UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION
ENGLISH FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS (EMS) ADVISORY GROUP
VIDEOCONFERENCE MINUTES
April 17, 2020

Present: Paul Beehler, Chair (UCR), Margi Wald (UCB), Kelly Crosby (UCD), Jerry Won Lee (UCI), Liz Galvin (UCLA), Anne Zanzucchi (UCM), Kimberly Turner (UCR), Holly Bauer (UCSD), Jan Frodesen (UCSB), Kimberly Helmer (UCSC), and Brenda Abrams (Policy Analyst)

I.   Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, Chair Beehler noted that the in-person administration of the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) has been cancelled. The analyst reported that Undergraduate Admissions at the Office of the President is actively working to develop an online systemwide administration of the AWPE.

II.   Campus Reports

UCB: As of 2019, the Writing Program will no longer offer courses in the summer bridge program because there was too much work to cover in eight weeks. The number of visiting students this summer will be low and this will drastically impact the Program's budget. Demand for tutoring services offered through the Program has dropped dramatically. The Program is making changes to the portfolio process to make it less stressful for students by requiring fewer pieces and clarifying what is important. Enrollment in the reading and composition courses is high, possibly because students have additional time right now.

UCD: The number of students taking the English Language Placement Exam (ELPE) fell from 1100 to 500. The Writing Program introduced a new pre-Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) course this past year after looking at time to degree. Some students were juniors by the time they took the first year composition course. Use of the community college course was reduced and the Program noticed that students were placing higher and moving through ELWR courses faster. The data on student success shows that students passed at higher rates and that the learning outcomes are holding up. The Program is in the process of redesigning its placement process.

UCI: Last year, the Writing Program started offering two new graduate courses, dissertation theses writing and writing for publication, taught by lecturers who are actively publishing. These courses will be offered next year. Lower division reading and vocabulary courses complement the Entry Level Writing series. The plan for this year was to reclassify the lower division or Entry Level Writing courses to fulfill the lower division writing requirement. The Program offers a speaking and listening course for graduate students, and faculty have suggested offering it to undergraduates as well. Right now the enrollment numbers look positive, but there is concern about the budget.

UCLA: The bulk of the Writing Program's enrollment is in graduate classes. Entering graduate students who score under than 100 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are required to take the placement test and possibly a graduate English for Multilingual Students (EMS) course. Few students place in the first course in the three course ELWR sequence for EMS, which is offered only once a year. These students need extra support and the Program may offer them a hybrid, independent study course to avoid holding them back. The Program is focusing on outcomes and sequencing to ensure the benchmarks students need to demonstrate are clear. A partnership between the administration and a for-profit resulted in the Program teaching international students who spoke very little English, and this took time away from matriculated students who were eager to learn. There is also concern about a decline in summer enrollment.

UCM: The campus currently has 9k students and expects to grow to 13k students in the near future. Most of the international students are graduate students, and there are high percentages of multilingual, 1st Generation and Generation 1.5 students. Although only a small fraction of UCM students satisfy the ELWR with the AWPE, it is a valuable opportunity that helps with placement. Roughly 15% of students receive the E-designation on the AWPE. The Writing Program has been part of Undergraduate Education for many years, but it was not involved in academic planning. In July, the Program will fiscally and administratively be part of the School Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts and will be held in the dean's office. There are multiple projects with English as a Second Language and multilingual curriculum, and the Program will hire a multilingual research line and hopes to develop a sustainable curriculum.

UCR: Basic Writing 1 is a prerequisite and Basic Writing 2 is an oral communications class for students with significant deficits in spoken English. Multilingual students take the Basic Writing 3 course and many students retake it several times before moving on to the ELWR-satisfying course. About 300 students were in the Program last year and typically 7 % of the freshman class takes the EMS course. Current challenges are related to the transition to remote instruction, especially the final exam. Another challenge with remote instruction is how to encourage students to engage in classroom discussion. The Program tries to offer students extra support and the data suggests these students are advancing at rates similar to other students.

UCSD: Enrollment in the Analytical Writing Program decreased by about 200 students and the Program was able to offer smaller classes. A major decrease in enrollment is expected in the fall which means the Program will not renew a large number of instructors with one year contracts. A proposal to offer credit for courses starting this fall will be considered by the Representative Assembly of the Academic Senate on May 19. In January, the Senate approved the Program's plan to expand credit bearing upper division course offerings. Last year, the Program tested 830 students and without the systemwide AWPE, twice that number will have to be tested this fall which will be difficult. The Program is looking at UCD's writing placement test (on Canvas) as a way to test international students earlier in the summer. Right now, the focus is on how to offer classes remotely if students cannot come to campus in the fall.

UCSB: The oral communication course and vocabulary and grammar for academic writing course grant credit toward degree for undergraduates. The curriculum for graduate students is a mix of writing and oral skills courses. Last year, the Writing Program was told to expect more than double the number of international students. Between spring and fall, there is bump of students who place into AWPE while graduate student enrollment is stable. This year, the Program brought back the pronunciation course for international students, who are all from China. The five summer session courses are fully enrolled. The Program offered an online course on preparation for academic writing in the summer. There are concerns about the budget and about how many students will enroll in fall. The instructors are a mix of people who have been around awhile and recently hired instructors, and the representative's retirement has been postponed until December.

UCSC: The curriculum is a content-based approach to teaching multilingual learners. Writing 25 is about place and has an ethnographic anthropology component. Writing 26 is about language and students study their own language acquisition process. A third course on genre was eliminated due to budget cuts. All students have to take Writing 2 to fulfill the composition requirement unless they fulfill it through other means (SAT/AP). The Writing Program set up a multi-lingual curriculum committee which developed rubrics based on the Writing 25 and 26 curriculum, with seven outcomes across both courses. Students uploaded their work to Canvas and all students were asked to complete an online survey. Most of the multilingual students are from China and 70% of them are male, and the Program teaches a higher percentage of 1st Generation students than the rest of campus. Over 40% of the international students are 1st Generation. Before the new curriculum, international students felt marginalized on campus and felt isolated, which led to focusing on pedagogical support for students who do not have family with them.

The instructors have made an effort to build personal relationships with students. The data show that the coursework is helping students with using sources and incorporating background material, but students (~75-85%) have met all the learning outcomes.

III.   Remote Instruction

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UC has swiftly moved to remote instruction and the transition has been difficult. It is likely that remote instruction will continue over summer and possibly in the fall. Members are asked to report the challenges for their programs and share any creativity or innovative strategies being utilized.

Discussion: The workload for UCB's ELWR class was already demanding and remote instruction has made it more stressful. International students have returned home so the different time zones are a challenge. Students do not have a quiet place to work, some do not have internet access and instructors have concerns about students' ability to focus. The campus is helping but students who need assistance may not know that help is available, and there is no way to check on at-risk students. The dean does not want the Program to allow students to pass the ELWR course with a grade of C-. The UCD Writing Program set up a website with resources for students such as webinars. The Registrar is considering removing all dates and times from summer session courses to help students with scheduling conflicts, and faculty will deliver instruction and the final exam asynchronously. This will allow students to move forward with their degree.

UCI treated week one as a soft start and instructors used this time to transition to remote instruction. The Writing Program instructors have been encouraged to be flexible with students, and any problems related to remote instruction will not be held against them. Instructors will not be required to reapply for their positions next year. Instructors with experience in remote instruction are sharing their expertise with other instructors, and course releases were secured so instructors can have virtual office hours. UCLA also had a soft start and the Program is committed to not being too hard on instructors. One section has 15 students and time zone differences have been an issue. Instructors are working hard to build community.

A large number of UCM's students live in rural areas where access to broadband is limited, so there is a massive initiative to get broadband expanded in these locations. Faculty have been collaborating to share resources to make remote education work as well as possible. UCR will list course times as though they are synchronous in summer and classes will be recorded. One faculty member has lots of experience with online instruction and resources are being shared through a COVID-19 response committee. The Writing Program is holding frequent meetings with instructors to discuss what is and is not working. There are concerns about how to help students in different time zones. Classes are being recorded but students want synchronous sessions so they have the opportunity to talk with one another. There is concern about the privacy of students using webcams. The Program is figuring out how to increase verbal interaction in English and how to deliver final exams.

UCSD's Writing Program is experiencing challenges similar to other campuses. All writing courses are running synchronous sessions and most students are attending. A significant number of students returned to China and Korea and they are taking classes at 9 AM or 5 PM. A couple of courses have a high percentage of students in different time zones and instructors have 5 PM office hours to accommodate them. The Program will not enforce its attendance policy and may give students the option of completing an assignment instead of attending class, but some students think this is more work. There have been some issues with students accessing Canvas and Google Documents. Local students have issues with internet connectivity as well as limited access to technology.

UCSB did not have a soft week so faculty spent spring break participating in online training. Instructors are sharing resources and expertise in remote instruction. Faculty have been encouraged to explore low stakes alternatives to exams. Some students are stuck in dorms and many have returned to China. Although the ELWR-satisfying courses only use letter grades, students can ask the Registrar for Pass/No Pass instead. Most classes are asynchronous and students are able to comment on online forums that have been set up. UCSC's Program has several faculty with training in remote instruction who are sharing resources and there is a teaching circle on distance learning. Students have not reported problems with accessing Canvas. About 30% of the students in the Program have returned to China and many others are still on campus. Teaching is being done asynchronously and students sign up for mandatory office hours. Students have low stakes assignments and the representative is doing the same projects as the students.

IV. Analytical Writing Placement Exam and Second Language Instruction

Undergraduate Admissions at UCOP is working on an online administration of the systemwide AWPE. The AWPE has been criticized and there are concerns about its effectiveness. Members are invited to describe the AWPE's role in second language instruction, how the cancellation of the in person AWPE will impact Writing Programs, and how testing at the local level will be handled.

Discussion: UCB does not have separate sections or programs for EMS students and students are able to self-select into the College Writing R1A class. The AWPE is the only tool the Program has for placement into R1A or the freshman Composition course. There is no infrastructure to offer the AWPE locally if the systemwide Exam is unavailable. Freshmen start enrolling in mid-July for courses that begin in August. International students have to take the AWPE on campus in the fall. The representative, Program director, and AWPE Chair Jon Lang are discussing issues related to timing and funding.

UCD has offered the ELPE online for years on Canvas and a quarterly campus AWPE has also been offered. The E-designation from the AWPE helps with the ELPE placement process. The Program might develop an alternative exam to use on campus and this will be described to the Committee on Preparatory Education next week. A key goal is to align placement with learning outcomes. UCI is trying to identify a test that will work in place of the systemwide AWPE. International students have to take the AWPE on campus and the plan is to use the TOEFEL Writing sub-score for placement, but the learning outcomes are different from what the TOEFEL assesses.

UCLA uses an online exam to place students during summer orientation. Without the systemwide AWPE, the Program will need to test about 1600 students instead of the 200 it usually tests. Different scenarios are being considered including how to manage students admitted from the waitlist in late summer. The UCM Program has approached campus administration about getting funding for placement but it does not look promising and the infrastructure for testing is not available. The Program is arguing that placement is a worthwhile investment for equity reasons and fiscally in terms of academic planning. Different ways of offering an online exam, including using Canvas, are being explored.

The AWPE plays a major role in placement at UCR. AWPE essays given the E-designation are read to confirm that students are placed in the right class, either the EMS course or the ELWR-satisfying course. It is not clear how students will be placed without a systemwide AWPE. The Program usually tests about 20% of its students in the summer and if all students have to be tested there are questions about how this will be coordinated, what exam to use and how to deploy it to students. Canvas could be used and teams of faculty would be hired to score exams and identify students needing EMS classes. UCSD might use something similar to UCD's ELPE to place international students. All placements would be preliminary until the Program sees how the students are doing at the beginning of the quarter. UCSB is planning to create its own placement process because the Writing Program has not been happy with the AWPE. This

Program is also interested in UCD's project. UCSC does not like the AWPE and is considering using a guided self-placement process.

Videoconference adjourned at: 12:00 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Paul Beehler