

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION
ENGLISH FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS (EMS) ADVISORY GROUP
VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES

April 15, 2022

Present: Paul Beehler, Chair (UCR), Margi Wald (UCB), Catherine Hatzakos (UCD), Jerry Won Lee (UCI), Liz Galvin (UCLA), Yiran Xu (UCM), Kimberly Turner (UCR), Holly Bauer (UCSD), Karyn Kessler (UCSB), Gail Brenner (UCSC), Jon Lang (AWPE Committee Chair/Chief Reader, UCB), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Admissions), Brenda Abrams (Policy Analyst)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Beehler welcomed members to the annual meeting of the Committee on Preparatory Education's English for Multilingual Students (EMS) Advisory Group. The chair thanked the committee for providing feedback to Admissions at the Office of the President (UCOP) regarding using the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Essentials exam as a method for satisfying the admissions requirement for English language proficiency for international students. Most members were in favor of adopting the Essentials test because it is economical and less cumbersome for students, but some committee members had concerns about the abbreviated nature of the test. The Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Task Force, which included the chair and the UCI representative, completed its phase I report, and it was transmitted to Academic Council Chair Robert Horwitz. The Task Force will complete the phase II report by June.

The systemwide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) is in its final administration this May, and this means that placement and fulfillment of ELWR after 2022 will be handled locally with each campus determining its process. An accurate placement is critical for the success of students. Most campuses are thinking about either direct placement (using the AWPE), collaborative placement, or some form of directed self-placement. The need to figure out their placement process will provide each campus with an opportunity to think about the philosophy guiding their programs. Faculty working with multilingual students might want to look for opportunities to contribute to the discussions at their campuses.

II. Campus Reports

San Diego: There have not been any significant changes in the program since last year. Because of the pandemic, the program was not able to offer several new courses. The number of students placed in ELWR-satisfying courses increased, and many of them are not doing well academically, which has been a challenge for the program. Mental health issues are prevalent, and faculty trying to assist students are overwhelmed. Seven faculty members are going through the continuing appointment process, and the campus anticipates their appointments will be approved this year. The program has grown from 20 faculty in 2015 to more than 33 now. This year, the first comprehensive review of the program was conducted, and Chair Beehler was on the review committee.

Irvine: The representative reported that there was a larger number of international students in the program this fall than in previous years, and there are about 1200 students in the program. There was a significant drop in placements into the Academic English 2A, 2B and 2C courses. The uptick in international student enrollments and the downtick in placements may be related to an imperfect local placement system. The license for the proctoring system expired which gave

students taking the online placement exam access to it for about 72 hours without any proctoring. It is possible that academic dishonesty led to the low number of placements. There is an emerging sentiment that a low placement is inherently inequitable, a perception which may contribute to the resulting tendency to give students a higher placement. A lower placement should not be considered inequitable if there is sufficient data indicating that a course is appropriate and that a student will learn what is needed to be successful in subsequent courses.

Last year, the program piloted three graduate-level courses (Introduction to Graduate Writing, Thesis and Dissertation Writing, and Writing for Scholarly Publication) targeted for international students primarily in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and the Social Sciences. Those courses did well enough to have been officially approved, and the program hopes to continue offering them into the future as UCI is seeing a steady increase in international graduate student admissions, including into PhD programs.

Riverside: Although there was an increase in the number of incoming freshmen, there was not a significant increase in students in the program's Basic Writing classes. Either because of online exams or other factors like autocorrect functions in software available during the local placement exams, students were placed into English 4, which is not solely designed for multilingual students. These students are struggling in this class, especially when it comes to basic reading comprehension, and they are taking longer to get through the class because they are not getting all the tools they need, so the program is providing additional support.

An external review of UCR's program provided positive feedback and helpful recommendations, such as implementing mechanisms to celebrate student writing. John Briggs, the director of the program, will be retiring after next year and there will be a search for a new director. The program is working on a new placement mechanism since it relied on the AWPE to place about 75% of the students. A rigorous testing system used in summer will be adapted to place all students, and a test development committee is creating the materials for it. The program has selected one of the two prompts it piloted and a new exam will be piloted for summer placement to see how the process will work. There are questions about staffing and readers, and there are challenges because some students are noticeably behind due to the pandemic. The Basic Writing instructors have talked about proactively referring these students to the academic resource center for extra tutoring.

Los Angeles: The program is small and relatively stable, but between last year and this year, placement and enrollment into the ELWR-satisfying undergraduate EMS courses almost tripled. A possible explanation for the increase is that students did not take the SAT or submit their scores. The enrollment of graduate students in EMS courses declined since last year and this has been attributed to the pandemic because many students deferred admission or decided against attending. Incoming students will take the systemwide AWPE next month and the AWPE will also be administered locally during summer orientations. In the fall, the program hopes to add a questionnaire to the local AWPE as a way to obtain more student input on placement.

The local EMS placement exam is mainly for graduate and transfer students, and this exam was moved online during the pandemic. The program replaced Moodle with Canvas right before winter quarter, and Canvas has simplified things. There were concerns about academic integrity, but the program decided against using Respondus or other tools with their online placement. Data from the past seven years was reviewed to see if there have been any changes in the percentages of passing scores, and no differences were found. A team of Georgia State graduate students evaluated the program's rubrics, which was a good professional development experience and led to some changes to the rubric including eliminating deficit and grammar focused language. Additionally, throughout

2021 students in the lower classes were given pre and post course surveys about their experiences. There was a significant jump between pre and post course responses with students reporting feeling well-prepared in five different writing domains. However, while the feeling about being well-prepared to write a clear thesis-driven essay scored over 95%, the responses to the other four domains ranged from 45% to 60%. The lowest responses were to the question about feeling well-prepared to read and understand college level texts so this is an area the program will focus on next year.

Santa Barbara: Enrollments are rebounding to pre-pandemic levels and graduate enrollments across the courses have been steady over the past five years while undergraduate enrollment has declined. The program's English Language Placement Exam, used for both undergraduate and graduate placement, was moved online because of the pandemic, and it will be online permanently. The benefit of the online exam is that students can take it without having to be on campus and the program has the data needed to make decisions about placements and staffing earlier. The program is also able to identify the graduate students who need support early and fit Writing courses into their schedules. The program director and the program's four continuing lecturers participated in four Excellence and two Merit reviews this past year.

New faculty-led committees were created to increase faculty governance within the program including an academic personnel review committee which includes the continuing lecturers in the discussions and decision-making. The cases are then reviewed by the Senate faculty in the Linguistics Department. New committees were also created for the purpose of increasing faculty leadership around professional development and support in a peer-to-peer mentorship model. The program implemented an elective course called "Reading across the Curriculum" which has been popular among students, and this type of course may be offered to graduate students as well. The Senate approved the program's proposals to create parallel online sections of several courses, and the students' experiences and performance across these sections is being assessed in comparison to the hybrid sections. The program is losing faculty and recruiting is difficult because of the high cost of living in Santa Barbara.

Santa Cruz: The representative described the three courses that serve multilingual students and reported that the program switched from the AWPE to directed self-placement (DSP). If students pass Writing 25 or 25, they are automatically placed into Writing 1E but can also ask to move to Writing 1 which has a mix of native English speakers and domestic and international students. The program has been looking at enrolment and pass rates over the past few years. In 2021 through winter 2022, the international student population was much lower than in the past, and many students from China are not returning to campus, opting either to take remote classes or not enroll right now. In fall and winter 2022, the pass rate was significantly lower than in years past, with 66.9% of students passing Writing 25 as opposed to 86% in 2021 and 83% in 2020.

Since implementing DSP, the multilingual students are no longer predominantly Chinese but are a greater range of nationalities and backgrounds, and the program is trying to understand if this is related to DSP or simply a change in demographics. Some students in Writing 26 are wholly unprepared for college while others could be in a higher placement. In 2020-2021, the program conducted focus groups with graduates from UCSC who had been in Writing 25 and 26 to ask about their experiences and how courses could be improved. One suggestion is to consider grouping students based on their time zone for remote and hybrid courses. In 2021, the program did a background survey to gather information about students' geographical and language backgrounds and to ask what students thought of the pace and difficulty of Writing 25 and 26. Most students in Writing 25 indicated that their first language is either English, Spanish or Chinese whereas students

in Writing 26 had more varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds and a wider range of first language fluency.

Faculty are interested in continuing to teach online courses, so the program is determining the percentage of online courses that would be appropriate. There is a new contract in place for lecturers and the program is rewriting the file preparation instructions for each of the categories of promotion from pre-six to the new senior continuing lecturer category.

Merced: There are only five international undergraduate students at UCM but 38% of the graduate students are international, and 70% of all students are either first generation or multilingual writers and speakers. All of the program's classes are a mix of multilingual and monolingual English speakers, and students receive support from the English Language Institute Writing Center. The Merritt Writing Program, comprised primarily of Unit 18 lecturers, recently hired a new director who is housed in the Global Arts, Media and Writing Studies (GAMWS) department. Earlier this semester, there was a discussion about Merritt joining GAMWS and the program voted to remain independent. The long-term goal is for Merritt to have more Senate faculty and become an independent Writing Studies department.

The program's Writing major has just been approved, and more classes in the major will be offered starting in fall 2023. A small group of faculty began developing and testing a placement instrument to replace the AWPE, and a pilot was conducted with 25 students in the summer Writing readiness class. So far, the instrument has been successful but a full-scale pilot will begin this fall. In Spring 2021, the program had a research project on the challenges and opportunities of remote assessment during the pandemic, and quantitative and qualitative data was collected from students and instructors. Unsurprisingly, students and instructors reported being under stress, and students reported having significant familial responsibilities. However, the quantitative data showed that students were more positive than instructors in estimating the impact of COVID-19 on their learning outcomes. The program received two grants to support students: one to conduct a needs analysis among multilingual first year students and the other to implement a translingual approach in the advanced Writing course. In addition, the program surveyed students and instructors and collected student work to assess how learning and teaching align with the new curriculum.

Berkeley: The College Writing Program is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Since last year, there has been a major uptick in the number of students taking the AWPE, but this year the percentage of non-passing papers dropped which may be related to SAT scores not being available. There has been an increase in enrollments even during COVID-19, but the reason for this is unclear. Instead of taking the AWPE, almost 50% of students enroll in the accelerated College Writing class which offers more support. Many classes have moved to a hybrid model because being in conference with students or having them work in small groups is a better use of time. Some international students have not been able to return to campus.

UCB's program is small and does not handle all of the reading and composition requirements across campus. With the elimination of the systemwide AWPE, there are concerns about how the program will handle the large number of exams that will have to be read, but the program will administer the AWPE this year using Zoom and Canvas. UCB's administration has asked the program to create a Berkeley-branded exam and students will be asked to provide input on this, but there will be significant logistical hurdles to overcome. The most at-risk students have been dealing with inequities made worse by the pandemic and, while instructors let students know about the resources available to them, resources and support for instructors are lacking. The program receives a small budget from the dean and depends on profits from summer session, and the

program only has lecturers and an academic coordinator. Summer session went from 125 sections to 10, so the program is trying to determine how it can maximize its work with the international students who enroll at UCB and is rethinking its course offerings.

Davis: The Writing placement survey created in 2020 for the program's collaborative placement process, has been revised. The EMS program works closely with the ELWR team because the EMS courses are part of the ELWR pathway. Before the pandemic, the program was already planning to offer hybrid courses because of the large number of students that need to take them and fully online courses may eventually be offered. Last fall, about 300 international students deferred but the program learned a large number would be returning, so there was a shortage of courses at the same time as several faculty left the program. It was challenging to accommodate all of the students in the ELWR-satisfying courses and many students were granted extensions because they had been waitlisted. The program found that it was important to notify students when a class was not asynchronous. In an effort to deal with the waitlist, the program will have a robust summer session with more offerings than usual.

Faculty that teach upper division or graduate level courses had to help teach the ELWR courses and this resulted in fewer sections for graduate students. The program expects to have the regular offerings next year and to be able to serve all of the graduate students. The representative has been in touch with advisors in various departments to let them know that graduate students with certain TOEFL scores have to complete the English language requirement in their first year or will need extensions. There is also an effort to train more faculty to teach the hybrid courses and the program hopes that a proposal to offer additional hybrid courses for multilingual students is approved.

III. Open Discussion

Chair Beehler invited members to follow up on issues raised in the campus reports.

Discussion: Members appreciated all the information about the EMS programs that was shared. The UCD representative would appreciate insight from other members about campus Writing centers and Christine Holten at UCLA was identified as a good resource. There is a need for formal structures to ensure that faculty EMS expertise can be of greater service to students across a campus. EMS could be seen as not just language learning but also cross-cultural learning, and programs could more strategically maximize resources available on campus to add value.

Chair Beehler described participating on the external review team for the UCSD Analytical Writing Program (AWP) and explained that external review is not attached to accreditation. The team saw the review of the AWP as an opportunity to support the program by underscoring things that were going well and identifying ways to advance the program whether that involves staffing, administrative structures, or funding. The reviewers met with numerous stakeholders on campus and generated a report with information about each part of the AWP. One recommendation is that programs should think carefully about who is invited to serve as external reviewers.

IV. Consultation with AWPE Committee Chair/Chief Reader

- *Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, UCOP*
- *Jonathan Lang, Chair, AWPE Committee and Chief Reader*

The systemwide AWPE will be on Saturday, May 22nd and Admissions will wait until Statements of Intent to Register (SIRs) are returned, so only students planning to enroll at UCB, UCLA, UCR and UCSD are invited to take the exam. The exam was scheduled after the May 1st deadline for SIRs, but

this will result in conflicts with high school graduations. About sixty students requested accommodations last year, and the AWPE will be administered on Sunday the 23rd for students who report a conflict with the Sabbath. Only students in the U.S. are invited to take the systemwide exam. It is difficult to estimate what the exam volume will be, but it is expected to be similar to last year less the students going to UCM. The vendor operations contract ends at the end of September 2022, and Admissions is working to transition any materials from the vendor that UCOP and the campuses want to maintain.

AWPE Chair Lang noted that a server will be needed to host the training videos and documents. Chair Lang is in possession of exams that have been approved by the AWPE Committee along with pre-tests materials, but these will need to be digitized so campuses can use them. There are enough readers for 16k readings but there is concern that readers could drop out before or during the reading period whereas some readers will agree to read more essays. Chair Lang explained that international students are not invited to take the systemwide exam because the different time zones make it difficult to schedule the exam at one single time which is important for security. All of the undergraduate campuses, including those using alternatives to the AWPE, have agreed to honor a passing AWPE score.

Campuses are facing a variety of challenges as they take individual responsibility for placement including running the scoring system that had been operated by the vendor. UCR agreed to investigate if it could handle modifying and running the vendor's code which means the other campuses would have to figure out how reimburse UCR for its work. Coordinator Lind reported that UCR decided against trying to utilize the vendor's old system. Chair Lang indicated that campuses are grappling with how to place students without standardized test scores or the AWPE. The Test Development Committee may not work because campuses are handling placement in different ways. It is not clear that the campuses can reach agreement on a new placement mechanism that will satisfy everyone. There are issues related to local control and debate over timed writing tests.

Discussion: UCOP will retain the exam scores indefinitely and Coordinator Lind will have copies of the May 21st exam and the previous exams. Over the summer, Admissions will consult with campuses still using the AWPE as it works out the details related to training materials and copyright permissions for old exams. Coordinator Lind will review the list of exams with permissions in place and send this information to the campuses.

V. New Business

Next year's meeting will be on April 21st at 10 AM, and it is possible that the group will meet in person at UCOP.

Videoconference adjourned at: 12 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Paul Beehler