

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Annual Report, 2001 - 2002

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Committee on Educational Policy in 2001-02 completed several projects remaining from the previous year; commented on proposals, processes, policies, and drafts emanating from the Universitywide Academic Senate and Office of the President as well as from UCSC's Senate and administration; conducted its routine, essential business of participating in external reviews, approving courses and catalog copy, and advising divisions, departments, faculty members and students on the application of policies in CEP's purview; and initiated action on a number of matters that will continue on into 2002-03.

Assessment and the College Core Courses

CEP's two principal items of unfinished business from 2001-02 were (1) the on-going implementation of UCSC's new system of assessment with its mandatory letter grades and performance (narrative) evaluations and (2) the completion of CEP's review of the college core courses. With regard to assessment, CEP presented to the Senate its final draft of Guidelines for Performance (Narrative) Evaluations, incorporated suggestions from Senators, and then, through the newly appointed NES Coordinator, distributed the guidelines to the faculty. CEP continued reviewing departmental requests to designate certain courses as using P/NP grading only and to require that majors take certain courses for letter grades. The committee revised the policy for determining students' academic eligibility for athletic participation to make the policy consistent with newly adopted gpa criteria for good standing. And, with the assistance of the Registrar's Office and the academic preceptors, CEP approved a stream-lined petition process for a one-time exemption from various enrollment deadlines and then began monitoring students' use and possible abuse of petitions and appeals to change letter grades so as to improve their GPA. The committee is especially interested in seeing if on-going experience with mandatory letter grades will suggest some policy changes, especially with regard to withdrawals (W).

In January, CEP completed its review of the purposes and effectiveness of the college core courses begun a year earlier. After considering course syllabuses, descriptive and evaluative reports from the college provosts, 29 questionnaires completed by core course instructors, and 709 questionnaires gathered from students, CEP concluded that, overall, the current college core courses do "an estimable job of fulfilling the educational purposes they purport to address, that is, providing freshmen with a fall seminar in which they work on analytical writing, critical reading, and active collaboration and productive discussion with peers."

As a result of its review, CEP became especially mindful of the core courses' importance:

- in serving all first-year students as one quarter in a two-quarter sequence of freshman writing courses;
- in providing a fall seminar experience which for many freshmen serves as an effective transition between high school and university cultures; provides access to advising and support services; and contributes to building and enriching the community in which they live;

- in preparing the more than 40% of the freshmen who have not satisfied the Subject A Requirement to re-take, and in most cases pass, the Subject A Examination. CEP concluded that, if the core courses were to be abolished or transformed so that they could no longer serve these purposes, the quality of undergraduate education at UCSC would suffer unless means at least as effective were developed to meet these needs.

Comments on Reports, Drafts, Plans, and Proposals

In 2001-02, CEP responded to requests for comments on BOARS' on-going discussion of the use of comprehensive review in admitting students to campuses and on the use of tests, especially the SAT, in determining UC eligibility as well as campus admissions. The committee participated in UCEP's and the Academic Council's extensive review of the Subject A requirement and examination. It also contributed to discussions of an academic plan for the Silicon Valley Center, reviewed proposals for restructuring the Writing Across the Curriculum Program (now called Writing in the Disciplines), commented on new guidelines for establishing programs and departments, and read drafts of UCSC's report initiating its up-coming WASC review. The committee commented on the Academic Integrity Report and reacted favorably to a proposal to identify academic "pathways" to assist in early advising of undergraduates.

CEP commented on the Long-Range Academic Plan for Undergraduate Education and consulted with Campus Provost John Simpson about the long-range academic planning process in general, voicing its concern that the process may not have adequately represented the interests of academic endeavors whose protection, development, and welfare are not necessarily consistent with the interests of the academic divisions, for example, core parts of the undergraduate curriculum, such as general education and service courses, as well as interdivisional interdisciplinary programs.

CEP consulted with Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Lynda Goff about the proposal to initiate, at the behest of President Atkinson, a series of freshman seminars at UCSC. CEP refined and approved the substance of the proposal while questioning the effect on other important programs of funding this initiative in the current fiscal climate.

Routine Work: Approvals and Advice

As part of its review of catalog copy and courses, CEP approved a catalog rights statement for students entering UCSC prior to 1993; streamlined the course approval process by delegating approval of routine course revisions to the Registrar's Office; and endorsed a policy of routinely approving 20-unit course loads for continuing students in good standing. CEP approved the academic program for College Ten and assisted a number of departments (most notably American Studies, Community Studies, and Art History) in revising their catalog program statements and their major requirements. It provided informal advice on a proposal for a B.S. in Health Sciences; discussed at length the process and particulars of pre-approving certain EAP courses to satisfy general education requirements; and acted on a not unreasonable number of student petitions requesting waiver or substitution of general education or other graduation requirements.

The committee determined that Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate credit will continue to count as elective credit, but will not be used to prevent students from taking certain courses by invoking the specter of duplication of credit. To clear up long-standing confusion and

inconsistency, CEP ruled that when two courses have been determined to be equivalent, a student may repeat either course to remedy a D, F, or NP.

And, acting on a request from Environmental Studies to count ENVS 23 as a chemistry rather than a biology course for the purposes of its general education IN designation, CEP decided instead to count all Introduction to Discipline courses as coming from their own departments. Therefore, rather than continuing in the context of general education to count as biology courses, ENVS 20, 23, and 24 will count as IN courses from environmental studies, and ANTH 1 will count as an IN course from anthropology.

On-Going Concerns: External Reviews, the Comprehensive Exam Requirement, General Education, Selective Admissions to Majors, and the Calendar

In several important areas, CEP began work in 2001-2002 that will be continued next year. First, in the course of its routine participation in departmental external reviews – in developing the charges for reviews of Theater Arts, Ocean Sciences, Economics, Education, and History and in the closure meetings for Literature, Anthropology, Art History, Computer Engineering, History of Consciousness, and Mathematics, CEP became increasingly convinced that the efficiency and efficacy of the current external reviews could be improved. CEP was especially concerned with the length of time between the beginning and end of reviews, which can render final recommendations moot, and with the not uncommon tendency of the process to ignore issues of undergraduate education even when they have been raised specifically in the charge. In connection with work being done by the Academic Planning Committee, CEP plans to continue to help the campus develop a more useful, meaningful process for systematically reviewing undergraduate academic programs.

Second, in conjunction with other issues such as the adoption of mandatory letter grades and the budget crisis, CEP received enough inquiries about UCSC's senior comprehensive requirement to feel the need to make clear its intention to uphold the requirement as an important part of UCSC's commitment to excellent undergraduate education and to reaffirm the 1995 definition of a "thesis" as "a major coherent project that meets the standards of the senior year level of achievement in the discipline." At the same time, CEP plans to initiate discussions which will encourage departments to develop feasible options for students to satisfy the requirement in meaningful ways while increasing the usefulness of the exit requirement as a way of assessing the effectiveness of programs of study within majors.

Third, in 2001-2002, CEP discussed in detail both the Writing Intensive (W) General Education Requirement and the Ethnic Studies Requirement. As a result of these deliberations, the committee decided to ask each department next fall to inform the committee about the options for satisfying the W requirement that it believes would be most useful for its majors. CEP increased the amount of relevant material required in E courses from "substantial" to "significantly more than half" and will ask departments that offer E courses to review these courses to determine whether they meet the criteria for satisfying the Ethnic Studies General Education Requirement.

CEP anticipates that its investigations of the W and E requirements will lead next year to a broader consideration of general education at UCSC, not with the goal of offering a new comprehensive plan but rather of investigating the possibility of recommending additions and revisions that would

make UCSC's current general education program more meaningful and more flexible in relation to students' interests and needs.

Fourth, CEP reviewed and, after considerable consultation, approved the School of Engineering's proposed policy for admitting students selectively to its majors. At the end of the year, CEP also commented informally on the Economics Department's plan to limit admissions to its majors. In the course of these discussions, CEP determined that the procedures adopted in 1996 for declaring a department "impacted" (and therefore able to limit its number of majors) are cumbersome and out-dated. CEP has circulated for comment a draft of revised procedures and will finish the process of revision next fall.

Finally, as a result of communications from many concerned faculty members, CEP, in consultation with the Registrar's Office and VPDUE Lynda Goff, recommended changes to the 2003-2004 Academic and Administrative Calendar (it being too late to alter the calendar for 2002-03), primarily to avoid final examinations during weekends and to create a spring break composed of a full week with two weekends. CEP's recommendations are now being reviewed by various individuals and units. In the fall, the committee will draft principles for the creation of future academic calendars, recommend specific dates for future years, and circulate its recommendations for comment.

Acknowledgements

CEP's work in 2001-02 was aided and informed by the presence and perspicacity of regular guests Associate Director of Admissions Michael McCawley, Council of Preceptors' representative Stacey Sketo-Rosner, and Associate Registrar Pamela Hunt-Carter, whose significant preparatory work often informed the committee's deliberations. CEP's approval of courses and catalog copy depended on the indefatigable efforts of Interim Academic Editor/Coordinator Margie Claxton. Student representatives Isaac Menashe and Christopher Amico were faithful and articulate participants. The committee appreciated the perspective afforded by VPDUE Lynda Goff and will especially miss the expertise, grasp of detail, and insight provided by Professor William Ladusaw, who is leaving the committee after a three-year stint as Provosts' representative. Above all, CEP is grateful to be the beneficiary of Academic Senate Administrative Specialist Cathy Fong's knowledge, memory, efficiency, patience, and tact.

Respectfully submitted,

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