

## UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

## MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2014

Attending: Ross Frank, Chair (UCSD), Linda Adler-Kassner, Vice Chair (UCSB), Caroline Streeter (UCLA), Bradley Queen (UCI), Bruce Copperstein (UCSC), Eugene Nothnagel (UCR), Simrit Dhillon (Graduate Student Representative) (telephone), George Gadda (Assistant Director, UCLA Writing Programs and AWPE Committee Chair), Robin Scarcella (Chair, EMS Advisory Group), Steve Handel (Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP) (telephone), Bill Jacob (Chair, Academic Senate), Julie Lind (AWPE Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP), Michael Trevino (Director of Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP), Brenda Abrams (Principal Analyst)

**I. Chair's Report/Announcements**

Chair Frank invited Associate Vice President Handel to update the committee on the draft report on the presidential community transfer to UC initiative. The report will not be released until the Regents meeting next month. Recommendations include UC extending its message and transfer information and pathways to community colleges. The majority of transfer students come from just 19 of the 112 community colleges and another recommendation deals with methods to increase student and geographic diversity to the entire system. The third area will involve the work of Senate Committees like UCOPE to help students apply, be admitted, and enroll at UC. Current admissions procedures and transfer pathways will be reviewed to assess ideas for improvement and streamlining. Balancing streamlining and ensuring student success after enrollment is important. A fourth area asks the campuses to consider how they welcome and support transfer students. Finally, the report states that transfer is a shared responsibility and suggests that UC find ways to strengthen its ties to the community colleges.

AVP Handel explained that community colleges are more diverse than the four year institutions in the state. UC's freshman class is more diverse than the students who transfer into UC. UC does have markers about the transfer ready population and this group is less diverse than the community college population in general. UC has examined transfer pathways in 2012 to map the transfer process for several large majors. Chair Frank commented that anecdotal information indicates that transfer students have writing problems. AVP Handel reported that a general inventory of programs and services at the campuses for transfer students was conducted.

Chair Frank provided an update on an issue discussed in January, AP placement above and beyond the ELWR. UCOPE's concerns were discussed with UCEP on April 4<sup>th</sup>. A memo will be signed by both committees sent to the campuses to ask them to look at their policies related to satisfaction of college writing beyond the ELWR. The chair also spoke with BOARS but this committee deferred to UCEP and UCOPE.

**II. Consent Calendar**

**Action:** The minutes were approved.

**III. AWPE Scoring/Norming**

- *George Gadda, Assistant Director, UCLA Writing Programs*

**Discussion:** AWPE Committee Chair George Gadda led a discussion on passing the AWPE requirement. Notes were not recorded this portion of this discussion due to its confidential subject matter.

**IV. English Content Expert Workgroup**

- *Michael Trevino, Director, Undergraduate Admissions, UCOP*

The IB English language exams, used to satisfy the ELWR, were changed in 2013. UC was initially notified that

only the names of the exams were changes. However, the campuses became concerned about whether there were more substantive changes. This is critically urgent matter because students are ready to enroll in UC. UCOPE is asked to consider whether the IB English Language Exams qualify for fulfillment of the UC Entry Level Writing Requirement. A content expert workgroup was formed at the request of UCOPE and BOARS to review the exams. Assistant Director Gadda reported that there has been a substantive change in the exam. A portion of the exam has been renamed and Assistant Director Gadda indicated that this part of the exam is still rigorous and meets the ELWR satisfying function as before at the same scoring levels. A new exam is called Language in Literature in the IB. In the assessment, this part of the exam is focused on literature and analysis of passages that students have not already seen. The passages are clearly aimed at a certain rhetorical analysis. The materials did not suggest the same intellectual demand as the literature exam to the assistant director. Assistant Director Gadda would like to see more samples before making a determination about this new exam because it is new and lacks the history.

Another member of this workgroup believes that the new Language in Literature exam is rigorous and that it more closely resembles what is done in lower division writing courses as well as the Common Core. The aims of the exam as described in the guidelines were shared with the committee. Assistant Director Gadda noted that only after the campuses had already used the IB to satisfy freshman writing requirements following entry level writing was UCOPE asked to consider if the IB literature exam should satisfy the ELWR.

**Discussion:** The committee discussed concerns about what UCOPE says should be done with assessments after they have fulfilled the ELWR which has previously been left to the individual campuses. There are questions about the extent to which UC wants to fund entry level writing courses. The IB is a two year degree program that culminates in the exam. The problem is it is being treated like a placement exam when it actually is not one. There are two different exams now, one of which is completely new. AP English has for thirty years had a literature and composition exam and a language and composition exam was introduced in the 1980s. UCOPE members are asked to weigh in on whether the new IB language and composition fulfill the ELWR. The vice chair commented that UCOPE should be wary of the trend where UC says that exams meet various other requirements. Chair Frank suggested UCOPE could state that this new exam counts for ELWR and nothing else, although this is not within the scope of UCOPE's authority.

Chair Frank proposes that UCOPE accept the old IB 1A as equivalent to the new IB literature. The chair also proposes that UCOPE request data to review at some time between now and next year to see how the students are performing. In addition, the chair proposes writing a memo to the campuses about accepting both exams for the ELWR but not using these IB scores to satisfy any other English composition requirements.

## V. Validation of AWPE

- *Linda Adler-Kassner, Vice Chair (UCSB)*

UCOPE has previously discussed whether there should be some effort to validate the AWPE in terms of considering what it assesses, how well it does this assessment and if it assesses what UC wants it to. A sub-group of members of the committee discussed this matter with the writing program directors. Faculty who teach the English language writing requirement courses and general education requirements will be asked about what they are teaching and what they expect the AWPE to be assessing in the writing of test-takers. AWPE is an assessment for placement that serves specific functions. The current AWPE is one approach to doing this work and UCOPE has an opportunity to consider the alternatives. The goal is to have information available in time for the committee's January meeting.

Assistant Director Gadda suggests that UCOPE should ask about the campus experience with students who have satisfied the requirement in various ways. Instructors in courses subsequent to the entry level writing course will be asked to identify students that they thought had a preliminary writing course and who did not. The goal is to find out who in the instructors' judgment needed preparation and this question is intentionally asked late in the term. The way that students have satisfied entry level writing is coded into the student record at UCLA. Every October there is a UC writing programs conference at UCSB and at the end of the day there will be a question

about this subject. Dana Ferris from UCD, Elizabeth Abrams from UCSC, Karen Gocsik from UCSD, Vice Chair Adler-Kassner, and Assistant Director Gadda will work on the validation exploration.

## **VI. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership**

- *Bill Jacob, Chair, Academic Senate*

Chair Jacob thanked the committee members for their work on the important issues related to AWPE. Senator Padilla is sponsoring Senate Bill 1200, which reportedly has the support of Microsoft. This bill is focused on mathematics. The fact that the legislature is addressing matters related to a-g is problematic. This legislation could be interpreted as saying that computer science should satisfy area “c.” UC could support computer science in area “c” if it is an advanced course that builds upon the previous mathematics courses in substantive ways. A freshman course about the role of computers in our lives might be valuable but it is no substitution for area “c.” The AP computer science course is not area “c” but the College Board is going to reapply for some type of blanket approval for this. Chair Jacob feels this might be fine if three years of area “c” math are required to enter it. UC has been working with Padilla's staffer and a legislative analyst but the bill has still not been amended. A related bill, AB 1764, only impacts high schools and does not reference a to g. This bill proposes that if a school district will require three years of math for graduation, students in the third year should be able to take computer science. Chair Jacob does not think AB 1764 will create problems for UC. Attempts to push UC on area “c” could result in UC saying no and the CSUs being required to do it.

Regarding the May budget revise, it is difficult to predict what the governor will do although he is sticking with his 5% increase. It is just a 2% increase in general funds. According to Chair Jacob, the speaker thinks that higher education should get the same 8% that will go to K-12 from Prop 98. For the first time in a long while, the legislature is more willing to fund UC than the governor is. UC will try to get funds for UCRP that the governor will not oppose. The Innovative Learning Technology Initiative has funded the development of thirty-nine courses. Thirty to thirty-five courses have been offered for cross campus enrollment, and 35 students were cross enrolled for the winter and another 50-60 are expected to cross enroll in the spring. Some of the \$10M earmarked for ILTI will go directly to the executive vice chancellors with the only requirement that the funds are used to support online courses. The governor had a requirement that the courses facilitate cross campus enrollment.

**Discussion:** The author of AB 1764 contends that this bill will increase access to computer science courses for certain student populations. Computer science courses all fall into area “g” as an elective credit. It was noted that accepting computer science courses as math will not align with three years of common core. Chair Frank described the committee's earlier discussion about the IB exam and the line that UCOPE would like to draw. UCEP and UCOPE will also craft a joint memo asking the campuses to examine how the courses are used for any other diagnostic placement purposes. Chair Jacob suggests that it would be valuable to take a comprehensive, systemwide look at AP/IB issues and Chair Frank noted that UCEP is beginning to look at this as a possible issue. At one campus, colleges are being asked to accept more AP courses as part of the effort to help streamline time to degree which conflicts with the message UCOPE hopes to send. A member indicated that the funding for an online course at his campus has not been approved and Chair Jacob referred him to Ellen Omundson at UCOP.

## **VII. Consultation with the Office of the President**

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

Coordinator Lind reported that this year's exam is on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 151 test centers throughout the state. UC is aiming for 15,000 test takers but the numbers selected for the exam have increased this year after a trend of decreasing numbers over several years. About 32,000 students sign up and the appearance rate is 50%. The fee will not be increased this year or in the near future. The fee for the exam is \$110, the reduced fee is \$20 and the fee is waived for students meeting certain criteria. Scores will be reported the week of June 9<sup>th</sup>. The score results are shown to students through a campus portal rather than being sent by US mail.

Over 4000 exams were given on campus this year, up from 3600 the year before. The number of exams has gone up as expected with the increased focus on international students. This year there will be an archive of the past training and scoring videos and materials available for local writing offices to use with their local readers. The program is expected to remain in good financial health. The exam revenue will continue to slowly drop as the number of test takers with fee waivers slowly rises. Income last year was down \$30K from the previous year. The number paying the full fee is still under 50% but it is not decreasing rapidly. An RFP issued in January was pulled because it was not eliciting responses from enough vendors to generate a competitive bid. A new RFP may be issued in July and they remain on track to have a signed contract in a timely manner.

**Discussion:** Assistant Director Gadda explained that each of this year readers will initially be limited to 300 exams. The selection happens when students have just been accepted and the exam happens after the intent to register letters are returned. So a lot of people selected for the exam just are not coming to UC, which is reflected in the 50% attendance rate.

### **VIII. SAT Changes and BOARS/UCOPE/UCEP Statement**

A joint statement by BOARS, UCOPE and UCEP on the importance of writing is ready to be finalized. UCOPE has received information about proposed changes to the SAT English language exam. The essay will be optional and two other components of the SAT will be changed. The reason for this memo was that President Napolitano began discussing the changes to the SAT before they were actually announced or known to the Senate. Chair Jacob asked the committees for a statement about their intent to review the changes when more information is made available. The materials do not include the actual exams.

AVP Handel shared that he worked at the College Board before returning to UC. The reason for the changes is to make a test that would be better suited to higher education. Many higher education institutions were not using the mandatory essay as any type of indicator. Some suggested that a longer writing exam would be needed in order to gain a real sense of students' abilities. It is not clear yet how long the session will be. The multiple choice portion of the test will be divided into separate math and writing sections. The new test will go into effect in about two years. The proposed changes are creative and also very ambitious in AVP Handel's opinion. As the Board proceeds with development of this and the exam, there will be opportunities for UCOPE to evaluate what is proposed. Data will also be shared with UCOPE as it becomes available. The chair of BOARS has suggested meeting with the College Board and AVP Handel would be happy to facilitate a meeting with the Board and UCOPE.

**Discussion:** In the current test, the essay contributes to the score and is combined with the scores from the multiple choice section. With the new version of the exam, the essay will be optional and reported separately. In the past UC required applicants to submit an SAT II writing score but when the essay became mandatory, the SAT II requirement was dropped and the College Board no longer offers this either. Assistant Director Gadda indicated that UC has always accepted a College Board SAT measure of writing to satisfy entry level writing. The old Achievement test became the subject test in writing and is now being used as a free standing writing section.

The vice chair commented that there are things associated with any exam that are not known such as the scoring of the SAT. There is abundant data about the lack of validity of the SAT. Until this exam is put in place UCOPE will not know what the scoring will look like. According to the College Board the changes will make the SAT a test of readiness rather than aptitude. Vice Chair Adler-Kassner recommends that if accepted, the new SAT should satisfy the early writing requirement and nothing else. According to AVP Handel field trial data will be available for UCOPE to review before any decisions are made. UCOPE may have to decide whether to mandate the writing part of the test as part of the score that will be considered as part of ELWR satisfaction or to go with the two parts and allow the essay score to be added if the student takes it.

AVP Handel asked if UCOPE needs to think about how the ACT is treated, noting that the ACT essay has always been optional. According to Coordinator Lind, UC specifies that the ACT with writing should be taken. The

scoring guide for the current SAT is criterion referenced. The revised SAT will have a 50 minute writing exam instead of just a 20 minute exam. Assistant Director Gadda commented that the current essay is essentially an AWPE like task, while the new task is an analysis of the text that asks students to comment about how the author presents his argument or ideas. There is a question about what we mean by writing and about how useful this is as a general stand in for more general UC expectations of what students will be able to do. If the impetus in the high school curriculum is on analyzing other people's writing as opposed to one's own, this may not be a gain. There will be a three part score for reading, writing and analysis but it is not clear how this will work and the AP may change their approach to this.

AVP Handel suggested drafting a series of questions for the College Board including asking about how it will be scored. A conference call with UCOPE and the College Board might be scheduled for the fall. It is difficult to tell how the College Board expects to accomplish what it has proposed. The committee discussed the construction of exams and how questions are used, which includes experimental questions. UC faculty may find it challenging to know how to interpret the new scores. Faculty will not know what the curve is and good information may not be available until after the fact. It was noted that the new SAT will ask questions that are more directly relevant to the students in terms of their preparedness needs. The SAT began as a test of merit, then became a test of scholastic aptitude that would show a students potential. Until now, the College Board is stating that it drives instruction.

The questions for UCOPE seem to be what do the two parts of the multiple choice new exam tell us about the student's readiness to satisfy the ELWR level of college writing and what do we get if we add the essay. Many schools have gone SAT optional which UC cannot. UCOPE could only say that the SAT does not satisfy the ELWR. The committee's questions include what score identifies essentially the same population that the 680 used to represent and what value is added to the decision making process by including this particular essay scored in this particular way. A member commented that this test tells us how to use the tools of writing but not whether the students' themselves can write. Assistant Director Gadda remarked that there are other approaches that would move beyond simple rhetorical analysis. The committee was reminded that it is high school students taking the SAT and they should not be expected to possess certain skills before entering UC. UC will have to decide whether what will ultimately be assessed by this SAT will be acceptable.

The members agreed to develop a list of questions using a Google document. Assistant Director Gadda, Advisory Group Chair Scarcella and AVP Handel will participate in drafting the questions.

## **IX. UC Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) Basic Writing Course**

Chair Frank explained that there is an online writing course at UCI. This is not a mandatory course although it is an ELWR satisfying course. Students can test into the course at the beginning. There is a diagnostic that students must pass to take the course.

**Discussion:** The cross-campus enrolled students will not be allowed to take the course if they do not pass the diagnostic. Each campus decides whether a course taken at another campus counts for credit towards the major. It is not clear whether an ELWR online course satisfies the ELWR requirement on another campus. Chair Frank asked the committee to consider its role with respect to the ILTI courses. This course is being taught by a Unit 18 lecturer.

## **X. Divisional Reports/Member Items**

EMS Advisory Group: The Advisory Group met earlier this month and several subgroups were formed to work on different issues. One group will look at international students and support services and provide a report to UCOPE next year. Another group will look at placement assessments which will include how campuses place students into and out of services. A third group will focus on oral language concerns with a special emphasis on graduate students who will become teaching assistants. Another subgroup will look at California students

including first year students. Advisory Group Chair Scarcella explained that the advisory group is there to assist UCOPE. There are workplans for each of the subgroups and the work they produce will be presented to UCOPE.

UCSB: The member is on an intersegmental task force that will look at common core standards. The sample assessments have been reviewed.

UCSD: The experiment UCOPE approved several years ago is now receiving resistance from the campus writing directors. UC writing directors have agreed to write a letter opposing the experiment.

## **XI. New Business**

Meeting adjourned at: 3:40 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Ross Frank