Committee on Preparatory Education Meeting
Minutes
Monday October 10, 2011

Present: Frank Bauerle (NSTF Rep), Gabriel Elkaim, Donna Hunter, Sarah-Hope Parmeter (ELWR Coordinator), David Smith(Chair), Susanna Wrangell (staff).
Absent: None.

I. Introductions and Announcements
Chair Smith welcomed back committee members.

II. Review Committee Charge
Members reviewed the committee’s charge and will decide if it needs changing or updating at a future meeting.

III. Confidentiality and Recusals
Chair Smith reviewed the confidentiality agreement and committee’s charge. The Chair noted that the committee does not really have a need for recusals and will address issues of recusal on a case by case basis.

IV. Glossary
Chair Smith just reminded members that this is a handy list of acronyms to reference.

IV. Review Recommendations in Annual Report, 2010 – 11
1) Proposal for a Systemwide Mathematics Diagnostic Test.
There is already a systemwide test available that is issued to students as a self test to see their proficiency level in math but not used for placement into courses. UCOPE is working on this Chair Smith encourages members to send comments and ideas while he is drafting a proposal to present at a UCOPE meeting. There will be no cost in administering or scoring the test. Diagnostic and placement tests are two different things. This is not a placement test, all campuses already do this. This is a tool to help students get an idea of their skills in math. After taking the exam, students need only enter the score at the UC of their choice and then a pop up menu would list the resources available for the student to be successful in completing the requirements for a degree.

2) Proposal for a Senate Committee on Retention and Advising.
Chair Smith consulted with the VPDUE, and he does not really feel this is necessary, members feel the senate needs to be in the loop with these issues, especially after SEC investigated administrative units in the committee’s purview. It is especially important when preparing recommendations about academic units under the authority of Student Affairs. There needs to be an overseeing body, with membership from the VPDUE and Retention Services. as “sits with” the committee, as well as a divisional adviser and preceptor. Since staffing committees is a challenge, and CEP already carries a large burden, CPE is not as busy with issues and could take on this responsibility. It would be necessary to propose changes to CPE’s charge, but these are
issues the committee addresses as routine business. Chair Smith will set up an informal meeting with Dean Ladusaw on the possibility of creating this committee; based on his past experience as VPDUE.

3) Monitor the possibility of UCSC reaching the status of a Hispanic Serving Institute University. Analyst Wrangell will check on the status and report back at the next committee meeting.

4) Writing preparation for transfer students.
CPE members want to know how these students perform in upper division courses with writing skills. Chair Smith will send a request for data to the Director of Learning Support Services Cordova and update members at a future meeting.

5) Continuing to work with SEC on the re-alignment of Student Affairs Units.
Chair Smith gave the committee a quick overview of the formation of the enrollment management unit, which consists of: the Registrar’s Office, Financial Aid, and Admissions. These units now report to the VPDUE as of July, 2011. Retention services is still on the Student Affairs side and the EVC was not convinced that these units needed to be moved from Student Affairs to the VPDUE’s Office. Shortly after this was announced, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs resigned, leaving the remaining units of Student Affairs to report to a new authority. The following units: Colleges, Housing, Dining, and the Baytree Bookstore, now report to Business Administration Services (BAS) Vice Chancellor Valentino. Student Engagement, Health Services, Retention Services, and Judicial Affairs report to Alma Sifuentes who will report to the EVC.

CPE will revisit these issues during the year.

V. BOARS Transfer Admissions Proposal
Members discussed the draft proposal from BOARS on transfer admission preparation. Students will be required to declare a major before applying for admission to any UC campus. The proposal is in response to legislation that would like UC to mirror the CCC/CSU model. There should be more emphasis on the student’s goal to select a major and stick with it so they can transfer more prepared for their major and graduate to degree in two years. The BOARS goal is to have students more prepared with a two year goal in mind, but many students will not be able to finish in two years like physics and other science majors. If the student prepares just for their major, will they suffer after arriving at UC and need more help? If students are focused only on major requirements, and basic needs are not met, will there be more failures than successes? The University system provides the upper division experience and we want to get them out in two years. CPE agrees with the principle that students are prepared for their major but we are more concerned with the student’s knowledge and competency with regard to writing and mathematics. Students who manage to cut corners in writing and mathematics will always gravitate towards the path of least resistance. It is possible a lower percentage of this type of student will be allowed in because they will have to be more prepared by default.
CPE is concerned with the lack of consistency in the way courses for writing and mathematics are taught at the level in most Community Colleges. These courses are not necessarily of the quality that is needed to be successful for a UC degree and many students are not always willing
to accept this, or are disappointed that they must now take another course in writing to become proficient.

VII. Classroom Time Schedule Change
CPE members reviewed the proposal to shorten classes from 70 minutes to 60 minutes to allow an increase in the number of course time slots available. This schematic would allow for three more courses per quarter for an additional 9 large course offerings per year. Committee members all agreed this would be a detriment to quality teaching time. Most members felt this proposal was proposed due to the need for more large lectures courses. Here are the questions for our response letter:
1) How soon will we reach the point where a large course doesn't get offered specifically because there's not a room for it? Or have we reached that point already?

2) Is it realistic to expect a scenario in the near-to-mid term where there is funding to mount significantly more courses, anyway? Or is the purpose to be able to mount extra sections of large courses, probably at the expense of upper division and graduate ones (as has been happening already as enrollment rises and budgets fall)? Or, finally, is the real issue that the largest courses are too full, and need bigger rooms, without much need to change the actual offerings at all?

3) What other options have been considered? For example, has the possibility of arranging for closed-circuit TV overflow rooms for oversubscribed large lectures been studied?

4) Is there a shortage of rooms for small to medium classes (< 50 students)?

We are concerned that the quality of instruction in small classes (such as preparatory writing classes) will suffer, and particularly concerned that this suffering might be unnecessary if there is no shortage of rooms for these classes, and everything is being driven by the large lectures. If that is the case, a solution that compromises only the quality of the large lectures (such as closed circuit TV in a second, smaller room) is preferable. In that case, this service would have to be offered by the campus administration and not be deducted from departmental budgets, as it would be now when such a request is made.

Preparatory classes are often taken by students with less-developed academic skills overall. We are concerned that these students will be disadvantaged by a shift that reduces classroom contact time with faculty and puts more emphasis on homework and reading at the student's own initiative. Indeed, we think this will be a disadvantage for many other students as well.

It might also become harder to justify (to others or ourselves) the 5-unit status of UCSC courses under this system in the long run. If we therefore end up moving toward a 4-unit norm, the problem of classroom space will only get worse.

That brings us, finally, to the argument that bringing our campus into conformity with other UC campuses should be a goal per se. We believe that our judgment of what is best for our students within space and budget constraints should be the only criterion under consideration. The
system of instruction on other campuses might be used to argue why a certain change might not be disastrous, but not used as a positive argument for a change, not even a secondary argument.

Additional concerns that lecture time would be reduced by 5 hours ((10 minutes less per lecture x 30 lectures per quarter). In any of our large lecture courses in Mathematics this is simply not possible without seriously affecting the quality of the instruction that students receive, and particularly those that need it most.

So attests,
David Smith, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education