

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

April 21, 2023

Present: Paul Beehler, Chair (UCR), Margi Wald (UCB), Catherine Hatzakos (UCD), Qian Du (UCI alternate), Leslie Sherwood (UCLA), Kimberly Turner (UCR), Holly Bauer (UCSD), Karyn Kessler (UCSB), Kimberly Helmer (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 videoconference and explained that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss trends, successes, and challenges. Many of the programs for English for Multilingual Students (EMS) continue to go through changes, so ongoing communication between members will be even more important going forward. Campuses are adjusting to the phasing out of the systemwide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) as well as the return to in-person instruction which may be adding stressors in the classroom. Students seem to be operating differently as the pandemic winds down with more frequent absences and treating classes like they are correspondence courses.

II. Campus Reports

San Diego: The program was reviewed for the first time since it was formed, and the feedback was positive. The program started making changes based on the review, seeking resources for such changes. UCSD has split positions that have two different review categories with different pay schedules, and these positions are currently under review. About a third of the faculty have continuing appointments. The program is figuring out the placement process and the campus administration is willing to provide funding, including paying faculty to read.

There are concerns about the number of students who will be tested by the program this summer because with the sunset of the AWPE, the number who need to be tested is expected to grow from the usual 800 to 3,000. The first placement exam will be offered on June 6th and issues include establishing test security and not having a mechanism to administer the exam remotely. Last year after looking at the test, many students reported having technical problems and asked to complete it later. This year, students who view the exam and do not finish will be required to take the exam at the Triton Testing Center in person on campus. Challenges for the program include that Canvas' limitations and increased student absenteeism and nonresponsiveness to emails about placement.

Irvine: Last year, enrollment was a challenge because of the campus's new placement system. UCI has been experimenting with different types of systems for all students, including domestic English-speaking students, international multilingual students, and domestic multilingual students. The number of students in the program has been fluctuating significantly. Instructors are concerned about how to accurately place multilingual students into the courses that will give them the support which will help them successfully navigate future courses. One issue with the placement system is the lack of proctoring because currently placement is basically a self-assessment where students upload writing samples they think reflect their high school writing experiences and answer questions about those experiences. The portfolios are read by a group of reviewers and the program is finding that, while the writing samples

that are submitted are polished, the students are not well-prepared for college level academic reading and writing tasks, so instructors have been struggling to find ways to work with them.

This year the EMS program will handle placements differently using a proctored timed essay for a small subsection of international students from countries where English is not spoken. This test was used before the pandemic to place approximately 1,000 students, but the program can only place 100-200 students using the new placement system. The program is conducting outreach to help others on campus see multilingual students in a more positive light and is trying to establish collaborative opportunities with the School of Education. In addition, the program is expanding graduate course offerings in an effort to show that it offers more than just remedial courses for underprepared undergraduate students. Such changes will hopefully provide a more positive understanding among students about the value such courses offer. The graduate level courses are going well, and the program will continue expanding these offerings in future years.

Los Angeles: A team of lecturers have developed and piloted informed self-placement to replace the systemwide AWPE. The EMS program hopes to start using informed placement, which has several components, this fall. Challenges include low enrollment in the courses and the limited course offerings during the academic year, a challenge that hinders students from completing required writing courses in a timely manner. To address these challenges, the program is creating a two-unit co-requisite EMS course to be taken along with the ELWR courses. The program has the option to offer the EMS ELWR courses online if enough students need them. Another issue is that, as of May 2022, lecturers cannot be paid summer ninths which is money for certain projects separate from their workload. The lecturers working on informed self-placement need a full course release but some of their work does not merit it. A grievance has been filed by the union regarding the summer ninths issue, which impacts not only the placement process but other projects as well.

Riverside: The University Writing Program (UWP) includes both freshman level and EMS classes. The EMS program has 58 Unit 18 lecturers and, while there are also graduate student instructors (GSIs), the basic writing classes are always taught by experienced lecturers with certifications or master's degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. A challenge last year was that the number of students placed into basic writing courses increased from 249 in fall 2021 to 417 in fall 2022, and this may have resulted from the return to in-person placement testing as opposed to an online process. Instructors have seen a difference in what students produce when in-person versus working remotely on their computers. Since the UWP thinks students can be more accurately placed when they are in person, this summer the placements will be conducted in-person with proctors and there will be 20 exam dates. The program anticipates having more than 4,000 students to place this summer instead of the usual 1,000.

The search for a new UWP director was successful with Wallace Cleaves, the associate director in charge of freshman composition classes, being selected. Last year the program had an external review, and the preliminary findings about the placement process were positive which is why the process will remain similar to the AWPE. The program's test development committee spent last year piloting the exam and compiling norming packets to ensure that the instructors will be well trained, but this work has been challenging for staff. Another challenge is the rise of ChatGPT, so the University Writing Program is trying to determine what reliance if any students have on artificial intelligence (AI). A workgroup has been established to identify ways to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic which include a lower pass rate for the basic writing course.

Santa Barbara: The EMS program, part of the Linguistics department, offers three undergraduate pre-ELWR courses, and the final course in the EMS program for undergraduate students satisfies the first writing requirement. There are also writing courses for graduate students. Enrollments are close to last year's which may be a rebound from the pandemic. The program uses the English Language Placement Exam (ELPE), and this year 524 students completed the exam with about 83% placing into EMS courses and 62% of these placed into the two lowest levels of the program. Graduate enrollments have been stable over the past four to five years, but in 2022-2023, the enrollments increased, so the program has offered additional sections which are almost 95% full.

The EMS program hosted a yearlong brown bag series as a community-building initiative for writing and EMS faculty. This year the program will implement a professional engagement award for a faculty member who shows a high level of professional engagement. The program applied for a UC digital inclusion grant. There are 12 faculty members in the EMS program, eight of whom are continuing lecturers, and last year there were four successful excellence review cases. The program was able to convert an annual request for course release for the assistant director position to permanent course release, and having consistent leadership has been beneficial especially as the testing process changes. There is an equity issue related to the fact that EMS faculty are assigned to teach up to eight classes, and this will be addressed with a request to modify the curriculum plan so that instructional workload credits are implemented the same way for EMS faculty as they are for the writing program faculty. The program is clarifying the criteria and support for how continuing lecturers can achieve senior continuing lecturer status, and this will draw from the writing program's process.

Santa Cruz: The EMS program is under the writing program, and the three courses for multilingual speakers are content and project based. The courses are approved to be taught in-person, hybrid and fully asynchronous, and students in hybrid courses meet with the instructor once a week. Writing 1E is the ELWR satisfying course and the Writing 25 and 26 are preparatory electives. The leadership roles are being redesigned, so instead of one person being responsible for a single course, a pedagogical team designs projects that are unified. This quarter began with a joint presentation to improve the writing instructors' understanding of how to work with multilingual speakers and it included a workshop on creating assignments that are more inclusive and asset based.

The program is finding that students in all courses are passing at higher rates than in the past and this may relate to faculty being more lenient, or the higher pass rates may be attributed to students placing themselves better via directed self-placement (DSP). International student enrollment is low, leading to courses being cut. Over 4500 students were enrolled in fall 2022 and enrollment dropped to just under 3,000 by winter, but the reason students dropped out of UCSC is not known. The program is utilizing the same online DSP test for international and domestic students and the questions are being honed. The UCSC report includes a link to the DSP instrument which is working well overall and has had a positive impact on the curriculum.

Berkeley: The College Writing Program (CWP) is within Letters and Science Interdisciplinary Studies and there are no separate ELWR or EMS programs although several instructors have applied linguistics backgrounds. Although the campus does not report data on the number of multilingual students, based on the F-1 and J-1 visas, it is clear that there are many immigrant students, but it is hard to know how many are multilingual. Students who need to satisfy the ELWR can either take the Berkeley Writing Assessment which has replaced the AWPE or opt to take the accelerated college writing R.1 six-unit course (CWR1A) that fulfills the ELWR and the first half of the first-year writing series. Other reading and composition requirements are taught in the disciplines by GSIs or lecturers, and CWP involvement with

offering post-ELWR reading and composition courses increased every year which might be related to the smaller number of GSIs available to teach.

CWR1A and the second course in the reading and composition requirement are approved as in-person and hybrid formats, and the program offers two sections of each per semester completely online. The number of students who took the AWPE increased over the past eight years and the number of students who did not pass also increased dramatically. As a result, the program now has 40 instructors teaching just CWR1A and some of the other reading and composition courses, and the program has stopped offering other courses in part because of the budget situation at the campus. The number of sections has also increased over the past three years which may be related to students skipping the assessment process and opting directly into CWR1A. Students are allowed to skip the assessment because the CWP does not have many offerings to choose from, and the program does not have enough people to manage a big process.

The summer program was decimated by the pandemic, but the situation is getting better, and revenue from this summer should fund professional development and additional courses. The CWP will expand the summer minor certificate in language, education and teaching. A pedagogical grammar class has now been added. The program is struggling with the amount of time the Berkeley Writing Assessment requires and is seeking more support from the administration. The program recently celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Davis: The University Writing Program (UWP) houses all the EMS courses. The Writing Placement Survey has been under development the past few years and replaced the AWPE in 2020. The process is not entirely directed self-placement because faculty are involved, but students can challenge their placement. There are four pathways: the first two are not ELWR satisfying, and two are EMS ELWR satisfying paths. There is one fully online course that requires students meet synchronously once a week. Students are surveyed after they complete the coursework for the year, and this input is used to update the survey which launches in each March and is open until October.

The biggest challenge last year was ballooning enrollment, and this was addressed by converting ELWR-satisfying courses to meet demand for upper division courses. This year, the program offered additional EMS courses over the summer to assist students who needed to fulfill ELWR. Many international students from China could not return home due to strict COVID-19 lockdowns, so the program adapted two courses to serve them. Last year, incoming international student enrollment was under 50%, but it has leveled out this year, and the same number of sections are expected for next year. Twenty-two of the 80 UWP faculty are EMS specialists and, in addition to EMS courses, they teach upper division courses. The instructors have noticed that students leave class early and there have been complaints about having to rewrite instructions for students. Additional complaints around meeting with students more often and providing explicit explanations for assignments were also expressed. Undergraduate students are struggling as they relearn how to be in the classroom. Graduate students, on the other hand, seem to be motivated. There is a concern about budget cuts that may include EMS courses for graduate students.

III. Discussion about Placement Processes on Individual Campuses

Chair Beehler invited members to ask follow-up questions about the campus reports and discuss other topics of interest.

Discussion: UCR has found that students using Google Docs or similar programs when typing passively accept the suggestions the technology offers without question or deep understanding. In contrast,

handwritten essays show the students' actual knowledge base and skill level giving instructors a better understanding about what students can produce. Working with students in-person can also reveal reading comprehension problems and patterns which lead to placements in courses that better prepare and serve the students for future classes. Chair Beehler asked if other campuses are concerned about students providing writing samples that are generated by ChatGPT and similar technology and noted that UCR has worked hard to maintain the in-person proctored environment so instructors better understand the challenges students face in writing.

UCSB's program is considering how to eliminate the ways artificial intelligence can influence student placement or performance, including using readings that come from the UCSB student publication that has limited distribution. UCSB's ELPE asks students to respond verbally to a question, and the program is considering giving this more weight to help make placements in the future. It is important to make it clear to students that if the program finds they have used generative AI, there will be repercussions. Programs that are supposed to detect AI are not accurate. UCSD's program is trying to mitigate cheating by using readings embedded on Canvas that cannot be downloaded, and readers are being trained to make sure students are responding to the excerpt on the learning management system. By comparing students' responses to the reading as it pertains to their written statements about their preferred placement, the program will see if there are differences. Some students might be cheating, but UCSD has found that the percentage of students being placed in ELWR courses is consistent with previous years when responses were handwritten.

UCD's UWP asks students to reflect on why they accept suggestions from AI like Grammarly and aims to teach students to understand the contexts where AI could be used but other contexts where it would be unacceptable. ChatGPT may be more problematic than Grammarly because it produces the work which has a major impact on creating consistent and reliable assessments for students. Programs should make sure that test prompts call for synthesis and are connected to concepts in the course. One member remarked that, in a worst-case scenario, students who use ChatGPT could be placed in a class for which they are not prepared. Members agreed that generative AI is here to stay, and instructors should acknowledge this, making appropriate adjustments to their programs. A member observed that students are engaging differently with school and are no longer familiar with how to engage with class content as a result of the pandemic. Students have significantly more anxiety.

IV. Discussion about Effects of Graduate Student Strike on EMS Classes and Instruction

Chair Beehler invited members to discuss the impact on EMS classes and instruction of the GSIs' strike.

Discussion: The strike has led to attempts to take away GSI and teaching assistant support from classes with first-generation and/or under-resourced multilingual students who need significant support. Some writing programs are being pressured to increase class sizes (except for ELWR classes) and the union claims the increase is a workload issue. UC supposedly negotiated in good faith, but the GSIs and students are being negatively impacted by the contract. At UCB, departments have stopped offering reading and composition courses due to the expense of paying GSI salaries or they have stopped hiring lecturers and GSIs altogether. Social science and humanities departments at UCSD did not have enough graduate students to fill the GSI jobs, and there are also conversations about limiting the number of graduate students admitted to programs. It was noted that students with PhDs have a very difficult time getting quality jobs after graduation.

V. Consultation with AWPE Committee Chair/Chief Reader

- *Julie Lind, AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP*

- *Jonathan Lang, Former AWPE Committee Chair and Chief Reader*

Coordinator Lind reported that the final administration of the systemwide AWPE was in May 2022 and students enrolling at UCB, UCLA, UCR, and UCSD participated in the online exam. Just over 7,400 students took the exam and the pass rates was 49.5%. Three hundred forty students were given the E designation for English as a Second Language. There were no problems with the administration of the exam, and there were sufficient readers to review the essays. The exam fee was waived for 48% of the students which is automatic when their UC admission application fee is waived. AWPE Chair Lang indicated that there were concerns about finishing the scoring on time but it worked out well. This was the second time the same prompt was used for the exam and Chair Lang noted that the passing rates both times were similar, but the significance of similar passing rates is unclear.

The long-term contract with the operations vendor has ended, the online testing and payment systems have shut down, and all the AWPE materials have either been archived or destroyed. The UCR UWP looked at the AWPE scoring system code design documents because the campus was contemplating taking over that code and using it in their local environment. Based on the analysis, UCR determined that adapting the system would not be feasible. The scoring system was about a decade old and, considering how rapidly coding evolves as well as how rapidly the UC's security protocols and policies change, Coordinator Lind is not surprised that the system was not suitable for continued use. UCR has archived the system but some old documents that were never added to it cannot be located.

Discussion: A member asked how the UCOP funding that supported the AWPE infrastructure is being used now. Coordinator Lind explained that the program was always intended to be self-supporting based on the student exam fees and UCOP did not provide a budget for it. The last couple of years the program ran a deficit, which was one of the reasons why UCOP decided to sunset the exam. After the final administration of the exam, President Drake authorized campuses to charge an ELWR fee. According to Chair Lang, UCB is now spending an inordinate amount of money to run its system, and this does not account for the administrative overhead required. The authorization for the ELWR fee specified that campuses should have a mechanism for waiving it for students who do not have the means, and Admissions offices will have information about application fees being waived.

Coordinator Lind stated that the \$110 AWPE fee covered the cost for students who received a waiver, and the fee could have been lower had all students been able to pay it. The UCSD representative met with UCI's writing program manager who explained that all incoming freshmen are assessed the ELWR fee in conjunction with the various other campus fees students must pay and financial aid can be used to cover the fee. Coordinator Lind suggested that it would be good if campuses can find a way to collect the ELWR fee without building a separate payment system which was a major expense for the AWPE program, and the coordinator is happy to help campuses figure out what systems will work.

VI. Consent Calendar

Action: The EMS Advisory Group April 15, 2023 videoconference minutes were approved.

VII. New Business

The group will meet on April 19th 2023 by videoconference.

Videoconference adjourned at: 11:45 AM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Paul Beehler