

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION
Report on Enforcement of Senate Regulation 10.5.2

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

Last spring, the Committee on Preparatory Education reported to the Senate on what appears to be an alarmingly upward trend in the percentage of students who have not completed the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) by the end of their first quarter of enrollment (Table 1). CPE is concerned about the impacts that this delay is having on these students' success in other courses and their ability to make adequate academic progress during their initial years at the University. We speculated that one reason for this increase in the number of students who take more than one quarter to complete ELWR might be the rise in the number of students entering UCSC who are English Language Learners. As possible evidence of this trend we note that the rate of students entering UCSC who are designated as having English as a Second Language problems, as a percentage of those who did not pass the May UC Analytical Writing Placement Exam, has risen from an average of 14 percent per year between 1998-2001 to an average of 18 percent per year between 2002-2006 (Table 2). There may be other factors contributing to this trend, but the fact remains that increasing numbers of students arrive on campus that do not meet our expectations for University level writing and they are taking longer to achieve that level of competency.

In order to mitigate the impacts of this trend, CPE decided to work this year on strengthening the enforcement of Senate Regulation 10.5.2. This regulation stipulates that entering students who have not satisfied the ELWR must enroll in an Entry Level Writing section of the College core course during their first term, and that pending satisfactory passage of the requirement, continued enrollment in an Entry Level Writing course is mandatory. Unfortunately, the latter part of this regulation had not been enforced until this year.

In addition to better enforcing Regulation 10.5.2, the Writing Program, in consultation with CPE, has developed a slightly revised series of ELWR classes. The most significant curricular change for 2006-07 was the addition of WR 23 as a full 5-unit Grammar and Rhetoric course in fall quarter, replacing WR 22B, a 3-unit Grammar and Editing workshop. WR 23 was designed to better assist students who are in their fourth quarter of enrollment at UCSC and have not yet completed ELWR. These students are at risk of being barred from further enrollment at the University. In fall 2006, 27 students enrolled in WR 23 and all 27 satisfied the ELWR by portfolio review. In comparison, in fall 2005, 33 students were enrolled in the 3-unit WR22B, Grammar and Editing Workshop, but only 27 passed ELWR by review and 6 were barred. Though the numbers are small, these preliminary results suggest that the expanded WR 23 curriculum may be positively enhancing the chances of this particularly recalcitrant population of struggling writers to successfully meet the Entry Level Writing standard.

In fall 2006, CPE met with representatives from the Writing Program, the Registrar's Office, undergraduate advising, and the Deans of Humanities and Undergraduate Education to discuss enrollment management, advising, and increased capacity in ELWR courses to more adequately enforce Regulation 10.5.2. This was a very productive meeting that resulted in a high level of coordination between the various academic and administrative units responsible for ensuring student compliance with this regulation. A number of factors conspired to make this year a particularly difficult one to begin these enforcement procedures. These factors included

an unexpectedly large Freshman class (3,350 students in 2006 compared to 2,950 in 2005) and a lower than expected pass rate on the November writing exam (66 percent in November 2006 compared to 71 percent in November 2005).

As a result, the Writing Program had to scramble at the last minute to find the staffing and resources needed to offer 20 sections of WR 20 to accommodate the approximately 440 students who had not fulfilled the ELWR by the end of their first quarter of enrollment. This is close to double the number of sections of WR 20 that have been offered over the past five years (between 10-12 sections per year from 2001-2006). In winter quarter 2007, 416 ELWR students enrolled in WR 20; of these 291 or about 70 percent passed ELWR by portfolio review; 125 students did not pass or failed to submit a portfolio; and approximately 20 students who were required to take WR 20 did not do so for various reasons. (Some signed up for the course to get the hold lifted on their enrollment and then dropped the class. CPE, the Registrar, the Writing Program, and undergraduate advising are working together to eliminate this loophole.)

In spring 2007, the Writing Program is offering 7 sections of WR 21, up from 4 sections in spring 2006. Currently 132 of the approximately 145 first year students who have not yet fulfilled ELWR are enrolled in WR 21. This is a 70 percent increase in enrollment over last year compared to the close to 90 percent increase in winter quarter, suggesting that better enforcement of Regulation 10.5.2 may be having a positive impact on the rate at which students complete the ELWR requirement.

If, as expected, somewhere between 70-75 percent of these students pass their writing portfolio review at the end of spring quarter, then there will be between about 45 to 50 students entering their fourth quarter of enrollment without having completed ELWR. If these predictions bear out, this would only be about a 30 percent increase over the raw counts for fall 2006, again suggesting that better enforcing Regulation 10.5.2 is encouraging a greater percentage of students to fulfill this requirement in a more timely manner. However, we will need to collect statistics over several years to see if these are significant and sustainable changes.

CPE is working with the Writing Program and the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Education to try to collect better statistics on those students who take more than one quarter to complete ELWR. We are particularly interested in finding out more about the English Language status of these students and about other factors that may be impacting their success in University-level writing. With more diagnostic information, CPE can work with the Writing Program and CEP to develop an ELWR curriculum that is better tailored to the specific needs of this cohort of students, adapting the best practices from writing programs nationally.

CPE is also concerned with the lack of instructional support for writing once students have completed the ELWR and Composition 1 and 2 general education requirements. We would like to see instructional resources allocated to support more sections of Writing 22, the 3-unit Grammar and Editing Workshop, which should be open to all students who think or are told that they need more help and support with their writing, especially while they are working on papers in other courses across the curriculum. Transfer students, in particular, have little access to writing instruction at UCSC. Most are admitted to the University with all of their writing requirements technically satisfied; however, as most of us know through experience, transfer students' mastery of University-level writing can be quite varied. CPE is also alarmed by the erosion of writing

tutoring support at all levels, and particularly for English Language Learners who have satisfied the ELWR or are transfer students—and thus do not have access to tutoring services.

CPE would like to encourage the campus administration and other Senate committees to pay more serious attention to the dynamically changing levels of academic preparedness, especially in the areas of writing and mathematics, that UC-eligible students are bringing with them to the University and to how we will respond to these changes curricularly and in terms of enhanced academic support.

Table 1: ELWR pass rates at end of fall quarter.

Year	Entering Freshmen	No. of Nov Writing Exams	Pass Rate on Nov Writing Exam and Review
1999		719	78%
2000		1001	78%
2001		1144	78%
2002	3,251	1048	81%
2003	3,453	1188	76%
2004	3,122	885	78%
2005	2,950	1081	71%
2006	3,350	1068	66%

Table 2: First Year UCSC students with “E” designation (English Language Learner), as a percent of students who failed the May system-wide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (UCAWPE).

Year	Percent of AWPE failed exams w/ “E”
1998	15%
1999	16%
2000	14%
2001	11%
2002	19%
2003	17%
2004	20%
2005	19%
2006	17%

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

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