

## COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY Annual Report 2014 -15

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

### **Executive Summary**

The Committee on Educational Policy's (CEP) responsibilities include the review of campus academic programs, program statements, new courses and revisions to courses; consultation with other committees and administrative units; and the consideration of student petitions. In addition to these routine activities, CEP spent a considerable amount of time discussing the review of non-degree academic programs and two issues that have a long history with our campus and the committee: grading policies and writing instruction.

### **Expanding Grading Options**

For largely historical reasons, our campus is the only one in the UC System that does not allow instructors to assign C- grades, and one of only two that do not allow D- or D+ grades. CEP has observed adverse impacts on students, and especially on student aid, stemming from the absence of the C- grade. Moreover, CEP observes that the absence of D- and D+ limit the options available to faculty for characterizing a students' performance. The D- and D+ grades would also give faculty the ability to assign grades that more accurately reflect the quality of each student's work. Consequently, CEP concluded it was time to change our grading options to include the grades of C-, D+, and D- in the options available to faculty when issuing final grades in courses. For more information about the rationale for this change, please refer to the document CEP prepared for the Senate meeting on February 18.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the positive feedback at the Senate meeting, CEP proposed legislation to add the above-mentioned grading options.<sup>2</sup> The revised grading options were approved by the Senate on April 22, 2015. The expanded grading options will go into effect in the fall quarter of 2015. It is important to note that the new C- grade will not satisfy course pre-requisites, major or minor requirements. C- grades should only be issued to students whose academic performance would have been at the high end of the D range of the old grading scale.

### **Non-degree academic programs**

CEP discussed several non-degree programs, including the Summer Academies for incoming International and STEM students; the Honors and Challenge Programs; the Multilingual Program for International students; and various other College and certificate programs. CEP reviews undergraduate courses associated with non-degree programs, but the programs themselves are sometimes launched without consultation with Senate committees. This is a particular concern for programs that are not described in the department program statements and other sections of the general catalog that are routinely reviewed by CEP. After discussing this concern with VPAA Herbie Lee, it was decided that non-degree academic programs should be reviewed using the procedure used for other academic programs, including majors and minors found in the VPAA's

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<sup>1</sup> The document may be viewed at <http://senate.ucsc.edu/senate-meetings/agendas-minutes/2014-2015/2015-february-18-meeting/1776%20-%20CEP%20grading%20options%20whitepaper.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The legislation may be viewed at [http://senate.ucsc.edu/senate-meetings/agendas-minutes/2014-2015/2015-april-22-meeting/1783%20-%20CMinus\\_Chap\\_Changes%20Chp%20\\_9\\_10.pdf](http://senate.ucsc.edu/senate-meetings/agendas-minutes/2014-2015/2015-april-22-meeting/1783%20-%20CMinus_Chap_Changes%20Chp%20_9_10.pdf)

Policies governing the establishment, disestablishment and change of academic units and programs.

After reviewing an update from Honors Director Matt O'Hara about the Honors and Challenge programs, the committee discussed how the programs should be handled administratively, so as to ensure that these programs can continue to operate on more secure footing. The committee recommends that the college provosts formally establish honors programs as academic programs, submitted to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

### **Writing Instruction and the College Core courses**

CEP spent a considerable amount of time discussing instruction in writing while participating in the recent external review of the Writing Program. The Writing Program's self-study raised concerns about UCSC's writing requirements. The external review committee noted that the Writing Program is not solely responsible for the requirements and felt that campus-wide effort will be required to assess their effectiveness. This feedback prompted the Committee to re-examine our writing requirements.

Campus writing requirements consist of the Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR),<sup>3</sup> the lower-division Composition 1 and 2 (C1 and C2) requirements and the upper-division Disciplinary Communication (DC) requirement. The C1 and C2 writing requirements were integrated with the required College core courses in 2005 and are now administered by the Colleges and the Writing Program in the Humanities Division. The DC requirement replaced the W requirement when the new UCSC general education requirements were implemented in 2010; the courses that satisfy this disciplinary writing requirement are administered by the programs that sponsor students' majors.

The C1 and C2 requirements are intended to prepare students to become effective participants in spoken and written university discourse.<sup>4</sup> In 2005, the C1 and C2 requirements were integrated with the required college core courses. To satisfy C1, a student must satisfy ELWR *and* earn a grade of C or better in one of the 80A or 80D core courses, each of which is supposed to provide instruction in critical reading, analytical writing, and speaking in seminar. Rhetoric and Inquiry courses that satisfy C2, including the 80B core courses and Writing 2, are supposed to provide further instruction in these areas and in academic research skills.

Students can satisfy C1 before entering UCSC by earning an acceptable score on the AWPE or other standardized tests, or by passing an acceptable college or university English composition course at another institution. Students must satisfy both the C1 and C2 requirements prior to their

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<sup>3</sup> All students admitted to the University of California must demonstrate an acceptable level of ability in English composition by fulfilling this requirement. Students can satisfy ELWR before entering UCSC based on their SAT, ACT, IB or AP scores; passing an acceptable college or university English composition Examination (AWPE). Although ELWR is an "entry level" requirement, it is not required for admission to UC campus. A student can satisfy ELWR after entering UCSC by passing the AWPE or a portfolio review conducted by the Writing Program. Students who fail to satisfy ELWR by their fourth quarter are barred.

<sup>4</sup> With few exceptions, sections of 80B (C2) Core are taught by faculty hired by the colleges; sections of 80A (C1) for those who enter ELWR-satisfied are also taught by faculty hired by the colleges; and sections of Core for those who enter not yet having satisfied ELWR 80A/80D (C1) are taught by faculty hired by the Writing Program.

7<sup>th</sup> quarter of enrollment.

The path by which a student satisfies the college core course, ELWR, C1 and C2 requirements is determined by their writing proficiency upon entering UCSC and their college affiliation. Several pathways for satisfying the requirements have evolved over time, which complicates first-year advising. The Colleges and Writing Program do an excellent job of guiding students toward the appropriate courses based on their academic background and test scores and help them satisfy the requirements in a timely manner.

Approximately 40% of incoming students do not satisfy ELWR before entering UCSC as frosh. This problem is not restricted to our campus<sup>5</sup> and is likely to worsen as we enroll increasing numbers of international students. After completing and passing the core course (which carries C1 outcomes), a surprisingly large number of students fail to satisfy ELWR based on their performance on the AWPE and/or the portfolio review.

Additionally, the C1 and C2 outcomes have not been revised in light of recent research on the teaching and learning of writing, nor were they revised in response to the DC requirement. In other words, there has been no move to create a vertically designed writing curriculum that would structure students' learning from the point of entry to the point of exit. This leads us to question whether our lower-division writing requirements are providing an adequate foundation for the Disciplinary Communication (DC) general education requirement and writing in other upper-division courses.

Another concern is that the number of courses and credits required to satisfy the lower division writing requirements ranges from one to five courses and 5 to 25 credits, not including additional courses required by some colleges. Preliminary data suggest that roughly 20% of incoming freshmen must take 3 lower-division writing courses; about 7% must take 4 or more writing courses. These students may find it difficult to satisfy other GE requirements; address potential deficiencies in mathematics; or take the foundational courses required for their major. Most departments do not appear to be taking these challenges into account when developing advising plans and sample schedules for their majors.

Any discussion of the campus writing requirements is complicated by the integration of the writing and college core course requirements. In addition to providing instruction in writing, the core courses serve an important community-building role, and these courses are presented as a unique feature of this campus. CEP is committed to a thorough review of these requirements in close consultation with other Senate committees, the college provosts and the administration next fall.

During the spring quarter, CEP reviewed a proposal from VPDUE Hughey and the Dean of Humanities for a series of writing classes for international students (the Multilingual Curriculum). The proposed curriculum addresses an important population of students currently underserved at UCSC: the classes are designed for English language learners from other countries,

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<sup>5</sup> Information about the percentage of students admitted to the University of California who do not satisfy ELWR prior to entry can be found at [ucop.edu/elwr](http://ucop.edu/elwr).

and thus contain pedagogical approaches best tailored to these students. CEP believes that this sequence will be more effective for this population than the current sequence of courses (Writing 20, 21, and 23) that most international students currently take if they do not satisfy ELWR in their Core courses in the Fall. The committee also recognized, however, that many questions about this program remain unanswered, and concerns remain about the effectiveness of this program and its consequences in terms of the relation between these courses and other writing and college requirements.

The Committee would have preferred to consider the Multilingual Curriculum in the context of the broader discussion of the campus writing and core course requirements that will take place next year. However, CEP was convinced that the proposed courses are in the best pedagogical interests of international students and must be available to international students entering as freshmen next fall. Based on the pressing need for these writing courses, and the willingness of the Colleges to develop core courses tailored to the needs of international students, we recommended approving the curriculum for one year. The extension of the program will be dependent on data about the performance of students in these classes and the outcome of on-going discussion about the relationship of the lower-division writing courses to the College Core courses.

Questions about whether domestic students should take these courses, or whether there should be more consultation with relevant Senate committees must be addressed, but should not delay a program that appears to be in the best interests of students. CEP strongly recommended approval of this program for a year, given that it deems that these courses are important for the success of international students, even though a great many questions remain unanswered.

#### **“Double-counting” of general education requirements**

According to regulations, only one general education (GE) designation can be placed on a single course unless a specific exception is granted by CEP. By preventing overlap between GE designations, each GE course can focus on a single educational objective. Preventing overlap between GE designations also encourages students to choose courses based on their interests and educational goals, as opposed to a desire to satisfy as many requirements as possible. Course-sponsoring programs must therefore choose a single GE requirement for any course that satisfies the objectives of more than one GE requirement.

In response to requests from faculty in the Division of the Arts, CEP revisited the “double-counting” issue this year. CEP appreciates the difficulty of assigning only one GE designation to certain courses, including those dealing with ethnicity, race, or cross-cultural issues in the context of the arts. Although CEP remains opposed to allowing students to satisfy multiple GE requirements by taking a single course, the committee acknowledges that this policy is problematic for a small number of courses. We therefore agreed to place multiple GE designations on a small number of courses in the Division of the Arts on a trial basis, with the condition that a student can only satisfy one GE requirement by taking a single course. Only one GE designation will be listed for the courses in the catalog, but students will be allowed to satisfy the other GE by petition if they so choose. During the trial period, the department will select a default GE. Students who wish to have the second GE associated with the specific course will petition CEP for a substitution. If

the trial proves successful, CEP will consider expanding this option to other courses the following year.

### **Major qualification policies**

CEP has approved numerous major qualification policies over the past few years, with their continued use dependent on the submission of a satisfactory report describing the impact of the policy on student success and the size and diversity of the majors after two years. After reviewing two such reports from large undergraduate programs (MCD Biology and Psychology), the committee concluded that it is difficult to evaluate a major qualification policy that has been in effect for such a short period. The committee therefore extended the deadline for submitting these reports to four years. During the coming year, CEP will work with the Student Success Steering Committee, Institutional Research, and other units to develop mechanisms for generating the data departments need to evaluate their major qualification policies.

### **Scheduling of final examinations for undergraduate courses**

CEP is concerned about the impact of final exam schedules on students. In many cases, students must take two or three exams in a single day. Because the final exam schedule provides a three-hour block for each examination, some students are subjected to up to nine hours of testing on a single day, often with minimal breaks between the exams. This poses significant challenges for students with disabilities who are given extra time to complete exams. To help address these problems, CEP reminded instructors that they are not required to use the entire three-hour period listed in the final exam schedule if the duration of the final exam is clearly stated in the course syllabus and strictly enforced. Furthermore, testing accommodations should be based on the length of the exam stated in the courses syllabus, as opposed to the final exam schedule.

### **Academic Calendar**

When reviewing the academic calendar for future years, the committee noted that the final day of instruction in the winter quarter falls on a Monday and final examinations beginning the next day. The committee determined that it is not in the best interest of students to have final examinations immediately after the last day of instruction. We therefore modified the academic calendar for the winter quarter so that classes will end on Friday and exams begin on Monday. These changes will go into effect beginning with the 2015-16 academic year.

### **Routine Business**

The committee participates in external reviews of academic departments and programs, new program proposals, changes to existing programs, course approvals, catalog materials, undergraduate student petitions, and requests to appoint graduate and undergraduate student instructors.

This year members reviewed proposals submitted during fall and spring quarters and recommended approval for the following proposals:

- Bachelor of Art in Games and Playable Media
- Multilingual Curriculum Program

Members agreed to change the process with regard to renewal of established UNEX Certificates. Normally, these are vetted by an expert in the discipline or field and after expert approval, the renewal requests are sent to CEP. Members approved delegating these types of certificate renewals to the CEP Chair. New proposals and exceptions would be discussed by the committee as a whole.

The following three certificates were renewed for another five years: Administrative & Executive Assistant, Business Administration, and Marketing Management.

These certificates needed an extension: Technical Writing and Communication and Marketing Management, which will be reviewed during fall quarter.

Two certificates had a change in administrative home: Ecological Horticulture and Advanced Ecological Horticulture.

### **Statistics**

In addition to course proposals and requests for general education designation on course proposals, CEP members reviewed 161 new course approvals (including two online courses) and 484 course revisions, 79 program statements, and 4 posthumous degrees.

The Chair reviewed the following:

- 455 undergraduate student petitions
- 47 requests for Graduate Student Instructors;
- 10 requests for Undergraduate Student Instructors;
- 4 requests for Individual Major.

CEP benefited from the expertise of an impressive group of invited guests, including the Associate Registrar, the Academic Preceptors representative; Admissions staff and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education.

Finally, we thank Susanna Wrangell and Barak Karkauer for their outstanding work as CEP's analysts this year. It would have been impossible for the committee to function without their phenomenal support and detailed knowledge of our campus's undergraduate programs, policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted;

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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