

Committee on Preparatory Education
Minutes

Monday, November 17, 2008
1-2:30 p.m., Kerr Hall Room 129

Present: Nandini Bhattacharya (NSTF Rep), Nate Mackey, Roxanne Monnet (Staff), Sarah-Hope Parmeter (ELWR Coordinator), Judith Scott (Chair), Tony Tromba.

I. Announcements and minutes.

Members introduced themselves.

The draft minutes from October 2 were approved as amended. Members were reminded that CPE minutes are posted on the public web site after the committee approves them.

II. Entry-Level Writing Requirement Update.

UCSC's coordinator for the Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) gave CPE an update on student progress toward ELWR satisfaction. Student have four quarters at UCSC to satisfy their ELWR requirement after which they are barred from further enrollment and may return only after having satisfied ELWR with a course taken elsewhere. At the time of this meeting, 24 students will be barred from winter 2009 if they do not satisfy the ELWR by the end of this quarter. The number was 29 at this point in fall 2007 and 28 in fall 2006.

Most students take and pass the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) by the May before they will enter UCSC as a frosh. Students may also satisfy ELWR with a qualifying score on an Advanced Placement test. Those who enter UCSC without having satisfied ELWR will take the AWPE at the beginning of the quarter. Each exam is read by a minimum of two readers. A score of 3 or less is not a passing score. If an exam receives one score of 3 and one of 4 by each reader are reread by experienced reader (third read) and will either do up or down. In this way there are no scores of 7. Score of 2-6 are not passing. UCSC's pass rate is usually at the UC average.

The reason for the dip in pass rate in 2006 is unknown. That year only 66 percent of those who took test in November passed. 2007 was the first year that the Regulation was actively enforced, in an effort to get students into the classes they need as soon as possible. This first year appears to be a success in that more students satisfied their ELWR requirement before the 4th quarter.

III. Math Placement Exam.

CPE considered the request by the Math Department to change their placement exam to limit the number of times that a student may take the placement exam in their UCSC career to 3. The new policy also stipulates that they may not take the placement exam to get out of taking a class that they previously failed. The Committee also considered feedback to the request received from the

Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). CEP supports the new policy and made the suggestion that students take a class after one or two attempts at the exam.

After answering questions for the Committee, member Tromba and NSTF representative Bhattacharya recused themselves from the discussion.

CPE agrees with CEP's suggest that student take a class after a couple attempts at the exam and speculated that taking the partial unit Learning Services Course may be sufficient to allow students to retake the exam a third time.

Anecdotal reasons that students have chosen to take the exam multiple times may include students' desire to get to the next math level faster; some students think that they are ready for calculus based on the work that they did in High School; and some students who failed Math 3 do not want to retake the course. For a number of these students, Math 3 is the only math requirement for their major in the Social Sciences.

CPE members voted in support of the request to limit students to 3 attempts at the Math Placement Exam and to disallow that the exam be taken as a way of passing beyond a class that they previously failed. The change will be effective with the 2009-10 catalog year. In their letter they will invite the Math Department to consider the recommendations made by CEP and will ask Math to notify affected departments of the change. Math could implement CEP's suggestion as a recommendation or submit a revised policy to CPE if they would like to require that students take a course after two attempts at the exam.

IV. Math preparation topics.

Members considered the results of the May 2008 undergraduate student opinion poll conducted by CEP, particularly comments related to mathematics at UCSC. The comments suggest that another course maybe needed for social sciences students, perhaps more of a statistics or logic course than a pre-calculus course.

At the next meeting CPE will be apprised of the results of CPE's inquiry to Psychology and Applied Mathematics regarding a new course for Psychology students.

So attests,

Judith Scott, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education