

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION
Annual Report, 2005-06

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Committee on Preparatory Education (CPE) met approximately twice per quarter throughout the academic year to deal with specific issues related to its charge. The work and accomplishments of the Committee during the 2006-07 year are summarized below.

Review and Changes to Charge and Bylaw SCR 10.5.2:

The CPE reviewed its charge and submitted a request to the Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections for a conforming language change to bring the charge into conformance with current terminology at the Campus and University levels. CRJE agreed to change “Subject A Requirement” to “Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR)” and “Subject A Exam” to “Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE)” in our Committee’s charge and throughout the UCSC campus bylaws as a conforming language change.

CPE also examined the language and implications of enforcing SCR 10.5.2, the bylaw that defines the Entry Level Writing Requirement and its implementation on campus. The Committee found the language of this bylaw to be outdated and out of compliance with current UC and Campus practices. The Committee Chair wrote to CRJE to request conforming language changes to SCR 10.5.2. “Subject A” needs to be replaced with “ELWR.” UC defined tests and scores also need to be updated. The regulation also needs to clarify that although students held for the ELWR may enroll in C1 sections of the college core courses, passing the ELWR is prerequisite for receiving credit for the C1 General Education Requirement and for enrollment in every university-level undergraduate course in English composition beyond the Freshman Core Course, and for the bachelor’s degree. This is a conforming change in that it will bring the bylaw into compliance with existing UC and Campus practices. This request was sent to CRJE in late June. CRJE recently confirmed that the recommended changes are conforming language changes.

SCR 10.5.2 requires students held for the ELWR to remain enrolled in ELWR-related writing courses until they meet the requirement. This aspect of the bylaw has not been systematically enforced in recent years. Failure to enforce this requirement may be contributing to the rising number of students who are in jeopardy of being barred after their fourth quarter for not satisfying the ELWR. CPE strongly supports the immediate enforcement of this bylaw. However, doing so will have some budgetary impact for the Writing Program, which will need to offer more sections of the ELWR preparatory courses each quarter. Next year, we will work collaboratively with the VPDUE, the College Preceptors, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Chair of the Writing Program, and the Dean of Humanities to see that this bylaw is properly implemented and enforced.

Proposal to Increase Curricular Support for Students Under-Prepared for University Writing:

CPE is concerned with the steady increase in the percent of newly admitted freshpersons who have not satisfied the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). The reasons for this upward trend in ELWR enrollments have not been fully charted, but the fact is that increasing numbers of students arrive on campus challenged by university-level English. An increasing percentage of those held for the ELWR are English language learners (ELL), reflecting the changing demographics of our state. Non-passing exams with the ELL designation coming to UCSC have increased from 11 percent in 2001 to 20 percent in 2004 and 19 percent in 2005. In addition to ELL writers, ELWR students include monolingual native English speakers and bilingual “Generation 1.5” students who have received all or most of their schooling in the U.S. but who nonetheless struggle with the demands of written English. Many come from under-resourced high schools in California that have not adequately prepared them for university-level challenges in reading and writing. Given documented shifts in the demographics of California, it is likely that this population will continue to swell and represent an increasingly larger segment of the UC eligible cohort each year. This year our committee spent significant effort exploring and documenting these trends and developing a series of curricular proposals that we feel could significantly mitigate the impacts of these trends at UCSC. We circulated a draft proposal to CEP Chair Hughey, CPB Chair Koch, VPDUE Ladusaw, Interim Humanities Dean Lease, VPAA Galloway, Learning Support Services Director Gritsch de Cordova, and Provost Spafford (UCOPE representative) and received useful and informative feedback. Our final proposal was submitted as a report to the Academic Senate in May and was presented at the last meeting of the Senate in the spring (AS/SCP/1498). Our proposal outlined the following curricular changes:

1. Require that all first-year students who fail to satisfy the ELWR at the end of their first quarter enroll in at least one additional writing course (Writing 20) during their first year, as per Divisional regulation 10.5.2, which requires enrollment in “Subject A” (now ELWR) classes for students who don’t satisfy the ELWR in their first quarter until they satisfy it. Enrollment in such classes has been treated as a strong recommendation, not a requirement, in recent years
2. Enhance language instruction for ELL students.
3. Restore, with 2 units of workload credit, Writing 10A, 10B, 10C—enrolled tutorials, for students concurrently in ELWR classes, that were cancelled when the Writing Program’s funding for tutoring was cut in 2003.
4. Sponsor seed funds for a longitudinal study of student writing.

Our analysis estimates that these changes could be achieved with a modest campus investment of roughly **\$40,000 per year**.

A revised ELWR curriculum that more directly meets the needs of the most at-risk population of students will likely have several salutary effects. The proposed changes will:

- Decrease the number of students barred for not satisfying the ELWR, thus improving the campus's first- and second-year retention rates;
- Speed the progress of students needing more than one quarter to satisfy the ELWR;
- Better equip under-prepared students to meet the challenges of university-level writing and increase their chances for success in courses across the curriculum.

CPE plans to work next year with the appropriate Senate committees and campus administrators to see that these curricular changes are implemented and that we can effectively track and assess the impacts of these changes through time.

Math Preparation and Possible UC-Wide Math Competency Requirement:

A survey was conducted by UCOPE last year (2005-06) that drew only four campus responses. UCSC was not one that responded. The survey asked if the campuses would support a system wide entry level Math competency requirement and placement exam for admission, equivalent to the Entry Level Writing Requirement.

Some questions that arose in the Committee's discussion of this issue were:

- What standard would be used for a systemwide requirement?
- How would such an entrance requirement compare with or effect the UCSC Q requirement?
- Would there be something akin to an SAT cut-off score allowing some students to not be required to take the UC placement exam?
- Would having such a requirement improve K-12 math education and better prepare students for university level work?
- Would having such a requirement better prepare students for their life after academia?
- Have they considered the need for retesting to ensure students meet the bar after taking coursework?
- Could the current Q designated courses be restructured to help students to satisfy this requirement?
- Who would pay for implementing this requirement? Campuses? UCOP?

In order to discuss some of these issues and to gauge campus support for such an initiative, CPE extended an invitation to CEP Chair Hughey, Math Department Chair Montgomery, VPDUE Ladusaw, Applied Math and Statistics Program Chair Draper, Professor of Education Moschkovich, and Learning Services Director Gritsch de Cordova to meet with the Committee. This meeting took place on Monday, April 17, 1 p.m. in Kerr Hall 307.

While there was some general interest in the idea of a UC-wide math competency requirement, there was also some concern over a lack of clarity regarding the proposed purpose or goal of such a requirement and how it would be implemented and funded. Meeting participants noted that an infrastructure, similar to that already in place to support ELWR, would need to be created to make sure that under-prepared students were able to meet this requirement. This would

require the addition of numerous small sections with associated tutorials in order to support basic math instruction. How would such courses be staffed and funded? How would such a structure impact the other curricular programs and resources in Math and Applied Math?

The Chair of CPE reported the results of this meeting to UCOPE at the spring meeting in Oakland. Given a general lack of positive responses for this idea from other UC campuses this proposal appears to have been dropped. However, the math skills and preparation of entering students and the impact of that preparation on students' abilities to pursue majors in the Physical and Biological Sciences, Engineering, and even some of the Social Sciences is an area of continuing concern to CPE.

Acknowledgements:

The Committee is grateful to Committee Analyst/Advisor Roxanne Monnet from the Academic Senate Office for her expert staffing and support. We would also like to thank VPDUE Ladusaw, Acting Dean Lease, CEP Chair Hughey, CPB Chair Koch, and Learning Support Services Director Gritsch de Cordova for their comments on our draft proposal for ELWR curricular reforms. VPDUE Ladusaw, AMS Program Chair Draper, Math Chair Montgomery, and Learning Support Services Director Gritsch de Cordova also contributed significantly to the Committee's discussions of Math preparation at UCSC.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

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August 31, 2006