

Committee on Preparatory Education
Minutes

Wednesday, February 17, 2010
9-10:30 a.m., Kerr Hall Rm 278

Present: Nandini Bhattacharya (NSTF Rep), Mary-Kay Gamel (Chair), Roxanne Monnet (Staff), David Smith.

Absent: Sarah-Hope Parmeter (ELWR Coordinator), Anna Tsing.

I. Announcements and updates.

The Committee on Preparatory Education (CPE) confirmed their talking points for the consultation to follow with Learning Support Services (LSS). The list includes the tutor program (training and usage), Modified Supplemental Instruction, Bridge Program preparation, and effects on LSS from the Student Affairs reorganization. CPE will also raise questions about aspects of the reports received earlier this year and about support for instructors of large lower-division courses that enroll a significant percentage of Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) eligible students.

II. Consultation with Learning Support Services.

CPE asked how things are going with the work of LSS and how the Committee could support LSS in reaching its goals.

LSS Director Holly Cordova indicated that the basic trends on academic progress for EOP students are disturbing and that it is difficult to establish partnerships at this time of budget crisis. Faculty are more overwhelmed than ever due to larger class sizes, reduced numbers of teaching assistants, larger sections, etc. At the same time, EOP students come to UC less prepared than non-EOP students and are remaining least prepared as they continue throughout their education at UCSC. The Bridge Program data suggests that EOP students begin to catch up by about year three or four, in terms of retention. While EOP students may persist through their degrees, they do not achieve the higher level GPAs, according to Director Cordova.

CPE asked what data is available on EOP students. Director Cordova indicated that the Data Warehouse has EOP as a data category and that CPE may be able to get useful information through the Office of Institutional Research.

Math preparatory courses were discussed. LSS has taken on the cost of all Math 2 sections and about half of the Math 3 sections through MSI. The question of whether Math 2 is adequately preparing students for Math 3 arose. Director Cordova indicated that a study is underway on that topic. Her data shows that students appear to earn one grade lower in Math 3 than what they earned in Math 2, meaning that students who earned a C in Math 2 do not pass Math 3. The future of Math 2 was discussed. Such options as on-line courses and community college courses are being considered for students who do not test into Math 3. An alternative to preventing

students from taking additional seats in Math 2 in order to improve their transcript might be for the course to be graded solely on completion of the work, and not on mastery.

Director Cordova added that a study was also needed to consider whether C2 is adequately preparing students to write. Faculty frequently say that students do not know how to write, despite how they may have scored on ELWR or how they performed in C1/C2. The question of what UCSC's responsibility to bring students up to par and what is UCSC doing to do to make that possible needs further discussion and action.

The trend toward making class sections optional was discussed. This is a particularly significant change for students who are in need of those sections and may either not realize it or may not find room in the available sections.

Director Cordova indicated that those in MSI pass with a higher grade in the courses that they are taking in 75 percent of the cases. Members asked whether LSS could handle a significant increase in use of the Modified Supplemental Instruction support program. Director Cordova indicated that there is room for a significant increase in support numbers, although more sections would need to be created (sections are set at a limit of 10). An idea for cases where classes moved to optional discussion sections is for MSI support to be increased and departments to encourage that students go to MSI a certain number of times after they have received their first C in a gateway course. Last year, LSS served 37 percent of UCSC undergraduates. If the instructor is working with the MSI tutors it works well. The MSI tutors need mentorship and continuity where possible.

CPE asked Director Cordova about the impact on LSS caused by the Student Affairs reorganization to create Retention Services. She has not noticed changes to the services that LSS provides as a result of the reorganization. She thinks that the data-driven approach of LSS is highly valued.

Director Cordova expressed her interest in increasing partnerships between LSS and those majors that are gated, in order to increase equitable access to those majors for all students. The potential for C students to not have a major if gating is permitted to occur in more majors was discussed. She was asked what could be done to encourage peer interaction and peer studying. A Committee member is interested in piloting use of some tools in one a class designed to encourage students to work with each other outside of classroom and will discuss ideas with Director Cordova after the meeting. One thought was that students might be able to "buy" their way out of a portion of required sections by either leading or participating in a peer option. The member would like to discuss training materials for students who might lead or participating in such peer studying options.

Support for instructors who have a significant number of ELWR unsatisfied students in their lower-division courses was briefly discussed. Director Cordova indicated an interest in working with instructors to develop curriculum to support these students. A member expressed interest in serving as a pilot instructor for development of curriculum for a large, lower-division class and will contact Director Cordova following the meeting to discuss the possibilities.

Director Cordova provided copies of LSS's tutor handbook.

A post consultation discussion will be on the agenda for the March meeting to discuss whether and when to ask Director Cordova to another meeting.

III. Humanities Reconstitution proposal.

CPE discussed a draft letter of response to the Administrative Task Force Report on reconstitution of the Humanities Division. The letter will be finalized this week by email.

IV. UCOPE update.

Chair Gamel gave CPE an update on the recent UCOPE meeting. The Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) prompt was selected. Academic Council Chair Henry Powell visited UCOPE to discuss the UC Commission on the Future. He also discussed the retirement program indicating that while it is still robust the Cost of Living Adjustment may be dropped. Among the information he gave to UCOPE, he indicated that 43 percent of high school graduates enrolled at a four year institution in 1996; whereas only 30 percent enrolled in a four year institution in 2004. It is anticipated that California will be one Million college degrees short by the year 2050. UC has begun to advocate for state funding for higher education with the California State University System. UCOPE received a report from Director of UC Undergraduate Admissions Susan Wilbur. She updated CPE on the status of funding for the AWPE which is not self-supporting. Proposals for how to make it self-supporting within about four years are being considered. Some ideas are for on-lien reading and scoring of the AWPE.

V. Retention Services

Further discussion on Retention Services was carried forward to the next meeting due to a lack of time at this meeting.

So attests,

Mary-Kay Gamel, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education