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Office of the Academic Senate
SANTA CRUZ DIVISION
125 CLARK KERR HALL
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November 10, 2022

Susan D. Cochran, Chair
Academic Council

RE: Systemwide Senate Review Entry Level Writing Requirement Task Force Report and Recommendations

Dear Susan,

The Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate has completed its review of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Task Force Report and Recommendations with the Committees on Educational Policy (CEP) and Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) responding. We would like to thank the faculty that served on this task force for their extensive work that led to this report. Overall, our division supports the proposed revision to SR 636.

CAFA and CEP note the concerns raised in the report regarding the use of standardized test scores as a way to fulfill ELWR. CAFA cautions that eliminating the use of standardized test scores (the SAT and the ACT) as a way to fulfill ELWR would require significant resources, without which it could undermine program quality significantly. Any future discussions about removing this option should carefully weigh the tradeoffs, with considerable input from the campuses. CEP identifies that continued use of standardized test scores has “the potential for forced acceleration” impeding a student’s ability to self-place, and potentially leading to equity gaps.

As reflected in the report, UC Santa Cruz has implemented a Directed Self-Placement (DSP) program over the last two years. UC Santa Cruz is unique in that we have a centralized Writing Program, allowing the program the ability to monitor and modify approaches to placement through data collection and consultation. This has given our campus the capacity to respond appropriately and to think through critical questions such as: “whether DSP captures the diversity of incoming students’ experiences, whether DSP places students effectively, and whether the DSP survey is sufficiently accessible to incoming students.” Thus, CEP echoes and concurs with a report finding that, “campuses must have local autonomy and local authority over their ELWR placement mechanisms.”

On behalf of the Santa Cruz Division, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important report and recommendations. We look forward to hearing more from the ELWR Oversight Committee (EOC) and UCOPE for further recommendations regarding these important issues for our students and campuses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patty Gallagher, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

cc: Laura Giuliano, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
David Lee Cuthbert, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate