

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

Annual Report 2014-2015

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Executive Summary

The Committee on Preparatory Education (CPE) had a late start this year and started meeting during winter quarter. One of the member's discussions focused on the mathematics online placement exam changing to the self-paced online ALEKS PPL program for students to work in for more accurate placement into mathematics courses. We agreed this may be an improvement to the placement exams we have had in the past and look forward to the data report in fall quarter and recommend follow up for next year's committee. Another topic in our committee purview is that of writing satisfaction. Many students enter UCSC without satisfying the required entry level writing requirement or (ELWR) satisfaction. Members reviewed pilot programs focusing on writing courses (Crown 79) and a proposal for international students on academic English. This proposal's final version was named the Multilingual Curriculum proposal, which CPE, in agreement with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), determined students should be ELWR satisfied before attempting to complete a C1 general education writing course requirement. Members were supportive of the proposal but would rather see writing courses that address the needs of all our student populations including: natives, first generation, multilingual language learners, international, etc. We will recommend next year's committee request a report on the Multilingual Curriculum pilot next year.

ALEKS PPL and the Online Math Placement Exam (MPE)

The Mathematics Department in an attempt to improve math placement for incoming frosh ran a test pilot using ALEKS PPL as a replacement for the online mathematics placement exam (MPE) during fall and winter quarters. Students were encouraged to work in the database to refresh themselves on weaker exercises in math. After CPE reviewed the data submitted by Undergraduate Curriculum Chair Debra Lewis, members found this approach to be better than what is currently offered but were skeptical that self-serving modules or programs only meet the needs of a certain type of student comfortable working independently. The overall outcome of the progress report that the committee reviewed clearly showed student placement to be closer in accuracy than the online versions used in the past. For example, the weaker students who worked for five hours or more in their Learning Module (LM) showed improvement on reassessment over stronger students, who may have spent less than 5 hours in their LM. CPE recommends next year's committee follow up with a request for a report on the final outcome of the first cohort of students who finished in spring quarter.

Multilingual Proposal for International Students

We consulted with Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE) Hughey, Senior International Office Ferguson and Writing Program Chair Shearer on the overview of changing the core curriculum to meet the needs of international undergraduates who need additional instruction in academic English. This population of students can catch up but others have the same issues with writing as our native populations on campus and require additional help with writing before ELWR satisfaction and taking college core. Members supported the course overview for the proposal. Later in spring quarter were given the opportunity to review

the draft proposal and found the four course offering to be unproblematic and much needed for international students to become part of our campus community and acculturated to U.S. culture. CPE will work with CEP next year on the integration of these courses and the success in colleges with regard to ELWR, C1, C2 and core course satisfaction.

Follow Up Report on Crown College: Crown 79: Winter Writing Course Pilot

Members reviewed the report on the Crown College core course pilot this fall and winter quarters, while the pilot was not exactly successful and students did not meet the objectives, the sponsors did learn from the experience and have re-designed the next version to be offered again in fall and winter quarters for the upcoming year. The pilot had two components: 1) shift the college core course to winter, 2) move Writing 20 to fall quarter for ELWR satisfaction and Crown 79 then take Core. Honors students and Writing 20 students had the option to enroll in Crown 79 (a 2-unit course) during fall quarter. Offering the course in winter quarter increased the number of enrollments, as many students were ELWR satisfied, had adjusted to university life, and were ready to address writing topics found in college core courses, but the delay did not help with community building. Some students also ran into the 19 unit maximum for courses. On the positive side, Crown students improved their campus percentages for ELWR satisfaction rates over the other colleges.

Members found the advantages hopeful, but with such a large cohort of students, and no writing sections, we are pleased with the addition of writing groups and peer evaluation in the course revision. Members agreed that introductory writing should be separated from core, so offering core in winter makes sense, but for the students who didn't need to take Writing 20, this delay with writing may have disadvantaged them, as during fall quarter there was no course to engage them with writing and critical thinking.

We agree this type of experimentation should continue, learning from the results of the first cohort. CPE is concerned that ELWR unsatisfied and satisfied students are not having their writing needs addressed. The evaluations were mixed: some students found Writing 20 boring while most of the Honors students liked it. Still, the overall satisfaction rate of 27% was better than the overall rate of 15% for the other nine colleges. In CPE's response to Crown Provost we recommend a range of writing classes at a higher level for ELWR satisfied students to continue being engaged with writing while waiting to take the core course. Committee members agreed students should not enroll in a college core before ELWR satisfaction. We are convinced that incoming international students need to acquire the skills to satisfy ELWR first and then the C1 and C2 general education requirements. CPE suggested having both a C1 and Core course instead of the traditional combination. We look forward to reviewing future reports on the success of this pilot.

Summer Session Academy

The committee was consulted by Special Assistant Padgett and VPDUE Hughey on the creation of the first credit bearing Summer Academy pilot. This preparation curriculum is being sponsored by Summer Session and the International Education Office and has a focus on language, writing, and navigating the research university. The program, this year, has been renamed Summer Academy and has two versions: Summer Academy for entering domestic students and Summer Academy International for entering international students. This year's

academy is focused on STEM students (from both populations). Many students enter the university unprepared and ultimately, are not successful. The plan is to recruit about 60 to 70 students and focus on students who meet a particular data driven logarithm of criteria, then tracking the students to see if they remain in the STEM field. Members will review an in-progress report at the end of spring quarter 2016.

Recommendations for CPE 2015-16:

- Follow up with VPDUE on the actions resulting for the Summer Academy programs.
- Review data on the ALEKS PPL database for students to reference before being placed in to a mathematics course.
- Review data on the success of the Multilingual Curriculum pilot

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

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