Committee on Educational Policy
Annual Report 2000-2001

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

During 2000 - 2001, the Committee on Educational Policy spent a significant amount of time on resolving issues left over from the previous year's discussions and decisions concerning assessment of undergraduates' work and on launching a review of the college core courses. In addition, CEP dispatched its regular responsibilities to approve undergraduate courses, review catalog copy, participate in external reviews of programs, and consider student petitions. CEP responded to questions concerning undergraduate educational policy from students, staff, the faculty, and the administration and was represented on the Senate Advisory Committee, the Academic Planning Committee, and the Universitywide Committee on Educational Policy.

Student Assessment: Grading and Narrative Evaluations

In the wake of the Academic Senate's decision on February 23, 2000 (confirmed by mail ballot in October, 2000) to adopt a grading system that included mandatory letter grades for undergraduates, CEP concerned itself with (1) recommending amendments to the newly adopted legislation so as to address potential problems, remove inconsistencies, and make expedient improvements; (2) resolving unfinished business regarding assessment, most notably the status of narrative evaluations; and (3) beginning the intricate and time-consuming process of implementing the new grading policy.

After reviewing grading policies at all UC campuses, and in an effort to avoid the contradictions inherent in the use of the notation C-, CEP proposed an amendment eliminating C- as a possible grade notation in the new grading system (adopted by the Senate at the November 9, 2000 divisional meeting) and recommended that existing regulations requiring narrative evaluations remain unchanged so as to provide students the benefits of assessment by both letter grade and narrative evaluation (a recommendation affirmed by the Senate at the Division's special meeting on November 27). UCSC's new grading policy was approved by the Assembly in February. In May, CEP proposed further amendments to change the method of determining an undergraduate's academic standing from a system based on academic progress to a system based on GPA and to include credit earned during summer session in the determination of academic standing (both adopted by the Senate at the May 30, 2001 divisional meeting).

CEP also prepared, circulated, and solicited comments on a draft of newly revised Advisory Guidelines on Writing Performance (Narrative) Evaluations. The final version will be presented to the Senate in October, 2001.

To implement the new regulations concerning grading, CEP solicited and acted on requests from colleges and departments to offer courses on a Pass/No Pass basis only and approved catalog copy requiring letter grades for some or all courses in the Computer Science minor and the following majors: Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Information Systems Management, Electrical Engineering, any major administered by Biology (Ecology and Evolutionary, & Molecular, Cell and Development), Music, and Literature.

CEP also made decisions and recommendations on numerous issues including the programming of student grade options on TELESLUG, determining deadlines for various enrollment decisions including Withdrawal, calculating students' exercise of the P/NP option, and informing students and faculty of the new policies and their implications. A number of issues remain for next year's CEP to sort out in the light of emerging experience and best practices on other UC campuses.

Review of College Core Courses

As recommended by the Advisory Group on the UCSC Colleges in its report of November, 2000 and as part of its responsibility for "the quality of all academic programs not under the purview of the Graduate Council" (Senate Bylaw 13.17.3), CEP commenced a thorough review of the eight college core courses with the goals of (1) determining the functions and quality of current core courses and (2) making recommendations concerning their future. By the end of Spring Quarter, CEP had received detailed descriptions and analyses of each college core course from the Provosts, a significant number of questionnaires filled out by core course instructors, and more than 650 questionnaires filled out by students. (These questionnaires were completed in May by students enrolled in sections of Writing 1 and by Regents Scholars.) Analysis and discussion of this data, supplemented by additional information to be gathered by next year's committee, will result in a report to be completed by the end of Fall Quarter, 2001.

Other Concerns

During the year, CEP discussed and commented on a myriad issues, including teaching opportunities for emeriti faculty, the instructional role of Unit 18 lecturers, departmental status for Latin American and Latino Studies, the instructional role of graduate students and undergraduates, articulation of credits for students in the UC-DC Program, academic policies regarding student athletes, the Academic Integrity Report, Learning Support Services, FTE transfer requests, academic policy implications of the current academic calendar, divisional summaries of planning documents, various proposals and policies concerning admissions to UC and to UCSC (including the Dual Admissions Proposal), issues concerning state-funded summer instruction at UCSC, the Silicon Valley Center, and planning for enrollment growth.

External Reviews

CEP participated in the completion of the external reviews of Art, Community Studies, Sociology, and Astronomy/Astrophysics and reviewed the charges for the external reviews of Art History, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Mathematics, Politics, and Psychology.

Catalog and Course Approval

CEP approved new majors in Astrophysics, Bioinformatics, Neuroscience and Behavior, and Plant Sciences, a combined major in Earth Sciences and Anthropology, a minor in Film and Digital Media, and College Nine's Academic Program. In addition, the Committee approved additions and/or modifications to requirements in Earth Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Film and Digital Media; approved a proposal from the Sierra Institute to list its courses under Environmental Studies; and decided to require signatures from both deans for cross-listed inter-divisional courses. Among the issues discussed by CEP that will need further consideration are various questions concerning policies defining duplication of credit and the use of omnibus courses whereby departments seek approval for a variety of unspecified courses under one course title.

Student Petitions
Whereas students' petitions requesting substitutions for or waivers of general education requirements raised no troubling issues, and whereas the numerous and pesky requests for exceptions to the letter grade deadline should decrease with the phasing in of the new grading regulations, the growing number of requests for retroactive withdrawals from courses indicates that policy concerning issues affecting students' GPAs will need careful consideration in the very near future.

Acknowledgements
CEP depends on and is grateful for the assistance of many people -- especially from the Office of Admissions and the Registrar and from among the Academic Preceptors -- to do its work. This year the Committee would especially like to acknowledge the contribution of Interim Registrar Pamela Hunt-Carter, who with great energy, patience, and foresight helped CEP address issues relating to the implementation of the new grading regulations.

It almost goes without saying that the intelligence, organization, focus, and institutional memory provided by Cathy Fong make it possible for CEP to do its work.

Respectfully Submitted,

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