



November 7, 2017

Dear Chairs Narayan, Walsh, Lewis, and Nielson:

Thank you for your swift, thorough, and encouraging responses to the joint Academic Literacy Curriculum (ALC) proposed by the Council of Provosts and the Writing Program. We appreciate your careful attention to the design of the proposal and to its many details. Knowing that a swift response of our own is essential, we make the following acknowledgments and observations, chiefly to remarks made in the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) letter, which captures the essential character of the letters from the Committees on Planning and Budget (CPB), Preparatory Education (CPE), and Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections (RJE).

First, we appreciate the extension (to December 15, 2017) for the Writing Program on the deadline for Program Statements. COP looks forward to providing the first formal Program Statements for the colleges in time for the December 2018 deadline.

As CEP's letter about the ALC addresses some issues that chiefly affect the proposed College 1, and others that chiefly affect the subsequent Writing Program courses, we address each in turn, and subsequently address issues affecting the ALC as a whole.

### College 1

- *Assessment and suitability:* COP understands CEP's interest in ensuring that Core will be assessed robustly in light of its history of grade inflation and compression. We also understand the strong curiosity about how the plans for the course dovetail with the needs of the wide range of students who will be enrolled in College 1. Our plans for assessment of the course in its first year were crafted by Writing Program assessment expert Tonya Ritola, in consultation with IRAPS Assistant Director Anna Sher, and will help us understand how course design should evolve. As for the suitability of the course design for the range of entering UCSC students: we look forward to submitting materials for approval in February, consistent with requirements of the Committee on Courses of Instruction (CCI).
- *General Education requirements:* Members of COP will continue to consider the option of assigning GEs to College 1 courses, keeping in mind that the first priority of College 1 is to meet the outcomes already defined for the course.
- *Space issues:* CEP has already identified available general assignment classrooms suitable for College 1 classes at and near the colleges and analyzed their availability for such classes. The fidelity of the College 1 model--which draws on student success literature tying sense of belonging to a specific physical location--requires that we do our best to locate College 1 classes at the appropriate college, and so we request CEP's support in preferential scheduling of College 1 courses at the colleges. For our part, per CEP's request, COP will work with the VPDUE's staff and our counterparts in CHES to identify suitable spaces at the colleges that are not already on the Registrar's roster of available spaces, especially at the colleges where suitable rooms are in short supply. Locating such spaces may, indeed, reduce the pressure to increase College 1 class sizes to 30, which we understand to be a main reason CEP is entertaining this higher class size for the course.

- *Class size:* We thoroughly appreciate CEP's aim to maintain smaller class sizes for both parts of the ALC, and concur that larger class sizes would lead to negative pedagogical consequences. We are hoping that budget savings we may see (see below, regarding AWPE scores) and suitable teaching spaces that are not part of the general assignment roster will support class sizes of 28 for College 1, students' introductory college course.
- *Senate faculty governance:* We understand RJE's analysis and will meet the expectation for consulting with the Senate faculties of the colleges.

### Writing Program courses

- *AWPE scores of 7 ("3 + 4"):* We understand that systemwide governance of the standard for satisfying the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) forestalls requiring students originally assigned "split" scores (7s) to take Writing 1, and appreciate the compromise of counseling students to take that course. We also acknowledge the suggestions made by CPE about how to counsel students. Recommending but not requiring Writing 1 will have two foreseeable consequences. The first is that we should anticipate fewer students in Path C and more in Path B than projected in the ALC proposal (which may lead to some budget savings), and we may see a higher retake rate for Writing 2 among students who are counseled to take Writing 1 but opt not to (which could cancel out budget savings just noted). The second is that we will need to develop some system to counsel students. This cost was not anticipated in the budget. (Directed self-placement is a potential method but works best with some form of one-to-one counseling, which is labor-intensive.)
- *Writing Program external reviews:* The penultimate section of CEP's letter says that "CEP supports the VPAA's proposal that the College 1 courses be included in the external reviews of the Writing Program (and in the mid-cycle updates thereof)." Including College 1 classes, which colleges will be mounting, in the Writing Program's external review would seem to significantly expand its scope. Acknowledging that purview over external reviews rests with the VPAA, our understanding of VPAA Lee's recommendation is a bit different. In his letter of October 6, 2017, the VPAA proposed that "future campus program assessment of the Academic Literacy Curriculum as a non-degree program be included in the Writing Program external reviews," and that with regard to including the colleges in process of external reviews, as previously recommended by CEP, "[a]dditional discussions between the relevant Senate committees, the VPDUE, the Council of Provosts, and myself will be necessary to explore this action." We hope that the Writing Program will be asked to focus on the writing components of the ALC in the context of an overall assessment of the ALC, and that future external reviews of the colleges will be asked to focus on the College 1 component of the ALC, likewise within the larger context of the joint curriculum as a whole. We look forward to further guidance from the VPAA on this matter.

### Joint issues

- *Budget:* CPB has done a thorough analysis of the budgetary projections of the ALC proposal and the underlying funding provided for Core and the Writing Program. We trust that the VPDUE and Humanities Dean, together with Planning and Budget, will continue to consult with CPB on establishing a transparent and consistent enrollment-based funding model, and on answering questions such as how salary and overhead costs should be calculated.
- *Administrative allowances:* CPB's consultation with Planning and Budget suggested that administrative allowances could be reduced from 18 course equivalencies to 11 (CPB 2), part of an effort on CPB's part to locate sites of potential savings that could be invested in other parts of the campus curriculum. COP and the Writing Program strongly urge against this form of efficiency. While we will certainly consider such savings in the future if warranted, we caution that robust assessment of the sort that both CEP and CPE urge in their letters requires intensive, distributed labor of lecturers who must be

compensated for their work. At least in the first 5 years of the ALC--that is, the years of most demanding evaluation and adjustment--this administrative allowance should stand.

- *GSI*s: Both the Writing Program and the Council of Provosts are prepared to serve the campus priority of graduate growth by inviting GSIs to teach a portion of our courses. Both programs have been operating under the impression that teaching opportunities for GSIs promotes graduate growth by providing employment. We were thus surprised to read that having GSIs teach in the colleges and the Writing Program might be a drag on the campus curricular capacity (CPB 5). We understand that a preponderance of GSRs in some fields (chiefly STEM?) may reduce the number of available GSIs and thus have this limiting effect on curricular capacity in those fields. We wonder whether this also the case in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the divisional sources for most of the graduate students who teach in Core and the Writing Program curriculum.

COP and the Writing Program are grateful for the support of the Senate committees as we turn to the next steps in the approval of the ALC.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Abrams  
Chair, Council of Provosts



Heather Shearer  
Writing Program Chair