



**University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE)  
Meeting Minutes  
April 16, 2026**

Attendance: Brad Queen, Chair; John Tamkun, Vice Chair; Nasser Zakariya, UCB; Timothy Lewis, UCD (videoconference); Emily Penner, UCI; Kie Zuraw, UCLA (videoconference); Aurora Pribam-Jones, UCM (videoconference); Agnieszka Jaworska, UCR; Pedro Cabrales Arevelo, UCSD (videoconference); Brian Dolan, UCSF; Rebecca Rios, UCSB; Nicol Hammond, UCSC; Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair, Academic Senate (videoconference); Susannah Scott, Vice Chair, Academic Senate (videoconference); Brenda Abrams, Policy Analyst

**I. Consent Calendar**

Action: Today's agenda was approved.

Action: The February 19, 2026 minutes were approved.

**II. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership**

*Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Chair*

*Susannah Scott, Academic Council Vice Chair*

UC has reached an agreement with the UAW which has now been ratified by the union members. Chair Palazoglu's remarks to the Regents underscored the centrality of graduate students to UC's research enterprise. Four new Regents were appointed to the Board during this meeting and Chair Reilly and Vice Chair Sarris were reappointed to their positions. The UC Adaptation to Disruptions Plus Task Force workgroups are finalizing their recommendations and strategies to enable a resilient university going forward.

**III. Chair's Announcements and UCOPE Business**

*Brad Queen, UCOPE Chair*

Members reviewed the annual campus reports on the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) and provided input on the responses to each campus. Chair Queen will finalize the memos in time for the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ELWR Coordinating Council (ECC). In addition, the current chair of the ECC will step down, so another Council member who is in the Senate will need to be appointed. Chair Queen will send an email to the ECC members requesting nominees for the chair position.

**IV. Consultation with the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)**

*Dave Volz, BOARS Chair*

The chair of BOARS joined UCOPE and explained the College Board's implementation of the Evidence-Based Standard Setting process for Advanced Placement exams. Chair Queen has raised concerns about the College Board's conditions and terms for using artificial intelligence, so Chair Volz recommends inviting a College Board representative to a future UCOPE meeting. BOARS has met with representatives from the International Baccalaureate Organization to learn about the program and may consider allowing the Standard Level exams to be reviewed for credit by exam. Chair Queen noted that UCOPE is considering establishing a group of faculty to focus on math preparation. This group would collect data and share information about what is working well or not across the system. UCOPE is also thinking about how scores from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) could be used as one of the multiple measures for math placement and, today, the committee will consider approving a request from UCI to pilot the use SBAC scores for writing placement.

Chair Volz explained the policy on reviewing external exams like AP for credit by exam that has been drafted by BOARS. UCOPE would not necessarily need to consult with BOARS about the exam scores used at the campuses strictly for the purposes of placement. One question UCOPE has is whether the scores from the digital SAT should be used for writing placement and a first step will be to ask Institutional Research to analyze data on this exam to determine if there is an adequate cut score that could be used to satisfy the ELWR.

#### **V. Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Pilot Option**

*Tony Alpert, Executive Director, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)*

Executive Director Alpert provided detailed information about the Smarter Balanced Assessment including its structure, scoring methods, and current use in California and other Western states. The test assesses English language arts (ELA) and mathematics skills. The writing component of the SBAC includes a full essay and brief writing tasks. The full essay is scored on a rubric with three categories: evidence and elaboration, organization, and conventions. The brief writing tasks are scored on a separate rubric. The SBAC uses a combination of human and machine scoring. The full essay is scored by human readers, with a 10% read-behind for reliability. The brief writing tasks are scored using a machine-based system.

Discussion: The UC is considering using SBAC scores for placement purposes in writing. The scores would be used to determine whether students are ready for college-level coursework or need additional support. UCOPE has concerns about the validity and reliability of the SBAC scores, particularly in relation to the writing component. There are also concerns about the potential for bias in the scoring system and the impact of the test on student outcomes. Executive Director Alpert agreed to provide UCOPE with information about the scoring system and the validity and reliability of the test and committee

members should review the SBAC test and provide feedback on its effectiveness in assessing student skills.

The committee reviewed arguments for and against piloting SBAC for UC placement, including concerns about student engagement with the test and potential impacts on faculty AI adoption policies. After discussion, the committee unanimously approved allowing UC Irvine to pilot using SBAC scores with a recommended cutoff of 2760 for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 academic cycles, contingent on Irvine providing data showing consistency with their local placement practices.

Adjournment at: 3:42 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: Brad Queen, UCOPE Chair