

**COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION**  
**Annual Report, 2006-07**

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.

**Conforming Changes to SCR 10.5.2:**

During the fall quarter, the Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections approved CPE's recommended changes to SCR 10.5.2. These changes brought the Regulation into compliance with existing campus and systemwide language and practices regarding the implementation of the "Entry Level Writing Requirement." Since these were "conforming changes" they did not need to be brought before the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division, for a vote.

**Negative Campus Trends in Completion of ELWR:**

Over the last two years, CPE has documented an alarmingly upward trend in the percentage of students who have not completed the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) by the end of their first quarter of enrollment (Table 1).

Table 1: ELWR pass rates at end of fall quarter.

Year	Entering Freshmen	No. of Nov. Writing Exams	Pass Rate on Nov. Writing Exam and Review
1999		719	78%
2000		1001	78%
2001		1144	78%
2002	3,251	1048	81%
2003	3,453	1188	76%
2004	3,122	885	78%
2005	2,950	1081	71%
2006	3,350	1068	66%

The reasons for this trend are unclear, especially since it seems at odds with other characteristics of our recent entering classes, such as greater selectivity in admissions and increasing SAT scores. We speculate that one reason for the increase in the number of students who take more than one quarter to complete ELWR might be a rise in the number of students entering UCSC who are English Language Learners. As possible evidence of this trend we note that the rate of students entering UCSC who are designated as having English as a Second Language problems, as a percentage of those who did not pass the May UC Analytical Writing Placement Exam, has risen from an average of 14 percent per year between 1998-2001 to an average of 18 percent per year between 2002-2006 (Table 2).

Table 2: First Year UCSC students with “E” designation (English Language Learner), as a percentage of students who failed the May systemwide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (UCAWPE).

Year	Percent of AWPE failed exams w/ “E”
1998	15%
1999	16%
2000	14%
2001	11%
2002	19%
2003	17%
2004	20%
2005	19%
2006	17%

However, the campus does not collect, collate or report statistics on the language status and educational background of entering students on a cohort-by-cohort basis. On April 16, 2007, CPE met with Vice Provost and Dean Bill Ladusaw and Director of Institutional Research and Policy Studies Julian Fernald to discuss how we could collect and track better information on the language status of entering students and how this or other factors correlated with their success or lack of success in completing ELWR and with their overall academic success at the University. Director Fernald shared with us aggregate campuswide statistics that showed that UCSC had a significantly smaller percentage of students from households where English was a second language than most of the other UC campuses. However, these data did not track trends in language status within each campus over time. For planning purposes, it may be less significant to compare ourselves to other campuses than to understand our own internal demographic dynamics. While the number of English Language Learners at UCSC remains relatively low compared to other UC campuses, it does appear to be growing (although by exactly how much is unclear from current data) and this trend does appear to be having an impact on the ability of an increasing number of students to meet basic entry-level English writing requirements in a timely manner. UCSC has traditionally provided less structured, institutional support for English Language Learners than any of the other UC campuses. The time may have come for us to rethink our commitment to this increasing segment of our undergraduate student body.

Dean Ladusaw and Director Fernald agreed with CPE on the importance of tracking this information on language status on a cohort-by-cohort basis. They pledged to work cooperatively with CPE to develop strategies for collecting this information from entering first-year and transfer classes. Dean Ladusaw also stressed the importance of tracking student success throughout their academic careers. He is concerned with low campus graduation rates and is initiating a study of how long it takes students to reach junior status and of what difficulties they encounter along the way. One question that might be addressed by such a study is what impact a student’s initial ELWR status or difficulties in completing ELWR have on their overall academic progress and ability to reach junior status in a timely manner. CPE also is concerned about the potential impacts that delayed completion of ELWR might be having on students’ success in other courses and ability to make adequate academic progress during their initial and subsequent years

at the University. The Committee looks forward to working more closely with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Planning and Budget to develop analytic strategies for better tracking the information that will allow us to assess and mitigate these issues.

**Enforcement of Santa Cruz Regulation 10.5.2:**

In order to mitigate the impacts of this trend in increasing numbers of students who are failing to complete ELWR by the end of their first quarter of instruction, CPE decided to work this year on strengthening the enforcement of Santa Cruz Regulation 10.5.2. SCR 10.5.2 requires students held for ELWR to remain enrolled in ELWR related writing courses until they meet the requirement. This aspect of the Regulation has never been systematically enforced. Failure to enforce this requirement may be a contributing factor to the rising number of students who are taking longer to meet this requirement and are in jeopardy of being barred after their fourth quarter of enrollment at UCSC, per systemwide requirements.

On October 16, 2006, CPE (represented by Judith Habicht-Mauche, Chair, and Judy Scott) met with Elizabeth Abrams, (Chair, Writing Program), Cher Bergeon (Academic Preceptor Representative), Joel Ferguson (Chair, Council of Provosts), Maria Cecilia Freeman (Campus ELWR Coordinator), Pamela Hunt-Carter (Registrar), Bill Ladusaw (VPDUE), Tchad Sanger (Associate Registrar of Advising), Georges Van Den Abbeele (Dean of Humanities), and Lynne Wolcott (Advising Coordinator, VPDUE office) to discuss the logistics of enforcing SCR 10.5.2. This was a very productive and successful meeting that resulted in a coordinated campuswide effort to ensure that all students who did not complete ELWR by the end of fall quarter continued to enroll in ELWR designated classes until they completed the requirement. As a result of this effort, compliance with SCR 10.5.2 was significantly improved. An oral report on the impact of enforcement of SCR 10.5.2 was presented by CPE at the May 30, 2007 Senate Meeting and a written report was attached to the minutes (AS/SCP 1539, located at: <http://senate.ucsc.edu/cpe/CPEreg1052SCP1539.pdf>). While the data we have so far is preliminary and incomplete, initial results, based on winter 2007, suggest that better enforcement of this Regulation is having a positive impact on the rate at which students are completing ELWR after their first quarter. CPE will need to follow up with the results from the spring and fall ELWR courses to see if this trend continues. Next year, CPE should work with the campus ELWR Coordinator and the Chair of the Writing Program to develop procedures for collecting and reporting standardized data on ELWR completion rates, so that these trends can be adequately tracked over time.

**Campus Changes in ELWR Curriculum:**

In addition to better enforcing SCR 10.5.2, the Writing Program, in consultation with CPE, has developed a slightly revised series of ELWR classes. The most significant curricular change for 2006-07 was the addition of Writing 23 as a full 5-unit Grammar and Rhetoric course in fall quarter, replacing Writing 22B, a 3-unit Grammar and Editing workshop. Writing 23 was designed to better assist students who are in their fourth quarter of enrollment at UCSC and have not yet completed ELWR. Preliminary results, based on fall 2006, suggest that the expanded Writing 23 curriculum may be positively enhancing the chances of this particularly recalcitrant population of struggling writers to

successfully meet the Entry Level Writing standard. See CPE report from May 30, 2007 (AS/SCP 1539) for more information on the results of the fall 2006 course.

### **ELWR Class Sizes:**

CPE at UCSC continues to support the efforts of the Universitywide Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) to get the UC Academic Council to re-affirm its commitment to support a mandatory cap of 20 students on the size of all ELWR classes. This cap would still be above most nationally accepted standards for introductory writing courses. Currently UCSC caps ELWR classes at 22 students each, one of the highest ELWR class sizes in the UC system. In 2005, UC Provost M.R.C. Greenwood, at the request of the Chair of the UC Academic Council, George Blumenthal, had agreed to provide centralized funding to all campuses to support implementation of this ELWR class size cap. However, because of subsequent administrative changes at both the Office of the President and the Academic Council this funding was never allocated. As a result this matter has been sent back to the campuses and the appropriate UC-wide committees for re-review. UCEP has withdrawn its previous support for what it now sees as an unfunded mandate. Thus, while both the Office of the President and the UC Academic Council claim to recognize the importance of this class size cap to the academic success of some of our most vulnerable students, neither is willing to act to see the cap implemented systemwide. This year's CPE urges next year's Committee to appeal directly to Acting Chancellor Blumenthal to implement this cap immediately on our campus and to work with the other campus chancellors to see that the cap is implemented and funded systemwide.

### **Response to Draft Strategic Academic Plan:**

CPE prepared a response to the administration's Draft Strategic Academic Plan. We were particularly concerned at the overall lack of attention to undergraduate curricular issues expressed in the plan. For example, there was no mention of the changing demographic profile of our undergraduate population and how these changes might affect resource and curricular planning, especially in the area of writing. The plan also did not address how shifting undergraduate enrollments to the sciences and engineering, if that was even feasible, would impact the need for more gateway courses and greater attention to math preparation. We also challenged the report's assumption that transfer students were "resource neutral," since there is little campus data on the actual preparedness and curricular needs of our transfer populations, especially in the areas of writing and math. We also expressed concern about the lack of attention and resources on this campus for the language preparation of foreign graduate students.

The second Draft Strategic Academic Plan was not distributed to CPE until May, after our last meeting of the year. Therefore, we left the formal response to that version of the plan to next year's Committee. However, we note that few of our expressed concerns were directly addressed in the revised plan.

### **Academic Preparedness of Transfer Students:**

CPE remains concerned about the preparedness of transfer students to tackle upper division course work. However, we are also frustrated by a lack of campus data in this area and our inability to develop appropriate strategies to assess this issue. On February 26, 2007, we met Holly Gritsch de Cordova (Director, Learning Support Services),

Michael McCawley (then Associate Director, Admissions), Corinne Miller (Director, Services for Transfer and Re-entry Students), and Larry Trujillo (Director, Student Academic Support Services) to discuss our concerns and brainstorm ways to approach this issue.

Michael McCawley reported that nearly all entering transfer students at UCSC have completed ELWR and both the C1 and C2 general education writing requirements. Over 50 percent are admitted with an Inter-Segmental Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) certificate, and thus are not required to take any additional writing courses at UCSC (i.e., they are exempt from the W requirement). However, ELWR Coordinator and CPE member Maria Cecilia Freeman noted that 25 percent of all community college students in California are from immigrant backgrounds and speak a first language other than English. She also pointed out that at UCLA, where they give entering transfer students an analytic writing placement exam, many (20 percent) placed at pre-ELWR levels and needed additional writing support to achieve University level standards of written English. We have no comparable assessment tools for evaluating the academic preparedness of entering transfer students at UCSC. However, anecdotal experience suggests that transfer students enter UCSC with a wide range of academic skills.

The group was in agreement that there needs to be more formal academic support for transfer students at UCSC, especially in the areas of math and writing. This support should come in the form of both elective courses, as well as tutoring support. However, the group was frustrated by the lack of institutional information and assessment tools to gauge the academic background and preparedness of transfer students. This lack of information makes it difficult to develop programs that are appropriate to the specific needs of our transfer students and to make an effective case for resource allocations in the area of academic support.

**Acknowledgements:**

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Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

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Judith Habicht-Mauche, Chair

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