

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
MINUTES**
Wednesday, November 19, 2014
11 am-1:30 p.m., Kerr Hall, Room 307

Present: Faye Crosby, Matt Guthaus, Max Hufft (SUA), Sean Keilen, Barak Krakauer (ASO staff), Jessica Ly (ASO Staff), Roxi Power (NSTF), Mary Beth Pudup (Chair pro tem), Tchad Sanger (Registrar), Heather Shearer, Susanna Wrangell (ASO staff), Margie Claxton (Associate Registrar), Richard Hughey (VPDUE).

Absent: Provost Rep., Mark Krumholz, John Tamkun (Chair),

I. Announcements and Consent Agenda

Heather Shearer served as chair in the absence of Chair Tamkun.

The external review letter for Computer Science was removed from the consent agenda for revision and will be placed on the agenda for next meeting.

The open access policy letter was amended and approved.

II. Honors and Challenge Programs Update

Members discussed how CEP should assess the success of the Honors and Challenge Programs and whether the committee should support the continuation of these programs. One feature of these programs that CEP would like to study more closely is their ability to improve the enrollment and retention of highly-qualified students. Committee members were also interested in the role that these programs can play in the intellectual lives and academic success of these students, but felt that beginning this discussion with clearer data about recruitment and retention would more helpfully frame the debate.

To this end, CEP will request more information from the Honors and Challenge Programs about their ability to enroll and retain students; specifically, the committee will draft a letter to Matt O'Hara, Director of the Honors Program, requesting the information about the Honors Program that the previous year's CEP had asked for by middle of the Fall Quarter, as well as information related to recruitment and retention. This letter will ask for statistics on what the rate of acceptance was for students admitted into the Honors Program compared to similarly-qualified students not admitted to Honors in other years, as well as information about how the retention rate of these students compares to the retention rate of students not in these programs. The committee will also ask that a survey of these students be conducted to determine the degree to which the Honors Program played a role in their decision to matriculate at UCSC and plays a role in their decision to remain here.

Members will continue the discussion of these programs when this data is available. Other issues related to the Honors and Challenge Programs will be discussed in subsequent meetings, such as whether the Honors and Challenge Programs should be dovetailed, the success of the ELWR-unsatisfied section of Honors for international students, and what the stewardship of the program should look like.

III. C-minus Grading Option Discussion

The committee continued its discussion of the C- grading option from previous meetings. Adding a C- (and perhaps D+) would bring UCSC into conformity with other UC's, and would likely also have a

beneficial impact on the GPA's of students, which would in turn help students maintain their financial aid eligibility. The committee noted again that it would face several difficult decisions if it will advocate for the introduction of the C- grade: would this grade count as a "pass," would it give GE credit, would it be repeatable for grade improvement, and so on. Furthermore, the committee is unsure how faculty would make use of this grading option in practice: would it largely be given to students currently receiving C's (in which case, it would lower that student's GPA), or would it largely be given to students currently receiving D's (in which case, it would raise that student's GPA)? The committee agreed that these issues are difficult to address adequately given the current amount of data, especially in light of the fact that there does not seem to be a single UC-wide practice about how to handle the C-grade. A survey of faculty about how they would use this grading option may help determine the effect that this change of policy would have on GPA's.

The committee decided to continue discussion of this issue in the next quarter, and hopes to write a white paper about this issue and report to the Senate.

IV. Individual Major Guidelines

CEP reviews requests from students to create individual majors. Many of these are rigorous programs of study developed by excellent students, but others are poorly-designed, created late in a student's academic career, and seem to be designed to allow a student who was unable to succeed in other departments to graduate; this, of course, is not the intention of an individual major.

The committee agreed that it would be wrong to eliminate individual majors, because they often foster interdisciplinary work and offer a chance for ambitious students to complete intellectually challenging and innovative courses of education. If, however, more of these poorly-designed majors are brought to the committee, it might be appropriate to define some sort of independent major qualification policy, modeled after the existing qualification policies that ordinary majors carry. In addition, a prohibition on requests for individual majors from students in their Senior years would be a disincentive from using individual majors as a sort of "major of last resort." The committee will revisit this discussion and prepare to implement these suggestions if these poorly-designed individual majors continue to be submitted to CEP for approval.