

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
MINUTES
March 14, 2007
12:30-2 p.m., Kerr Hall RM 307

Present: Heather Bullock, Joel Ferguson (Provost rep), Russ Flegal, David Helmbold, Pamela Hunt-Carter (Registrar, ex officio), Anatole Leikin, Roxanne Monnet (ASO staff), Loisa Nygaard, Jaye Padgett (Chair).

Absent: Sarah-Hope Parmeter (NSTF rep).

Guests: Margie Claxton (Associate Registrar), Bill Ladusaw (VPDUE), Michael McCawley (Associate Director, Admissions), Stacey Sketo-Rosener (Academic Preceptor).

I. Announcements and W topics.

The Committee was informed that the Resolution on the Writing-Intensive Requirement passed at the March 9 Senate Meeting. The Legislation to clarify that the student reps should be undergraduates did not pass. The majority favored it but not the required 2/3 proportion of those voting to amend a bylaw.

Chair Padgett communicated with the Art Department regarding CEP's concerns as to how the pre-major parameters would be applied to transfer students. The Department plans to continue its practices of admitting Junior transfers by portfolio review. For those transferring before they have junior status, no community college articulations are in place so the Department does not need to plan as to how to handle student performance in like courses. CEP confirmed its approval of the pre-major request to take effect with catalog year 2007-08.

CEP will not be meeting next week.

CEP discussed Merrill College's practice of using Z grades as a way of keeping students in the 80 X/Y/Z series. The series is being reduced to Merrill 80X in the fall and 80Y in the spring. The college wants to give a Z grade at the end of fall quarter, then give the grade for the fall course after the student enrolls in the spring course. These courses have not been reviewed for status as a multi-term sequence and that is not being requested now. (It was noted that there are very few multi-quarter courses on the books. In these cases, students receive one grade per series--not different grades per course. These courses cannot be graded separately since they are a continuation course.) It appears that the motivation for this process is to ensure that students take the full set of courses. CEP does not think this is an appropriate use of the Z notation. Chair Padgett will write to the Merrill College Provost with CEP's feedback.

II. Minutes. The minutes for February 21 were accepted as amended.

III. Environmental Toxicology Universal Charge for External Review.

CEP discussed the Universal Charge for the Environmental Toxicology External Review and has no additions to recommend. Member Flegal recused himself from a portion of the Committee discussion.

Since the Department does not have undergraduate degree programs, there is little for CEP to comment on. In the self-study, the Department notes that they plan to pursue pathways in other departments' majors. One already exists. The question was raised as to what level of faculty and staff resources should be in place before the pathways are established.

It was noted that there is a high ratio of undergraduates working in the labs of the Environmental Toxicology faculty and that it continues to be a highly diverse program.

IV. Detailed Calendar for 2007-08

Confirmation of the draft academic calendar for 2007-08 was carried forward to the April 4 meeting in order to provide more time for discussion with the divisional deans.

V. Dean visit.

The divisional academic deans visited the last portion of the meeting. The Committee and guests introduced themselves. CEP's report to the Senate on the writing-intensive (W) requirement and the associated resolution was given to the deans.

The deans were invited to raise issues to CEP for consideration (whether related to the W requirement or not).

Comments of note:

One dean supports broadening the definition of the W to scholarly communication as discussed at the last Senate Meeting (where the Resolution on the Writing-Intensive Requirement passed). This would include such things as oral argumentation skills as often happens in Europe. This dean thinks that UCSC students are disadvantaged in this area.

There is a perception that students are writing less between frosh level writing and satisfaction of the W requirement. CEP wants departments to be more involved in defining writing, and if possible developing and seeing that courses are taught for their majors.

The deans support the intent of the W requirement.

One dean believes that patching will not resolve the problem of a lack of capacity for the W requirement. As long as departments see this requirement as someone else's responsibility, it is subject to being cut from their curriculum when resources are tight. He asked CEP how the campus can guarantee that the W is supported in the discipline. He would like CEP to support the programs in making the W part of their major requirements. He encouraged CEP to consider whether departments are supporting the W for their majors when major programs are approved or reviewed.

The deans were reminded that CEP supports the W designation being attached to a sequence of courses and has approved 2 such sequences since last spring (Health Sciences and Earth Sciences).

Most UCSC departments will be growing in their number of faculty in coming years. For the W to be incorporated into department planning, it is thought that it needs to be made explicit to the departments that they must support the W for their majors. One option would be to change the Senate Regulation from “in the discipline” to “in the major”. Modifying the review process for programs to include the expectation that they are supporting the W for their majors is another idea. It was noted that GE and major requirements are treated very separately and that it may not be logical for the W to be in the GE “box”. Another category is University Requirements of which the capstone requirement is one. This seems the right place for the W.

It was recommended that there be a consultant to work with the faculty to incorporate the W in the curriculum. It was acknowledged that this requirement is not to fall to the Writing Program but that, with appropriate funding, that unit may be able to give workshops on how to deliver writing instruction. Pre-matriculation summer session courses, such as for ELWR-challenged students, might ease the pressure on the Writing Program so that they could assist somewhat with meeting this requirement.

CEP’s challenge is to execute the W by connecting it to what may already be happening as much as possible. If UCSC expects students to fulfill this requirement then the campus needs to be sure they can accomplish it. One approach would be to ask each discipline what should happen for their students with regarding to writing. Then to assess whether that is already happening or how they would go about achieving it.

The Art Division Dean expressed that the W could probably be sustained for their majors with more teaching assistant support. But the dean could not see how to get faculty to support the requirement without additional resources.

Another thought was that departments could increase the size of some classes and offer more sections in order to reduce the number of multiple offerings of some courses and liberate some funding but that classroom capacity issues prevent this from happening.

Peer writing instruction and tutorials were discussed. The Humanities Division would be in support of restoration of the program. CEP noted that two Universities with successful writing intensive requirements (Duke and Dartmouth) have tutorials as a component of their programs.

CEP asked what can be done to fund the W. One dean asked why writing tutoring should be paid for with anything other than student fees. It was brought up that divisional workload funds are returned to the VPDUE’s Office. The VPDUE indicated that he is looking for the faculty voice through this process. He wants to be sure of what the faculty want to have done with that money. It was noted that 95 percent of academic funds are out to the divisions already and are largely committed to salaries.

The group discussed how to finesse resources or mechanisms to help those disciplines not effectively supporting the W for their majors. The group wondered how to address the “unfunded mandate” attitude.

They discussed issues around teaching assistant support. There is a lack of funds to provide TAs at the TA to student ratio needed for success in writing. There is especially a lack of graduate students trained on how to teach writing. Perhaps there could be a summer institute for teaching writing followed by practice associated with summer session courses.

If UCSC had a professional school or more 5th year certification programs there would be more of a draw for students who could be looking for such work as writing tutor or TA for W courses. Although funding a TA may be more expensive than funding a lecturer, it helps to meet the goal of expanding graduate student numbers. In the end if there are not enough TA bodies units go for lecturers.

When asked for feedback regarding other GE topics, the suggestion was given for a research capstone in each discipline.

CEP asked the deans if they had other issues for the Committee to consider. Respondents indicated that frosh writing should be discussed and/or reviewed to be sure that it is preparing students for writing. They would like to know how writing quality is measured and what evidence there is on ways to most successfully teach writing.

It was suggested that one approach to furthering the broader GE report would be a campus discussion on what is expected of BA/BS students at the time of graduation as a way of identifying the GE needs.

The deans expressed an interest in having more routine meetings with CEP either as a group or individually. CEP also expressed the same interest.

Attest,

Jaye Padgett, Chair
Committee of Educational Policy