ELA by which students could meet the ELWR. Students could also meet the ELWR by scoring 680 or higher on SAT Writing, and even at the highest SBAC ELA scores of 2780 and 2790, 50 to 53% of those scoring at or above that score met the SAT Writing ELWR threshold. Only 17% of test takers scored 2780 or higher on the SBAC ELA, suggesting that using an SBAC ELA threshold would allow a somewhat different set of students to meet the ELWR than the SAT threshold.

Students were able to meet the ELWR by scoring 30 or above on the ACT Writing or ACT ELA, and at the highest SBAC ELA scores (2770 to 2790), the share of students at or above that score meeting the ACT ELA threshold for ELWR was between 50 to 60%. Only 21 percent of SBAC ELA test takers achieved a score of 2770 or above. As with the SAT, this suggests the SBAC ELA threshold would allow a somewhat different set of students to meet the ELWR compared to the ACT. IRAP examined how many California resident admits and enrollees would meet ELWR at different thresholds if SBAC ELA scores were the only way to meet ELWR. If the threshold was an SBAC ELA score of 2790, about 7,300 admits and 4,400 enrollees would meet ELWR; if the threshold were 2700, 33,600 admits and 19,900 enrollees would pass; and at a threshold of 2600, 54,100 admits and 30,800 enrollees would pass. At a threshold of 2290, all 58,309 admits and 32,824 enrollees with SBAC ELA scores would pass.

All three categories—met ELWR by SAT, met by SBAC, and met by both SAT and SBAC—are majority female, majority Asian/Pacific Islander, and about one-quarter White. The SAT category is about 15% first generation versus 24% for the SBAC category and 12% for those meeting ELWR by both tests. The share of Hispanic/Latinx students in the group meeting ELWR by SBAC is nearly double that in the group meeting ELWR by SAT.

Discussion: AWPE Chair Lang explained that the SBAC ELA includes a multiple choice section similar to the SAT/ACT and a Writing section which is somewhat like the Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition exam that helps to understand how students synthesize sources. The Writing section is a more difficult task for students than the AWPE. Students are given a number of sources and have a certain amount of time to develop an argument. A member pointed out that the student population taking the SBAC is different in part because it is administered during the school day and it is free, which lowers barriers to access.

Qualitative data about how students feel about the SBAC in comparison to the SAT/ACT would be helpful. Students only have one opportunity to take the SBAC in the 11th grade and do not take it in 12th grade. Should UC decide to use the SBAC for admissions, it would become a higher stakes exam. The SBAC is used for school accountability and to assess how schools are doing in terms of their instruction, and there is currently no preparation for students to take the SBAC as there is with the SAT/ACT. Executive Director Yoon-Wu confirmed that the SBAC ELA could be used for satisfaction of the ELWR much like the Test of English as a Foreign Language. It was noted that the SBAC has about the same predictive power as the SAT/ACT in terms of general college success.

A member expressed support for considering potential new ways to satisfy the ELWR by way of test scores, but validity studies would be needed especially if they will be compared to the SAT/ACT. Another member cautioned against deciding to use this Assessment before the ELWR Task Force has more clearly and precisely defined the Requirement, noting that it is not clear if the ELWR is defined by the courses UC Writing Programs offer or by something else. The analyst shared that the

report from the Senate's Standardized Testing Task Force may have helpful information about the SBAC: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/committees/sttf/sttf-report.pdf>. The BOARS representative commented that the new workgroup established to think through possibility of developing of a UC-specific instrument for admissions.

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*

The AWPE will be administered on May 22nd and Admissions is preparing to notify students now. Last year, payment compliance was poor, so students will receive an email and a letter notifying them about the fee for the Exam, to be followed by a text message the day before the test. The deadline for submitting Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs) is May 1st and the notifications will be sent once SIRs are received. There are operational challenges related to determining the Exam volume and securing an adequate number of readers. Only students who have submitted SIRs to UCB, UCLA, UCM, UCR, and UCSD will be invited to take the AWPE. If a new prompt is used for the AWPE next year, the sample selection process will be added back to the schedule, so the Exam will need to be administered in early May. If this is the case, it may be necessary to invite all students to the five campuses using the AWPE but the students will be instructed to not pay the AWPE fee until they have confirmed their decision to attend one of those campuses.

The current operations vendor is willing to participate in the 2022 Exam. Several aspects of the process will need to be considered this summer, including a sample selection process for electronic administration of the exam and the funding required. Admissions also needs to determine if there is funding to make improvements to the payment and registration systems. The revenue from the upcoming AWPE and the cost of readers will be known in June.

Discussion: Many students who take the AP exams will receive a qualifying score, but the scores are not reported until July. In the past, students planning to take the AP were encouraged by Admissions to also take the AWPE so they would have two ways to satisfy the ELWR. If there are not enough readers, Admissions may send unscored essays to the campuses. AWPE Chair Lang noted that out-of-state students will be able to take the systemwide online AWPE, so it is hoped that fewer students will have to take the AWPE on campus.

The vendor is open to continuing to work with UC after 2022; but if more activities are removed from their contract they may decide to terminate it. The switch to an online Exam reduced the vendor's revenue because the in-person administration of the AWPE involved much more work. The vendor understands that the ELWR and AWPE are being evaluated. Coordinator Lind does not anticipate that there will be a return to the in-person administration of the Exam because of how expensive it is, and having typed essays makes things easier for the readers. Director Yoon-Wu explained that, as more universities make standardized tests for admissions optional, students are less likely to take these tests. Some campuses are contacting students to recommend that they submit standardized test scores.

VI. Systemwide Replacement for the AWPE

In January, Chair Gagnon asked if the committee should consider replacing the systemwide AWPE with another central placement process. The goal would be to find a mechanism that accommodates the different needs that campuses have for placement of students.

Discussion: A member suggested that UCOPE should work on a parallel track to the ELWR Task Force and recommended that a subgroup of UCOPE might consider an instrument to replace the AWPE. Reportedly, about 75% of the members of UCM's workgroup on Writing expressed serious concerns about the AWPE, and the workgroup wants to explore what alternatives might look like. UCM plans to pilot some type of directed or collaborative self-placement tool to pilot with the students participating in the summer bridge program. It is not clear that members are in agreement about the purpose of placement or about the role of equity in placement, so open and honest discussions about this are necessary.

AWPE Chair Lang commented that the AWPE works for UCB and individual campuses would face a significant financial challenge to support collaborative placement processes. High quality counseling is a major component of collaborative processes and academics within Writing programs are best suited to providing the guidance to help students make the best choices about their education. One recommendation is to identify the existing resources available at the campuses that can be utilized. The instrument being used can provide an educational opportunity, making the integrity of that instrument important to the collaborative process. At UCSC, directed self-placement has been cost neutral because all of the resources used for the local AWPE were redirected.

Members are interested in exploring a central mechanism that draws on a collaborative model but allows campuses to adapt components to align with their curriculum. UCR's COPE believes the AWPE works for their campus and is a financially viable model. UCSD's Analytical Writing Program has submitted a proposal to the divisional Senate for an alternative mechanism, and this move was prompted by concerns that there may not be a centralized placement process in the future. UCD wants to be involved in discussions about what a central placement model might look like. A survey placement model could work for all of the campuses and allow each campus to adapt the model to the local context so it aligns with local curriculum and learning outcomes. It is important for UCOPE to discuss these issues and to develop an understanding of the differences between the campuses.

The UCM representative to UCOPE is on the ELWR Task Force and is willing to be an informal liaison between the two bodies. Chair Gagnon proposes dedicating a significant portion of the committee's June meeting to the discussion about the goals of placement and the best way to achieve those goals. In April, the four campuses currently using alternatives to the AWPE agreed to decide on the data they would collect and report this to UCOPE. The campuses could start submitting their data whenever they would like and plan to discuss their reports in October.

VII. Consultation with the AWPE Committee Chair and Chief Reader

- *Jon Lang, AWPE Committee Chair and Chief Reader*

AWPE Chair Lang indicated that the number of readers that will be needed for the AWPE will not be known until the number of SIRs is available. This issue is complicated by how readers must be hired now. UCOPE needs to decide about the passage to be used for the AWPE in 2022. One option is to use an older exam and work with the existing materials for training and the second option is to use the passage approved by UCOPE in January 2020 which would require the sample selection process. There will need to be revenue from the 2021 AWPE to fund the sample selection process.

Discussion: Associate Director Hardy indicated that Admissions should have some information about the revenue in time for UCOPE's June 11th meeting. The committee will postpone making a decision about this matter until June.

VIII. Grading Flexibility for Fall 2021

Last September, Academic Council endorsed a recommendation from UCOPE to temporarily modify the passing requirement in Senate Regulation 636 to allow a grade of C- or above to satisfy the ELWR for winter and spring quarter. The committee is asked to consider proposing an extension of the grading modifications for fall 2021.

Discussion: While this modification was done in response to the pandemic, a member questioned whether the change should be permanent. UCOPE would need to discuss what the justification would be for making the change permanent. Some campuses use letter grades whereas others use Pass/No Pass, and this is further complicated by the fact that the passing grade at some campuses is a C whereas it is a C- at others.

Action: The committee voted in favor of recommending the temporary modification of Senate Regulation 636 to allow for grading flexibility in fall 2021.

IX. New Business

There was no New Business.

X. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 12:55 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Jeff Gagnon