

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

## Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2014

Present: Robin Scarcella (Chair ~ UCI), Margi Wald (UCB), Dana Ferris (UCD), Kathie Levin (UCI), Linda Jensen (UCLA), Joshua Fenton (UCR), Elizabeth Losh (UCSD), Jan Frodesen (UCSB), Belinda Braunstein (UCM), Sarah-Hope Parmeter (UCSC), George Gadda (Consultant), and Brenda Abrams (Committee Analyst)

**I. Welcome and Chair's Announcements**

Chair Scarcella welcomed the advisory group members and reviewed the group's charge and the day's agenda. The Advisory Group is charged with responding to requests from UCOPE related to helping serve multi-language English learners who benefit from language support and with helping one another improve the education of UC multilingual students benefiting from English language support at all campuses. This support includes reading, writing, speaking and listening as well as information and digital literacy. The goals of this particular meeting include developing a plan to help international students, a plan for recommending writing assessments, collecting data that will help with oral language assessments and developing guidance for better providing California students with sustained support.

**II. Consent Calendar**

Committee members will send any corrections to the April 5, 2013 minutes to the chair and analyst.

**Action:** The minutes were approved.

**Action:** The agenda was approved.

**III. Campus Updates/Member Reports**

Chair Scarcella explained that each member will have ten minutes for his/her campus report and there will be time for questions.

San Diego: The main change is that the International Triton Transition program is continuing to develop. An ad hoc basic writing subcommittee is looking at the options for basic writing curricula at the campus. The writing center continues to serve a lot of students. Many students are appealing their exit exams because they are at risk of disqualification from UC. One provost is interested in changing the Senate policy to allow students to either pass the exit exam or to pass although it is not clear that this will solve the problems. A randomized study is moving forward next year that will exempt 320 students from the ELWR and college writing directors are meeting next week to discuss ways to improve the study design. The concern is that advisors are not allowed to advise students to take courses in order for the study to be truly randomized. This study is questioning whether ESL is effective at all.

Riverside: One of the biggest changes at the campus is the placement process. If a student receives an "E" designation on the AWPE, he/she is automatically sorted into the ESL course. The ESL course has grown from last year. The program is looking at students beyond the visa international students at students who have spent four years or less in U.S. high schools without visas. This year there were 110 students in this category, 76% of whom ended up in the ELWR course. Of these, only 30% of these students passed the exam in the fall and this will be a new area to analyze. The campus is developing new courses that will come before the ESL course and focus on reading comprehension and oral skills. Work is being done on retaining instructors with ESL certificates or degrees although the funding is limited. Currently there are 88 international students and next year about 50% more are expected.

Los Angeles: The campus is offering a new certificate for graduate students teaching writing. One course is freshman composition and one a writing II post freshman writing course. The professional development funds at the campus have doubled this year. An ad hoc committee is looking at the requirements for this funding because a dean has been making the financial decisions for the program. There has been a noticeable decrease in the number of students. There are eight full time ESL lecturers. This year two thirds of the students placed into freshman composition and the rest placed into ESL. UCLA Admissions may have cast a broader net several years ago and is now refining what is looked for. Last year there were eight LR courses and this year there are just three. An oral skills course for incoming freshmen is now offered. The program is more careful about running full classes. The representative and a TA coordinator will go to Shanghai in the summer to run a three week program for approximately 40 matriculated students. Enrollment may be opened for students from other UC campuses if space is available.

Merced: The writing classes are not taught by TAs, only by lecturers in the merit writing program. There are two writing courses for undergraduates neither of which is developmental. Writing 1 is the lower level course and Writing 10 covers the campus writing requirement. There are no ESL designated sections of Writing 1 or 10 in the past year but there was a push to get students enrolled into Writing 11. In the fall there were 52 sections of writing 1 in the fall. In the spring, Writing 11 is paired with writing 10. It is not clear if "E" designated students were contacted about taking the spring courses.

There are only eight international students in the undergraduate population; these students have visas, and at least two of them went to high school in Merced. This year, the Admissions Department is trying to boost international admissions. The campus does not have an ESL program or writing linguistics or English departments, and no extension program and the English major is in the World Cultures department. The representative coordinates the summer bridge program. More than 60% of the UCM students speak a language other than English at home and one-third speak only another language at home and not also English). The summer bridge program enrolls many first generation students and nearly 70% of the freshmen are first generation college students. This year learning communities are being emphasized that will put students into learning groups of three to four students. This semester the campus is offering EOP for transfer students to support their persistence and 108 students are in this program.

There are 122 international students out of the 358 graduate students. A year ago a two unit writing course in the sciences was established and approved by the Senate. This course is running now and the next step is to create a paired two unit oral presentation skills. The target audience was international graduate students in the sciences but the native students are taking the course as well. There are courses for TAs as well as the ITAs

Davis: The campus has a goal to increase enrollment and 90% will be from out of state, a significant portion of which will be international students. There has been turnover in the program leadership in the past few years. The student enrollment in the program has increased by 500% in three years. Last year linguistics offered thirty one sections and this year sixty are being offered. Fifty eight percent of the students were placed at the two lowest levels. Admissions has been making projections about how many students will need ESL services. Some of the students in the lowest levels are really too low to be enrolled at UCD. The campus will start documenting how many students fall below 21. The representative mentioned that she will run the ESL program full time next year. The campus has no services specifically intended for multilingual transfer students and inadequate support for graduate students. The MA level applied linguistics program will be shut down.

Santa Cruz: The number of international students has grown this year, and 110 freshman international students have been admitted up from 48 last year. The campus does not have an ESL program. The campus is trying to determine how to deal with the international students. In the summer, there were two orientations for international students at the end of which the students were given the AWPE in advance of the normal. An outside contractor, English Language Systems, was hired to do the orientations. A graduate student observed the orientation and has reported that the writing program should be responsible for the writing instruction given in the orientation. There is a 90% fail rate in the early AWPE. The dean provided additional funding for a grammar course which will be repeated again next year. The program had a good relationship with the applied linguistics

department. The linguistics department came up with a speaking course for international students. There has been a dip in the number of students with the "E" designation. Extra courses had to be added for the winter and spring although it is not clear if it was just the growth of international students that necessitated the increase. A retreat will include faculty teaching in the summer bridge program and in international education and will focus on large scale understanding about how writing works and more specific pedagogical choices for classrooms. A summer session court will be tried for international students this year. Two lecturers SOE may be hired. The campus has enrolled a small number of students who speak ASL either as a first language or have learned English after learning ASL and their grammar is so different. The representative asked the members to send any reading related to working effectively with deaf students who speak ESL.

Berkeley: The campus does not have an ESL courses during the academic year. There have been lots of initiatives and developments related to international students but nothing truly systemic is occurring. Enrollment in CWR1A (the course for students who have not scored high enough on the AWPE) has increased. The number of students taking the AWPE increased this year, but the number sitting for the AWPE is still significantly lower than 5-6 years ago. College writing R1A satisfies the entry level writing requirement and first half of reading composition. In the fall a number of part-time instructors were hired to teach in the program. There were six courses this spring instead of just two.

The numbers in the summer program continue to increase. At least 12 students per section are required to avoid canceling a class. Most courses had 8 to 20 students. Freshmen moving into their sophomore year were targeted. A hybrid version of the grammar and vocabulary class will be run in the fall. The college writing programs also offer a first year composition course although these are not for ESL students. The program is to offer the AWPE during Welcome Week two days before classes start. There will be a possible total of 100 students allowed to take it in the fall during a pilot. It is anticipated that 65-70% will receive a not passing score. The campus is offering a program for faculty who work with international students. Each year the program asks to do a mandatory assessment of international students but the administration has responded that this is a solution without a problem. There is no institutional support for any support services provided.

Santa Barbara: The number of undergraduate courses increased this year and the EVC provided funding. Because of the number students coming in at the lower level, more courses were offered through the year. The undergraduate students are almost all Chinese. Seventy five of the 90 students were placed into the writing program. The jump in enrollment has mainly been due to students placing at the lower levels. All of the continuing lecturers are now full time, some of whom have experience teaching overseas. This year there has been an effort to bring uniformity across the sections. There was some grade inflation so the standards being used to give As, Bs, and Cs across the levels were examined. The international transfer student course for economics majors was just completed. The overall proficiency of the students in this course was at the level of the lowest freshmen students. The representative went to China last year to test entering students using a two hour writing exam. Summer session has just one class for international students. Some departments require students to take the oral skills and writing courses while others do not but the program currently has to test all of the students which is a drain on the budget.

Irvine: The campus offers an academic English program with three to four levels of writing courses (Academic English 20A-D). Academic English 20D is the level in which many students are failing to pass. Students can test out of 20C directly into the pre-entry level composition program. This has resulted in the program quadrupling in size. IUPP is the Extension Program at UCI that brings students, primarily from China, to prepare them to be accepted into UCI, and 90% of the students are accepted into UCI. The number of students has doubled from last year. The graduate program does not offer writing courses, but it does offer speaking/listening courses that TAs are required to take and this program's enrollment is growing. Graduate students are occasionally admitted to an upper division writing course. The international students now have the opportunity to take the program's test first. Over 600 people were tested on the Thursday before Welcome Week. The scoring had been completed by the following Monday night but there was a delay that prevented students from enrolling in the courses in a timely manner. Most of the students were admitted into the program in the first quarter. Three quarters of the teachers were new so significant training was needed. The program was without administrative support for five years

until a program manager was hired last November. This year the program has an acting director from the German department. The program has received support from the Writing Center that hired an ESL instructor this year. Summer session will continue this year and since most students go home during the summer, an online course may be offered.

**Discussion:** Two variations of the UCSD randomized study received IRB approval. Lots of students have been exempted from many services from which they would benefit. There has not been an attempt to separate out basic writing from students with the “E” designation who are in particular need of services. The representative has not seen the complete study design. UCLA may have conducted a study similar to UCSD's in the 1980s which was published. The UCB offered to find studies about effectiveness of developmental services. It was noted that the principal investigator of the UCSD study is an economist.

The UCR pre-writing courses will be taken in the fall before the students take the official ESL course. Placement into these courses is determined by a combined review of SAT scores and analytical writing placement exams by the placement committee. There are discussions about creating an online course for students in their home countries to practice their oral skills but no funding has been found for this. There has been a big shift a UCR with respect to the support the campus provides for the EMS students. The lecturer research fund at UCR reimburses people for the cost of obtaining an ESL certificate. The UCLA oral skills course is a prerequisite for the writing course. The oral skills course will be for credit and it will focus on the language needed for leading a discussion, joining a discussion, how to speak to professors outside of the classroom and appropriate email language.

It was noted that more UCM students are taking the AWPE but that more are also failing it and it is not clear why. The group discussed the planned growth at UCD and other campuses. At UCD, the focus on out-of-state and international students is driven in part by money. The UCSD representative will send the UCSC representative information about deaf faculty who work in ESL. If a student speaks ASL, the reading is in English but anything done in spoken word is in ASL so the ASL student is only getting 50% of the instruction. The consultant mentioned that the lower test scores the members have noted overall are related to eligibility in the local context and that UC campuses should expect to see more heterogeneous student populations. It was noted that departments at UCSB should develop their own writing courses for their students.

#### **IV. International Students and Support Services**

- *Kathie Levin (UCI)*
- *Margi Wald (UCB)*
- *Robin Scarcella, Chair (UCI)*

The UCI representative described a survey that was recently conducted. As the members have noted, there has been a change in the student population and instructors have suggested anecdotally that the international students have different needs. A voluntary survey for the students was created and approved by an IRB. The survey asked about international students' English speaking skills and their sense of their preparedness for UC. Students were asked to rate the level of difficulty of certain tasks typical of writing classes. Almost all of the international students rated their readiness across various tasks very high, with scores of 6 or 7 out of 7. Similar questions were given to the students' instructors and they rated the students at 3 or 4 out of 7 in preparedness. For instructors, the students' most difficult task was understanding the readings, whereas the students felt this was their easiest task. The issue is determining why the students do not understand what they do not know and it may be that students are not aware of what they do not understand. The difficulty may be with tasks for which they do not receive immediate feedback such as speaking.

Chair Scarcella suggested that the group should discuss what the campuses need in order to serve international students. The UCB representative proposes that the group identify recommendations about best practices for things like support services or curriculum, noting that the details of implementation will vary by campuses. What it means to provide support should be defined because administrators can have very different interpretations. Chair Scarcella shared the white paper drafted by an EMS subgroup last year.

**Discussion:** The group discussed how students may not have the same understanding of what it means to read. Additionally, students do not understand how easy it is to identify different styles of writing. It is not clear how reading and writing instruction of English is delivered in China. It was noted that regardless of their background students rate their English proficiency highly. The group may want to suggest what should be offered by the campuses and provide research reports about international students in American universities as well as reading and writing instruction in China to support any recommendations.

Members discussed the idea of making recommendations to campuses about services for international students. A representative from UC Davis reported frequently sharing a Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) position paper (CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers) with colleagues or using it to structure a workshop. After reviewing the research, there may be just two or three recommendations. It may be helpful to include data about the increased number of international students at UC as well as nationally. The chair reminded the members about a memo drafted by a subgroup last year. It was discussed at UCOPE last year and UCOPE asked the group to work on a white paper. A new subgroup could work on completing the white paper and present it to UCOPE at the late April 2015 meeting. Other subgroups could work on collecting campus surveys or reviewing literature. The UCSB representative volunteered to help in the fall while on sabbatical and noted that she is particularly interested in assessment issues. A member asked for the chair to notify the Advisory Group about the outcomes of the group's work. The members agreed on the importance of providing data. The UCI, UCB, and UCD representatives will help with the work on international students and assessment.

#### **V. Writing Assessments: Placement Exams, Sit-Down Essay Exams, and Portfolio Assessment Issues and Concerns**

- *Jan Frodesen (UCSB)*
- *Joshua Fenton (UCR)*
- *Dana Ferris (UCD)*

Chair Scarcella indicated that the group has considered assessment issues such as the placement of first year students into or out of courses, inter-rater reliability when scoring placement exams, pass/fail course rates, course grades, portfolio assessment and admissions assessments. The UCSB representative suggested it would be useful to discuss systemwide possibilities for assessment, noting that UCSB does not have the budget or other resources to create a placement test for international students. Perhaps one campus could develop something that could be used by other UC campuses.

**Discussion:** The UCLA program had a history of assessment, but this changed when funding for ESL was cut back and the program was moved from Applied Linguistics to the Writing Program. The program has made significant changes to focus on writing. UCLA now has a one-hour writing exam (the ESLPE) and not many students move up or down, suggesting they are being placed appropriately. UCLA has orientation sessions for out of state students that begin right after Labor Day and these students are already in the residence halls in September. It is important to note that UCLA anticipated the growth in this student population. At many of the campuses international students are not able to move into the dorms because they are being used by summer session students or used by non-UC groups. The UCD program is developing a reading test and a writing test which other campuses hope to see. Writing instructors may need training on how to be better reading instructors.

UCI has proposed that international students should take the program's Academic English Placement Test since so many of the students end up being in the program anyway. This test is designed to assess the students' ability to write. Last year at UCLA, the international students in the orientation session were given the opportunity to take the UCLA Writing Program's diagnostic essay. The diagnostic essay is recommended for students coming from high schools in which English was not the language of instruction and who have only the SAT writing 680 to satisfy the entry level writing. The diagnostic essay is an AWPE exam from several years ago which means it can be used without charging the students. This year, 50 students who had 680 or better, took the exam and passed but most students did not follow the recommendation to take the exam.

At UCB students are coded in such a way that prevents them from enrolling in a course unless they have satisfied a requirement. A member indicated that students are not being asked to conduct library research but instead to reference the instructor's reading list. Members discussed the types of research freshmen are asked to conduct in their courses. At UCR in the past, the essays of students who received a no pass score were read by an additional person. In the last three years, the program conducted an analysis of various characteristics and found that the SAT English score and the SAT writing score, when considered separately, had little to no correlation to placement. However, combining these two scores (the "combo score") is a good predictor. When the scores of students who did not pass are received, the program sorts by the SAT combo score and the AWPE and any student with an "E" or with a low enough SAT score is automatically placed into BW3. The essays of students in the lower rung of UCR's ELWR course are reviewed more closely to determine if these students should have received the "E" designation. There is a discussion at UCR about potential alternatives to the SAT score in an effort to reduce the costs associated with paying readers.

Members discussed the use of portfolios. At UCSC, everyone takes the AWPE in May or September except those students who satisfy the ELWR requirement. Students who do not meet the ELWR requirement take a different AWPE in November. For November appeals, students hand in portfolios and in winter and spring, the students in the ELWR courses are required to submit a portfolio and the AWPE is optional. This results in about four to five hundred portfolios to review. The campus has assessed portfolios for at least twenty years and these are paper portfolios. The campus prefers the portfolios over the AWPE. The portfolio has to include a one hour typed sample corrected by the instructors, two or three essays totaling eight to 12 pages with prior drafts from the ELWR courses, and a cover letter in which the students describe the development of their writing skills. The campus is considering creating a general rubric especially for the non-passing portfolios that provides specific feedback about what was missing. One program at UCSD encourages upper division undergraduate students to create portfolios of material for the Public Rhetoric and Practical Communication course. Chair Scarcella suggested that the Advisory Group may want to write a preliminary white paper for next year with recommendations for best practices for assessments. This would entail collecting data at the campuses, conducting research and perhaps conferring with national experts. This group could meet in the summer or fall to examine assessment issues. The UCSB and UCSD representatives agreed to work on this white paper with the support of the committee's consultant from UCLA.

## **VI. Oral Language Assessments**

- *Jan Frodesen (UCSB)*

Many students come to UC with the need to improve their oral communication skills. The UCSB representative indicated that there are three graduate oral skills classes at UCSB. When the students are admitted, the program individually interviews each student. Students are either exempted or given a recommendation to enroll in one of the two levels of oral skills courses. The purpose of this is to catch the students who really have difficulty. In the past, the program had offered a ten-week pronunciation class for graduate students, but this was dropped due to budget. The program requires the international TAs to give a presentation with a faculty member in their department and there is a course for the TAs, but the program found that the TAs were not doing much work outside of class. The representative has thought about creating a tutorial in which the TESOL minor students provide tutorials to the TAs. This would give upper division undergraduate students the opportunity to work with non-native English speakers in oral contexts.

**Discussion:** UCI has a handbook on teaching oral language to graduate students that can be shared with UCSB. UCLA offers five courses for ITAs. The graduate students at UCLA who want to be TAs take the Test of Oral Proficiency. The group may want to look at the way students are assessed. The chair suggests that the group could develop a list of best practices for tutorials and other types of services. The UCSB, UCLA and UCM representatives agreed to work on this in the fall. The group agreed that oral testing of undergraduate students would be valuable, but the cost could be prohibitive and it is also time consuming.

## **VII. Teaching California Students Who Enter the UCs Requiring English Language Assistance**

The chair asked if the Advisory Group should continue considering the services provided to California students. First year undergraduate students who require English language assistance constitute a dwindling population and on many campuses a question is whether these students should continue to be served at all. UCI had 414 students in this category. Chair Scarcella would like the Advisory Group to discuss English language support services for transfer students. The budget crisis impacted the capacity for outreach to the community colleges and to provide courses for these students. The chair is concerned about workload issues and how much the members can take on. Several subgroups have worked on issues related to transfer students in the past.

**Discussion:** Some members reported transferring California students out of their programs because they are not happy and do not learn in the ESL classes. More collaboration with writing programs and more professional development for instructors could be two ways to support these students. At some campuses, such as UC Davis and UCI, the majority of the international students are Chinese. The programs are able to serve limited numbers of students from the Education Abroad Program and some programs are not able to serve any. Campus admissions offices have made efforts to recruit more broadly. There are international students who may not necessarily have the “E” designation. The group’s 2011 white paper was not endorsed by Council and the reason may have been that it did not have enough of a systemwide perspective. The chair and UCM representative will work on an action plan. The chair would like to explore whether the state is doing a better job of educating California students.

It is difficult to recognize the California transfer students who need help. The group could think about whether services should be targeted toward the California residents or to international students. The transfer students are requiring a good deal of support and they benefit from the services provided. Chair Scarcella asked the members who will work on the action plan for undergraduate students and the white paper on international students to include transfer students as well. Members discussed how collaboration with community colleges to support transfer students can be difficult. The analyst described the president's transfer initiative and the transfer action team and recommended that the advisory group's paper on services for transfer students should be forwarded to this group through the chair of UCOPE. The UCR representative and Chair Scarcella will help with the transfer action plan.

### **VIII. Analytical Writing Placement Exam**

- *George Gadda, Consultant, (UCLA)*

This year the AWPE will be administered in May. One thousand more students have indicated that they may be taking the AWPE this year compared to last year. The May exams are for only the California students and other students will be tested later. The exam was chosen at the UCOPE meeting in January. Seventeen scoring leaders have been identified. This year there is a change in policy. Previously readers were allowed to choose the number of essays they would commit to read. This year, people were limited to up to 300 essays but allowed to read more if necessary after meeting the minimum. It will not be clear until after May 12<sup>th</sup> how many essays there will be and how many readers will be needed so the program has to be flexible. With online reading, a small group of readers, the scoring leaders, meet in person and read 1000 essays pulled from representative test sites. From these they recommend samples to recommend for training, monitoring, norming and other purposes. There are many more uses for the essays so this is one reason for the increase from 60 essays to 150. Most of the 1000 essays have already been scored after being read. The consultant creates the training videos every year.

**Discussion:** The students to be tested in May have been accepted into UC. AP exams are administered at the same time as the AWPE and the scores are in the admissions system. More students have already satisfied the entry level writing requirement and the California test population is declining. International students are asked to write about an experience they have had but to write about it from a perspective that is unfamiliar. The AWPE cannot be administered overseas for a number of reasons including legal ones. A second concern is that if UC starts administering the exam in a new place, the University will be asked why the tests are not being administered in other locations. Campuses are utilizing portfolios to assess student progress.

**IX. Other**

The advisory group discussed when the annual meeting should be held. The group agreed that the Friday of the second week of April will be when UCOPE-EMS meets.

**X. New Business**

Meeting adjourned at: 3:37 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Robin Scarcella