

Present: Jonathan Alexander (Chair), Frank Ross (Vice Chair), Marcial Gonzalez (UCB), Caroline Streeter (UCLA), Suzanne Sindi (UCM), David Glidden (UCR), Bonnie Halpern-Felsher (UCSF), Linda Adler-Kassner (UCSB), David Smith (UCSC), William Jacob (Ex Officio – Council Vice Chair), Jacob Ryan Gutierrez (Student Representative – UCM), Eric Zarate (Committee Analyst), George Gadda (Consultant UCLA), Judy Sakaki (Vice President), Julie Lind (Analyst), Martha Winnacker (Executive Director), Michael Treviño (Director of Undergraduate Admissions)

I. Chair’s Report/Announcements

Chair Alexander had no announcements for the committee.

II. Consent Calendar

A. Approval of the Agenda

ACTION: The agenda was approved as noticed.

III. Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) Review and Selection of Essay Prompts

ISSUE: Professor Gadda provided the committee with background regarding the undergraduate writing requirement. Most students satisfy that requirement through UC’s Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE). The number of students tested each year peaked five to six years ago, but it has held steady at approximately 15,600 for the past few years.

Professor Gadda said that the typical exam development process involves a small group of ESL and writing faculty sifting through suggested reading passages and then selecting the most promising to send to Professor Gadda as chair of AWPE committee. Professor Gadda then makes the final selection and editing of these passages, sending the results to a fairness reviewer provided through a contractor. However, said Professor Gadda, the past three years have been atypical. Because of budget constraints, the test development group has not looked for new passages; instead it has looked at previous submissions that seemed promising.

Professor Gadda explained that the committee would review the potential exams at this meeting to make the final choice for the exam prompt. The committee would look though the exercises, take time to review the passage and topic, discuss them, and then vote.

DISCUSSION: Committee members discussed issues regarding differing expectations for writing in various departments throughout the University. They raised additional questions as to the difference between the UC exam and the SAT.

Professor Gadda remarked that he would try to frame some discussion points about the future of the AWPE for the April meeting. By that time, he also will send committee members seven to nine essays culled from the pretest that will represent the range of performance from the weakest to the strongest. The committee will then decide at the April meeting if each of those essays meets AWPE’s requirements.

The committee members read the sample prompts and discussed strengths, weaknesses, and implications of each.

IV. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership

Academic Council Chair Powell introduced Vice President Sakaki and announced to the committee that President Yudof is retiring at the end of August. He observed that the University is in better shape than when President Yudof first arrived. The search for his replacement is underway; there will be no interim president. Similarly, the search for the UC Riverside chancellor is underway.

The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate (ICAS) meeting was held a week ago; one of the main topics was open education resources. Two bills (1052 and 1053) sponsored by California Senate President pro Tem Steinberg were enacted last year. These bills are intended to provide up to \$10M for open education resources, however, no part of that funding is available at this time. Mr. Steinberg has asked that UC, CSU, and the CCC appoint three faculty each to serve on a Council for Open Education Resources. ICAS is also undertaking the rewriting of science competencies; this is likely to be a two to three year process.

Chair Powell informed the committee about discussion surrounding the proposed revision to WASC requirements for upper division GE. Although the changes most likely would not have affected UC, they would have considerable impact CSU and CCC. ICAS voted to urge WASC not to change the handbook.

Chair Powell stated that the SCIGETC has been renamed “IGETC for STEM.” This change is the result of SB 1440 creating AA degrees for transfer; it requires that ICAS include IGETC or CSU GE breadth. IGETC for STEM was renamed to be consistent with the law.

He also noted that BOARS has updated areas in English and math, and encouraged committee members to review them. These most recent changes were made in reference to the Common Core state standards.

Chair Powell described the two consortia that are working to determine assessments for Common Core. California is part of the Smarter Balance consortium, with about half the other states. These assessments are to be brought into California in math and language arts in spring of 2015; they will be administered to students in grades 3-8 and then again in the junior year of high school. Intense pressure is being placed on UC and other institutions to use these tests as a way to determine college readiness. Chair Powell expressed concern about these tests, which are to be based CSU assessments. He said that UCOPE needs to be proactive to defend the quality of math and language arts. He suggested that the committee meet more often, perhaps via iLinc, to debate and discuss the matter.

A committee member explained that the Lumina Foundation, the wealthiest postsecondary funding foundation in the country, has announced a goal to increase the number of students who have postsecondary degrees 60 percent by 2025. Lumina is also a partial funder of the Smarter Balance consortium and has a very aggressive agenda for postsecondary education that is tied to the idea of career readiness. The Lumina Foundation will publish a new report that defines competency by the achievement of particular competencies rather than credit hours. The committee member stated that efforts like these reflect back on the importance of assessment as a driver of instruction. She stated that UC assessment needs to be very sensitive to the context of the University and that assessments based on CSU models are not suited to UC.

Chair Powell told the committee that the governor's budget provides \$125M in deferred buyout of 2011-12 tuition, and approximately another \$125M (representing a five percent budget increase). Of that money, \$10M was carved out by the governor for online education. Governor Brown would like UC to increase the student-faculty ratio and is also interested in online education as a way of saving money.

UC is discussing a proposal that would bring the general obligation bonds held by the state under the University; UC could then refinance the bonds at a better rate and save approximately \$80M.

V. Consultation with the President's Office

Report from the AWPE Coordinator

Director of Undergraduate Admissions Michael Treviño told the committee that BOARS is taking an interest in assessment as well, and is going to be looking closely at total scores and assessment and how they function as predictors of success.

Mr. Treviño stated that AWPE lost money in 2009, before change to online scoring. In the first year of online scoring (2010), the loss was cut in half. In 2011, AWPE broke even, and 2012 it was solidly in the black, thanks to operational changes over the past four years. This last year, AWPE increased campus reimbursement for campus-based testing, and introduced a tiered exam fee structure based on financial need.

VI. UCOPE Consultation on UC Santa Barbara Planned Pilot for AWPE Testing in China

ISSUE: Chair Alexander stated that he has been approached about the possibility offering the AWPE overseas. These queries are in response to dramatic increases in international student recruitment, in some cases doubling from year to year. Currently, international students do not take the exam until they arrive on campus in September; this late assessment prevents students from being placed into the appropriate courses and they quickly fall behind.

Santa Barbara has designated testing sites in Shanghai and Beijing for students who have submitted a SIR for UCSB; no more than 100 students would be tested, and four campus staff would be sent to proctor the exam. This test would take place at the same time as California exam, enabling the campus to prepare for the students' needs and get them placed appropriately

DISCUSSION: Members discussed the extremely variant percentage of international students from campus to campus, with an agreed understanding of the difficulties arising from the late assessment of international students. It was noted that US students outside of California cannot take the test before they come to campus; likewise students from countries other than China. Questions were also raised as to the permissions possibly needed from the Chinese government for such an undertaking. Most members seemed to agree that many departments within the University would need to review, discuss, and vet the program before it could be undertaken, even as a pilot. Chair Alexander offered that the committee's role was to determine if administering the test overseas is sound and in the best interest of the international students. It would then be turned over to admissions, Academic Council, and to OP for their consideration.

ACTION: Compile UCOPE comments and concerns on the proposed pilot planned for spring 2013 via email.

VII. UCOPE Roundtable on International Students

ISSUE: Chair Alexander noted that Irvine's English, ESL, and ELL programs are being put under tremendous pressure by the recent deluge of international students. Those students also need extra assistance

around acculturation as well as language; they are often isolated by their lack of English communication skills and do not adjust well to campus life.

DISCUSSION: Committee members discussed possible options and strategies for helping international students adapt linguistically and culturally to the campuses. Questions were raised as to whether some campuses encouraged international enrollment as a way of making money without thinking through the responsibility to international students. It was mentioned that BOARS had a strict policy that campuses cannot accept a student from out of the state or country who does not meet or exceed the standards for a California student; members questioned if this policy was being honored.

Chair Alexander recalled a white paper written a couple of years ago and presented to the Senate. The white paper encouraged the campuses to make sure that academic English, ESL, ELL, and related programs were fully funded and either integrated into writing programs or working in close collaboration with them. While the impetus at that time was not international students, it may be appropriate to revisit the paper in regard to this item.

ACTION: Administer an online poll to determine whether the previous white paper should be resurrected in response to current concerns regarding international students. If it is deemed appropriate, the paper will be circulated to the committee via email so that it can be discussed in detail at the next meeting and voted upon.

VIII. Standardization of the Awarding of Advanced Placement (AP) Credit Across the UC System

ISSUE: AP credit is used very divergently systemwide in relation to course credit and requirements. Particularly problematic is the practice of excluding students from preparatory classes based upon their high AP scores. It was observed that students who have higher AP scores tend to come from wealthier families and from schools with high API scores; their scores may reflect better preparation, not necessarily better ability. Furthermore, high school students are perhaps being misled into thinking they will get college credit for high AP scores – a practice that is not uniformly exercised systemwide.

DISCUSSION: The committee considered whether a systemwide policy should be put in place to dictate how AP scores in English and math should be applied on the campuses. It was agreed that campuses should not be allowed to preclude students with high AP scores from taking GE writing courses or other preparatory classes in English or math. Questions were raised as to whether this issue should be properly undertaken by UCEP. It was suggested that a joint task force between UCEP and UCOPE should look at the issue more broadly. Such a task force should include student representatives and representatives from BOARS. It was observed that the AP program has been scrutinizing courses and revamping exams; this would be an opportune time to examine the role of AP test scores within the UC campuses.

IX. Update on Systemwide Math Diagnostic Test

The MDTP (Math Diagnostic Testing Program) has been used by the CCC, CSU, and UC for over 30 years. However, campus practices in regard to the program are unclear. MDTP has both assessment and placement tests. UC is considering giving students a diagnostic test so that students can learn what skills they need in order to score well on their fall placement exams. The diagnostic test would provide students with the option of taking classes over the summer to improve their fall placement grades.

X. Discussion of Budget Concerns and the Future of Preparatory Education in the UC System

The committee discussed OP's ongoing emphasis on online preparatory classes and the need to have UCOPE at the table for the discussion of online education in teaching writing. One option is a series of online modules that could be used in conjunction with writing courses as opposed to being stand-alone courses of their own. It was observed that UCLA is running a Summer Sophomore Online program for

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students who may need GE units. These courses are offered through summer session, and students can take them from home. Strong assessment is critical, and needs to be integral to such courses.

It was decided to discuss this issue further at the next meeting.

XI. New Business

No new business was brought forward.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Attest: Jonathan Alexander
Prepared by Fredye Harms