

## **Committee on Educational Policy Annual Report 2006-07**

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

Committee on Educational Policy's (CEP) work can be roughly divided into two categories. There is the work the Committee carries out as a matter of course, including reviews of campus programs, approval of program statements and of new and revised courses, consultations with other committees and administrative units, and consideration of student petitions. Then there are policy initiatives raised by CEP (sometimes in tandem with other bodies). CEP undertook work on several initiatives this year, in areas including general education reform, honors, and academic integrity. Our report begins with discussion of these initiatives.

### **I. Larger CEP Initiatives**

#### **General Education**

UCSC's current general education framework was largely put in place in 1984. An attempt at comprehensive reform was narrowly voted down in the late 1990s. In an oral report to the Senate last fall, CEP articulated reasons why our campus needs general education reform. (A slideshow of that talk can be found at <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cep/reportsindex.html>.) There are external reasons, particularly expectations of Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), UCSC's accreditation agency, but the most compelling reasons are internal. Across higher education, thinking about the meaning and functioning of general education has changed dramatically over the past decades. At the same time, our own general education objectives have lost focus.<sup>1</sup> A re-evaluation of the *subject areas* required ("what do we think graduates should know in the new millennium?") is overdue. Going further, CEP suggests that in reforming general education we place more emphasis than we currently do on what is arguably even more important than the content of subject areas: the intellectual *skills*, ways of learning, values, etc., that we wish to impart. These could include critical thinking; writing and other communication skills; quantitative/formal reasoning; research experience; understanding of different cultures; civic engagement; and ethical exploration.

The most pressing problem in the area of general education last year concerned our writing-intensive "W" requirement, and CEP devoted the most time to researching and attempting to resolve this issue. For the past few years that campus has not been able to provide enough writing-intensive courses to enable all students to satisfy the requirement on time. Writing-based courses have particular resource needs, and it has never been clear who is responsible for paying for W courses. As units have become pressed they have begun to eliminate or restrict enrollment in their W offerings. CEP was eager to examine the W requirement in any case, because in our view the requirement does not live up to its purposes in two respects. First, it is unnecessarily

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult, for example, to confidently infer the purpose or definition of a UCSC "topical" course by observing courses having this designation, or to find a reliable distinction between some existing "topical" and "introductory" general education courses; on our "writing-intensive" requirement see below.









































































