

Committee on Preparatory Education

Minutes

Monday, February 4, 2008

1-2:30 p.m.

Kerr Hall Room 129

Present: Elizabeth Abrams (Chair), Roxanne Monnet (Staff), Ellen Newberry (NSTF Rep, Judy Scott, Tony Tromba.

I. Announcements and updates.

The Committee was reminded of the Faculty Research Lecture scheduled to occur on February 12 with Professor Stan Woosley as the honored speaker. They were also reminded that the Teaching and Learning Symposium is scheduled for the afternoon of February 21.

II. Report on UCOPE Meeting.

UCOPE recently selected next year's writing prompt for the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE). The systemwide Director of Undergraduate Admissions attended UCOPE to discuss financial challenges related to AWPE. Presently the exam is taken statewide in May and all exams are read later that month in Berkeley (the "Big Read"); each exam is scored separately by two readers, and disputed scores are broken by a third reader. There has been a significant increase in numbers of students taking the AWPE in recent year (from 16K to 20K) causing a considerable increase in cost. They are currently hundreds of thousands of dollars over budget. The Director raised possible responses being considered by UCOP to decrease costs: dispensing with the statewide exam and dispersing the AWPE to individual UC campuses to proctor and read (this would roughly double the number of exams UCSC reads each fall were it to occur); and recalibrating exam scores to lower the SAT score that satisfies the ELWR. Of these possibilities only the last was given serious consideration, as the first would involve significant increased labor. UCOPE prefers lowering the SAT score at which students satisfy the ELWR by taking into account the SAT scores at which students also overwhelmingly satisfy the ELWR. UCOPE also recommended examining other methods of satisfying the ELWR (e.g., AP and IBH scores) to see additional correlations between methods of satisfying the ELWR so as to ensure that students who need the entry level writing instruction are not unnecessarily excluded from it. Given state demographics, it is not known whether this is a long term solution to the funding issues. UCOPE wants to be sure that the data is clearly enough understood to make such a change regarding SAT score cut offs. UCOPE was made aware of the significant staff reduction occurring at UCOP. Staff are being offered an incentive to retire earlier or go to work at another UC. Layoffs are anticipated. Both the Ad Hoc Report on International Education and the Regents Task Force Report on Undergraduate Diversity were discussed at UCOPE (more notes regarding those topics are in the sections below).

CPE was apprised of the results of the proposed legislative changes related to on SB635.

Academic council turned down the smaller class size for ELWR. Most campuses have been able

to reduce to 20 students per section (UCSC is at 22 and UC Davis had gone as high as 30 before recent reductions). Council accepted other recommendations for clarifying and reducing redundancy in the regulation. The new language reflects changes UCSC CPE recommended on draft legislation changes to ensure that satisfaction of ELWR not be attached to satisfaction of a particular course. As the recommendation was accepted, UCSC's approach to satisfaction of the ELWR may remain unchanged.

III. Undergraduate Diversity Report.

Chair Abrams reviewed for CPE the recent UCOPE meeting. UCOPE would like to know if the divisional CPE's the Regents study groups 3 key recommendations. UCOPE has the following questions. Should UCOPE offer general support for the recommendations given in the undergrad report? What does CPE think deserves the most attention in order to improve academic preparation and University access for a diverse undergraduate student population? Are there recommendations in the report whose articulation needs to be clarified or elaborated on? Do members have concerns about particular recommendations on undergraduate diversity that should be voiced by UCOPE to the Regents study group?

CPE found it to be an excellent report--thorough and comprehensive. The Committee supports the recommendations given in the report. However, the resource challenges to get there are discouraging.

On the subject of eligibility and admissions requirements, CPE found that the report made a better case for the need to change admissions eligibility criteria than did the BOARS report. CPE also found the report shed light on UCSC Math 2/Math 3 challenged-students, the subject of separate CPE discussion. It was noted that the report appears to be written from the assumption that there should be fairness across the system, an assumption that is problematic because it is impossible to achieve. K-12 education in California does not fairly distribute resources such as AP and honors courses, academic counseling, etc. that prepare students for postsecondary education. This leads to lack of fairness in UC admissions.

CPE thinks that outreach needs to be evaluated and revamped. The disorganization and lack of coordination has led to lack of effectiveness. CPE recommends coordination of the various programs that provide outreach support across UC. At UCSC that would involve coordinating efforts such as the Educational Partnership Center, CalTeach, COSMOS, and writing and math outreach projects, for example. It was noted that the short-term nature of funding for some outreach efforts has limited their effectiveness. CPE would like tangible benchmarks to be established and best practices in the area of outreach identified.

Members were asked to give feedback to Chair Abrams by February 19. A draft document will be considered at the March meeting.

IV. Draft Legislation to Modify the Committee Charge.

CPE considered a draft legislation proposal to modify their charge to add the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Coordinator to the committee with the status of "invited to sit

with.” They discussed whether the person could simply be invited as the agenda warranted it. However, given the connection between CPE’s and UCOPE’s charge to ELWR, the ELWR Coordinator is likely to have valuable input to all related topics that CPE considers. CPE gave unanimous support for the legislative change, and gave the Committee Chair the discretion to modify the text of the justification in light of feedback that may be received from the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections.

V. Continued Discussion Regarding Math Preparation Needs.

The topic of math preparation needs was carried forward due to lack of time.

So attests,

Elizabeth Abrams, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education