

**Committee on Preparatory Education**  
Minutes

Monday, December 7, 2009  
1-2:30 p.m., Kerr Hall Room 129

Present: Nandini Bhattacharya (NSTF Rep), Mary-Kay Gamel (Chair), Roxanne Monnet (Staff), Sarah-Hope Parmeter (ELWR Coordinator), Raquel Prado, David Smith.

**I. Announcements and updates.**

Winter meeting dates were confirmed.

**II. Update regarding ELWR.**

Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Coordinator Sarah-Hope Parmeter reviewed for the new committee the ways that UCSC students may pass ELWR (by exam or portfolio review). Most UC students take the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) in May before entering UC. Those who do not take the AWPE in May do so in September and are placed in college core courses based on their results. UCSC's pass rate for the APWE (including on appeal) is usually a percentile in the low 70s. Students may also satisfy their Composition 1 requirement with the AWPE but very few do. The work that students do in their fall core course can be used for a portfolio review, increasing the number of students who have satisfied the ELWR by the end of their first quarter at UCSC.

Students are required to satisfy this requirement within one year of entering UC (by the end of their 4<sup>th</sup> quarter at UCSC). Students who do not pass within the allotted time are barred from further enrollment. They can be readmitted after satisfying the requirement elsewhere, such as by taking a course at a community college.

ELWR satisfaction rates have improved. In recent years, barring of one or two students for non-satisfaction by the deadline has been the norm. No fall 2008 admits will be barred for non-satisfaction of ELWR.

College 10 is offering what they call a "stretch core course" for the first time this year. CPE is interested to know whether the new format reduces the time for College 10 students to satisfy the ELWR. Learning Support Services (LSS) will be analyzing the results of the new College 10 course structure.

Courses Writing 20 & 21 provide support toward passing of the ELWR after students' first quarter at UCSC. WRIT 23 provides a final opportunity to pass ELWR before the deadline. In winter 2010, approximately 216 students are expected to need course Writing 20 due to non-satisfaction of the ELWR. These students are required to complete a portfolio for ELWR review. Retaking the AWPE is optional. In Writing 20, students are required to develop their own prose style. It is anticipated that ~55 students will not pass in the winter and will need to

take a spring course. Over the summer there is usually some attrition from UCSC. Numbers of ELWR non-satisfied students enrolling in fall 2010 Writing 23 course are expected to range from 8 to 32.

UCSC does not have an English as a Second Language (ESL) program, unlike most or all other UC campuses. Currently there is no writing support specifically for junior transfer students, all of whom should have satisfied the ELWR requirement before entering UCSC. Most junior transfers have also satisfied their C1 and C2 requirements before entering UCSC.

Coordinator Parmeter recommends that all instructors with writing in their large, lower-division courses take a small writing sample early in the course to identify outliers. Departments could contact LSS, which may be able to provide support for those students or to develop other forms of collaboration with the course sponsoring unit. Coordinator Parmeter will talk to past ELWR coordinators about what has been done to support instructors of course which contain writing and will give an update at the next meeting.

CPE wonders how those who satisfy ELWR by portfolio do later in their academic careers. LSS has noticed that those students who pass ELWR on appeal of their AWPE tend not to do as well in upper-division work as do those with clearer pass scores, and that those who pass ELWR on appeal appear to repeat more courses for low grades.

CPE discussed possible reasons why Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) students with an ELWR score of 6 do worse than the non-EOP students who also scored a 6. It was suggested that the differing outcomes may be the result of how the statistics are done. CPE will invite LSS Director Holly Cordova to their February meeting to discuss the report on the Analysis of ELWR Core Course Student Performance Data with reference to EOP students.

The Committee decided to write to CEP asking to be kept in the loop regarding upcoming curricular changes due to budget issues. CPE is concerned about the impact that such cuts could have on the ability to offer necessary preparatory courses.

### **III. Math preparation topics.**

CPE was apprised of the near cancellation of Math 2 over the summer, its restoration, and the possibility for the future of its either being significantly changes or cancelled, leaving students to need to get their pre-Math 3 courses elsewhere. The Committee realizes that all UC students (with rare exceptions) must have passed a course deemed equivalent to Math 2 before being admitted to UCSC, yet recognizes that there are a number of reasons why students arrive at UCSC unprepared for Math 3, such as the quality of their high school math courses or a significant time lapse between their last math course and taking the placement exam.

UCSC students now have fewer preparatory options offered by the Mathematics Department than in the past. Some years ago, Math offered courses 1 and 2A/B. Math 1 had the same content of what is now Math 2. Math 2A and 2B were a slower version of the current Math 3. In the mid 90s, Math 1 became Math 2, and Math 2A/B were combined into the current Math 3. Applied Math and Statistics does not offer courses below the level of Math 3.

It is not clear to CPE that Math 2 serves well as prerequisite to Math 3. The fail rate of students in Math 2 is far lower than the fail rate for students who took Math 3 after passing Math 2. The reasons for this disparity in pass rates are not clear to CPE. It may be that Math 2 is not sufficiently conceptual to prepare students well for Math 3. CPE wondered how much raising the pass score for Math 2 would increase the pass rate of those students to proceed to take Math 3. The Committee was informed that those who score lower but do pass Math 2 are strongly encouraged to take the Math 3 sections that occur twice weekly rather than once weekly. However, in a recent offering of Math 3 the students in the twice weekly section scored ten percent lower on the mid-term than those in the once weekly sections.

Since Math 3 is pre-calculus, CPE agrees with previous committees that students who do not need to proceed to calculus may do better to take other courses. Former CPEs encouraged social sciences departments that encourage or require students to take Math 3 to consider other courses. This Committee will follow up with Psychology to confirm whether they are proposing other alternatives to their Math 3 requirement for the next catalog year.

So attests,

Mary-Kay Gamel, Chair  
Committee on Preparatory Education