

Committee on Educational Policy Annual Report 2015 -16

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

The Committee on Educational Policy's (CEP) responsibilities include the review of campus 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, the committee spent considerable time dealing with issues pertaining to the courses that satisfy the College core and lower-division writing requirements; creating legislation for a new Committee on Courses of Instruction; and reviewing several non-degree academic programs.

I. The Lower-Division Writing and College Core Course Requirements

CEP became concerned about our lower-division writing curriculum while participating in the review of the Writing Program in 2014.¹ The campus writing requirements consist of the Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), the lower-division Composition 1 and 2 (C1 and C2) requirements, and the upper-division Disciplinary Communication (DC) requirement. In 2005, the C1 and C2 requirements were integrated with the required college core courses. As a result of this partial merger, the vast majority of freshmen are required to take a composition course in their first quarter, even if they have not satisfied ELWR. After completing – and usually passing – a fall core course that fulfills the C1 requirement, a surprising number of these students are still unable to satisfy ELWR. This raised serious concerns about the quality and rigor of writing instruction on our campus.

In collaboration with the Writing Program, the Colleges have developed a variety of different approaches to help ELWR-required students improve their writing before enrolling in a C1 course. These efforts led to the creation of more than ten different pathways by which students satisfy ELWR, C1 and C2 on our campus. At present, 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 or for international students in the Multilingual Curriculum. Due to the number and timing of these courses, ELWR-required students often find it difficult to satisfy other GE requirements; address potential deficiencies in mathematics; or take the foundational courses required for their intended major during their first two years. Most departments do not appear to be taking these challenges into account when developing advising plans and sample schedules for their majors. CEP was also concerned that many of the approaches designed to help ELWR-required students violated SCR 10.5.2, which states that ELWR-required students must take a C1 course during their first quarter at UCSC.

At the end of last year, CEP concluded that the satisfaction of ELWR should be a prerequisite for enrolling in a composition course, as is currently required at every other UC campus. CEP informed the administration, Colleges and the Writing Program of our desire to implement this

¹ For additional information about these concerns, please refer to the CEP annual report (<http://senate.ucsc.edu/senate-meetings/agendas-minutes/2015-2016/2015-November-13-Meeting/1802%20-%20CEP2014-15annualreportfin.pdf>), and the report CEP presented to the Senate in February of this year (http://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/cep-committee-on-educational-policy/reports-and-presentations/Senate_Meeting_OverviewUCSCwritingrequirementsandMLC.pdf).

change as soon as possible, contingent on the approval of the required modification of SCR 10.5.2 by the Senate. CEP also asked that the Colleges develop a uniform set of core course requirements consistent with the proposed change in consultation with the Writing Program.

In January of 2016, the Council of Provosts (CoP) solicited feedback from CEP and the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) on several models for revising the College core courses and their relationship to the lower-division writing requirements. Both CEP and CPB strongly favored a straightforward model that would completely separate the lower-division writing requirements from core. This model would allow the core and writing courses to focus on distinct learning outcomes. Under this model, no student would be required to take a C1 course before satisfying ELWR. The segregation of students into different offerings of core based on their writing abilities would be eliminated, thus enhancing the community-building aspect of the core courses. Finally, the standardization of the writing and core requirements across the colleges would simplify pathways for students and the related advising and academic planning. Our only significant reservation about this model was the expense associated with the proposed expansion of the core course requirement to two quarters at all Colleges, which would also pose challenges for students pursuing majors with extensive lower-division requirements. CEP requested the Writing Program update the outcomes for Composition requirements (C1, C2) to enhance the vertical integration of writing. CEP reviewed and approved the revised outcomes during spring quarter. These can be found on our website² in the GE Requirements table under “Composition.”

The Council of Provosts submitted a formal proposal to revise the College core course requirements and their relationship to the lower-division writing requirements to the office of the Vice Provost Academic Affairs (VPAA) for Senate review in May of this year. Unfortunately, this proposal lack decanal feedback on the proposal and its financial viability. To avoid further delays, we reviewed the proposal and made the following decisions about aspects of the proposal under the purview of our committee:

- 1) CEP continues to support the college core course requirement. The requirement should be limited to the fall quarter of the freshman year, with the size and number of associated credits determined by the educational objectives of the course and available funding.
- 2) Core must be separated from the lower-division writing requirements, including C1, C2 and the courses that help students satisfy ELWR. The writing courses should be administered and taught by the Writing Program, not the Colleges. These courses must focus on making writing outcomes their priority.
- 3) The courses that satisfy the lower-division writing requirements should be vertically integrated with each other and the upper-division writing courses, including the courses that satisfy the disciplinary communication (DC) requirement.
- 4) CEP does not support the mandatory linkage of the lower-division writing courses to a specific topic (e.g. the college themes) or quarter (winter of the first year). This would have a disproportionate impact on students interested in STEM (and other) disciplines that require extensive lower-division coursework for admission to the major and timely progress to degree. In general, we believe that students should have much more flexibility

² The table may be viewed at - <http://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/cep-committee-on-educational-policy/ge-requirements/C1%20and%20C2%20Outcomes.pdf>

in the scheduling and theme(s) of their writing courses. To the extent possible, students should be given the opportunity to take a C1/C2 course related to the theme of their college during the winter if they wish to do so. Ideally, students should be allowed to take these courses in or near their college to perpetuate the sense of community established in the fall core course.

Our committee realizes that some of the above recommendations – including the separation of core from the lower-division writing requirements - will have significant financial ramifications, but student progress and success data suggest to CEP that more attention needs to be paid to writing instruction on our campus. Our recent meetings with divisional faculty revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the writing abilities of their majors. This is not surprising given that our writing requirements are minimal relative to those at other highly regarded institutions, including several other UC campuses.

The college core courses have long been a distinguishing feature of the first year experience at UCSC; they are treasured by many faculty, students and alumni. However, CEP does not believe it is appropriate to compromise the quality of the lower-division writing curriculum to finance the continuation of the college core courses in their current form, including their linkage to the writing requirements. If the campus lacks the funding required to fully support the recommendations of our committee, it may be necessary to increase the size of the core courses; decrease the number of credits associated with these courses; or explore other mechanisms for maintaining the viability of these courses. We sincerely hope this will not be necessary.

The Committee proposed changes to Regulation 10.5.2, which describes the mechanisms by which students satisfy the Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). Although the changes to SCR 10.5.2 that were approved by the Senate will not be implemented until the fall of 2017, the campus has an obligation to provide accurate information to prospective students and their families about the nature of the college core courses and the programs in place to assist incoming frosh satisfy ELWR and become effective writers. It is therefore critical to reach agreement on a plan for revising the lower-division core and writing curriculum consistent with the above decisions within the first few weeks of the fall quarter. The proposed changes, which were approved at the Senate meeting of May 18, 2016, go into effect fall 2017.³

CEP members and guests with conflicts of interest were recused from deliberations and recommendations on the topics of writing and core course curricula.

II. Multilingual Writing Curriculum for International Students (MLC)

Last year the Committee approved a Multilingual Curriculum for F1 Visa holders (consisting of four new courses (WRIT 24-27) on a trial basis with a preliminary report on its effectiveness due before the end of 2015-16 academic year. We were very impressed by the well thought out report; the MLC appears to have a very positive impact on international students who did not satisfy ELWR before entering UCSC. The Writing Program requested the extension of the MLC with the elimination of one of the four courses (WRIT 24). CEP approved this change for next year, with the further extension of the program dependent on updated information on

³ The proposed changes may be viewed at - http://senate.ucsc.edu/senate-meetings/agendas-minutes/2015-2016/2016-May-18-Meeting/1831%20-%20CEP_Reg_10.5.2Amendment_Proposal_Spring16fin.docx.pdf

the effectiveness of the program and its cost next year.

III. Non-degree academic programs

CEP discussed several non-degree programs this year, including the UCSC Scholars Program and certificate programs from two colleges, and (as noted above) the Multilingual Curriculum administered by the Writing Program.

CEP also discussed the criteria for creating and reviewing non-degree academic programs. The revised definition for non-degree program proposals such as certificates can be found on our policy webpage in the Undergraduate Degree Programs Definitions Policy document.⁴

IV. Requests for Enrollment Adjustments/Impacted Majors

During the academic year, our committee received inquiries from several departments in the School of Engineering and the Divisions of Social Sciences and Physical and Biological Sciences about the policies and procedures for restricting the access of students to popular courses or majors based on resource limitations. At present, there is no formal process for evaluating the carrying capacity of an undergraduate major or gating the flow of students into the program at the time of admission to either the campus or the major. After discussing this issue with CEP, VPAA Lee formed a working group to investigate this issue. The working group met once in spring quarter and will resume meeting next fall.

As an interim measure to assist Computer Science and other departments facing significant enrollment pressures, we approved restricting the initial enrollment in a relative small number of key courses to students who must take them to qualify for their major or complete their minor or major. Other students will be admitted to these courses on a space-available basis. Restricting course enrollment in this manner is labor-intensive for the Registrar's Office since it must be done manually. If this approach proves effective, we will investigate whether the process can be simplified or automated in the future.

V. Other Legislative Changes: Committee Charge and Creation of CCI Charge

At most other UC campuses, the work of our committee is subdivided between distinct Senate committees focused on policy issues (CEP) and the review of new courses and changes to existing courses. Although there are advantages to assigning these responsibilities to a single Senate committee, this has become increasingly impractical due to the size and complexity of our undergraduate programs. To address this concern, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee on Committees (COC) proposed legislation to establish a separate Committee on Courses of Instruction (CCI) that will assume some of the current duties of CEP. This change will align our campus with other UC Senate structures and allow CEP to spend the time necessary for consideration of the broad policy issues required by the rapidly changing environment of higher education. The legislation that passed at the February 12, 2016 Senate meeting.⁵

⁴ This document may be viewed at - <http://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/cep-committee-on-educational-policy/policies-guidelines/UgradDegreeDefinitions2016-WEBsw.pdf>

⁵ The legislation may be viewed at - <http://senate.ucsc.edu/senate-meetings/agendas-minutes/2015-2016/2016-February-12-Meeting/1820%20-%20CEP%20Establishment%20of%20the%20Committee%20on%20Courses%20of%20Instruction.pdf>

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 to teach or assist in undergraduate course instruction.

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

- Minors in Music and History of Consciousness.

CEP will review again after revisions:

- BA in Applied Linguistics and Multilingualism
- BS in Environmental Sciences

CEP participated in the external reviews of the following departments: Anthropology, Astronomy & Astrophysics, Biomolecular Engineering, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Digital Arts and New Media, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Economics, Feminist Studies, Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology, Ocean Sciences, Politics, and Sociology. CEP also reviewed mid-cycle reports and made recommendations on the length of review cycle for Science Communication, Environmental Studies, History of Art and Visual Culture, and Music.

The following three UNEX certificates were renewed for another five years: Education Therapy, and Technical Writing and Communication. Another three UNEX certificates - Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Education: Supervision and Administration, and Instructional Design and Delivery received extensions and will be reviewed during fall quarter. The certificate program in Web Content and Marketing Management was discontinued at the request of UNEX.

In addition to the issues discussed in earlier sections of the report, CEP reviewed and commented on the following issues and/or policies:

- Updated Open Campus Policy (December 2015)
- Proposed changes to Senate Regulations 417 and 621 (September 2015)
- Proposed Economics Department and Hastings M.O.U. for the MS in Applied Economics in Finance (November 2015)
- VPDUE Proposal for Undergraduate Student Winter Admissions (December 2015)
- VPDGS Miller consultation on Chancellor's Teaching Fellowship Awards criteria (December 2015)
- VPAA Draft Memo Calling for Review of Course Evaluations System (November 2015)
- VPDUE Proposal to Change Standard Classroom Time Slots, Passing Times, and Final Exam Block Time (January 2016)
- SIO/VPGE 3+1+1 Guidelines (February 2016)
- SIO/VPGE Proposal to Streamline EAP Course General Education Designations (February 2016)
- VPAA Draft Memo Calling for Updates to Department Instructional Workload Policies (March 2016)

- Proposal for Discontinuance of Education Department’s Collaborative Leadership Ed.D. (April 2016)
- Updated Credit Hour Policy (April 2016)
- SIO/VPGE Proposal for Study Abroad Program (April 2016)
- Proposal for Nanjing Audit University and UCSC Economics 3+1+1 Pilot Proposal (May 2016)
- Created Delegations Policy (May 2016)
- Updated Policy on Posthumous Degrees (May 2016)
- Review of VPAA’s Draft Revisions to Academic Programs and Units: Policy and Procedures Governing Establishment, Disestablishment, and Change. (May 2016)
- VPDUE Request for CEP Review Departments for Challenge 45 Mandate (May 2016)
- VPDUE Request for DC Grant Award Recommendations (May 2016)

Statistics

CEP members reviewed 136 new course approvals (including 8 online courses) and 1050 course revisions, 76 program statements, and 4 posthumous degrees and 2 Certificates.

The Chair reviewed the following:

- 477 undergraduate student petitions,
- 81 requests for Graduate Student Instructors,
- 6 requests for Undergraduate Student Instructors,

CEP benefited from the expertise of an impressive group of invited guests, including the Associate Registrar Margie Claxton, the Academic Preceptors representative Jan Burroughs, Admissions staff Michael McCawley and Barbara Love, and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Richard Hughey.

Finally, we thank Senate Analyst Susanna Wrangell and Senate Executive Director Matthew Mednick for their outstanding work on behalf of CEP this year. It would have been impossible for our committee to function without their phenomenal support and detailed knowledge of our campus’s undergraduate programs, policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted;

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