

Committee on Preparatory Education Annual Report 2015-2016

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

The Committee on Preparatory Education's (CPE) issues and discussions focused on continuing items from last year. As part of CPE's charge, the committee reviews the mathematics placement exam results as well as the exam questions. This is the second year that the Mathematics Department and the Physical and Biological Sciences Division sponsored a self-paced online program, ALEKS PPL. Based on data, this program can predict a more accurate placement based on the student's progression in preparation and learning proficiency. We would like to emphasize that the ALEKS product has two different modes, one for placement and one for students who require Math 2. Members were ready to review a proposal from the Council of Provosts on the restructuring of the College core course and the lower division undergraduate writing curriculum, but did not receive a complete proposal for review in spring. The Senate was asked to review the interim data report for the Multilingual Curriculum program for international students and a proposal from undergraduate education on revising class time slots. CPE discussed the current process for ELWR satisfaction and that requesting CEP review the current process for holds placed on student accounts who have not satisfied ELWR by the fourth quarter.

ALEKS PPL and the Online Math Placement Exam (MPE)

CPE's purview requires annual review of data pertaining to student success with regard to mathematics placement on campus; in the past the Mathematics Department provided data for the math placement exam. The exam itself has changed over time. First, the exam was in person using the exam developed by the Mathematics Diagnostics and Testing Project (MDTP), then an online version was created by the department, and finally, a new version was created in collaboration with McGraw-Hill Education, an outside vendor. As we noted above, the product used for Mathematics Placement is ALEKS PPL (placement, preparations and learning). The Committee reviewed data and discussed strategies for supporting the continuation of the ALEKS PPL program initiated during fall quarter. This year Mathematics' Undergraduate Vice Chair, Professor Debra Lewis, was a member of CPE, and before any discussion or decision was made on the subject, member Lewis recused herself.

Committee members agreed that the potential benefits of the Mathematics Department's adoption of ALEKS PPL is advantageous to the student populations, both native and transfers alike. Ample time for assessment and opportunities for reassessment in ALEKS PPL may reduce the negative effects of anxiety and advantages of common standardized test-taking strategies, improving estimation of mathematical proficiency. Supportive, encouraging advising helps students maximize the benefits of the progressive improvement of their math skills. In CPE's response to the Mathematics Department, we encouraged outreach in the form of an email to newly SIR'ed (Statement of Intent to Registrar) students, letting them know that enrolling in this program during summer can guide their decisions when enrolling for a math course in fall, avoiding enrollment in the wrong course which could delay progress to degree.

ALEKS “Course Product” for Math 2 and Math 2T CEP Report

This year the Mathematics Department offered courses Math 2 (revised) and new course Math 2T as adaptive courses with online participation in the self-paced program with in person sections. CPE was updated by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) for a data request due in spring quarter to continue the course offerings; CEP has extended this deadline to fall quarter since they were not able to review by the end of spring quarter. CEP has requested a data report that compares placement scores with other higher educational institutions that also use this program for mathematics placement.

One of the comparable variables for data is the grades students receive as they progress through other higher math courses. This information is not so easy to obtain. There are many variables with the number of course offerings and inconsistencies with grading based on the instructor (ladder rank faculty, lecturers and graduate student instructors, less variation, most mirror ladder rank faculty mentor). Students are also influenced by the different teaching styles. The data sets could track students who intend to continue in the mathematics course sequences and their progress. This would be good for assessment of the program and student retention rates. CPE members strongly emphasized the need for clarity on accountability for implementing and storing the data results of this mathematics assessment program in our response to the department.

CPE is interested in open and accessible data for campus constituents to have informed discussions, with aggregate – not individual – data. CPE did not have time this year to review the report during spring quarter and will recommend next year’s committee review the full report for data on the models used for Math 2 and 2T by the start of fall quarter 2016.

College Core Course and Undergraduate Writing Curriculum Proposals

Only two members (due to being one member short and recusals) reviewed the proposal for revising the College core courses, a non-degree program annually affecting almost all of UCSC undergraduate first year student experiences; we are unable to make any conclusions as the proposal in its current state is incomplete. It would be helpful to have the support of the respective deans and associated costs based on college models of lower division undergraduate writing requirements. CPE is deferring reviewing to next year’s committee when a complete proposal is expected in fall quarter.

Multilingual Curriculum Program for International Students

This year CPE was given the opportunity to review the preliminary assessment report on the four course multilingual curriculum. We 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. We recommend, based on the data presented in the report, that the curriculum be approved for another year; we deferred indefinite approval to Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) in consultation with the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB). We support the Writing Program’s request for suspension or elimination of WRIT 24 unless there is data supporting continuation of the course.

CPE shares CEP's concern that College core course writing assignments may be geared towards an increasingly small percentage of UCSC frosh. As the report points out, some, assignments may not be appropriate for international students unfamiliar with US cultural schema. We are pleased that the Writing Program will be exploring solutions for improvements of the student experience. We agreed with the Writing Program on collaborating with the Languages and Applied Linguistics Department faculty expertise to create and enhance course content. The Committee also supported the offering of the AWPE placement test during the summer to help with planning the courses, sections and student placement.

We would like to review a formal proposal and data set next fall, along with the Committees on Educational Policy and Planning and Budget.

Standard Time Slot Schedule Changes Proposal for Senate Review

VPDUE Hughey requested Senate review of a proposal based on serving increased enrollments per the UCOP mandate. CPE members discussed the revised course time proposal to reduce class meeting times and align the current class time slots closer to the UC standard. The second request was to reduce the finals schedule from three to two hours. This change was not approved but maybe reviewed in fall quarter based on faculty survey results requested during spring quarter 2016.

The proposal requested reducing Monday, Wednesday, Friday (MWF) class slots by 5 minutes per day and reducing Tuesday, Thursday (TTh) class slots by 10 minutes per day. The passing time between classes would be 15 minutes every day, reduced from 20 minutes on MWF to the current 15 minutes established for TTh classes. Members discussed and had concerns with the requested scheduling changes.

Members agreed that no one would want to teach the late Monday and Wednesday class time slot from 9-10:35 p.m.; it has many negative implications and concerns as to safety on campus, transportation, instructors with children and partners, and work life balance issues. Currently, the late night course sections have a low attendance rate as well as low course offerings. Members have observed first hand issues with classroom seating capacity during the class offerings; the current policy is that all enrolled students must fit into the classroom, but the truth is only a subset of the class show up, except at exams. Many seats are unfilled during some course lectures.

CPE prefers not to cut back on teaching instruction time but instead change how the courses are offered during the week. Members are concerned with keeping integrity and rigor in our courses. For our response we pointed out there are 49 instruction days per quarter, distributed among the two-day a week and three-day a week per week classes. If 5 minutes per day is reduced from the MWF time slot, this amounts to reduction of 7% of class time and/or materials for instruction. For the MW/TTH course offerings, this would be 9.5% less. Members agreed this would negatively affect course pedagogy. We offered instead a plan to book classrooms for median/average attendance and have overflow rooms with lectures recorded and rebroadcast; thus students can watch remotely, taking in person quizzes and exams in sections. This allows students a choice and would require no changes in current scheduling other than small tweaks. The campus may want to consider moving away from a MWF weekly offering to three weekly

classroom offerings of two day a week and keep passing time at the 15 minute limit. Members were not generally supportive of the change in final examination time block; this is a reduction of 33% time/material to be covered on the final exam and necessarily reduces the rigor and breadth of the subject matter.

The two-hour time block would result in many more students with multiple exams per day, increasing the need to reschedule exams. UCSC has a reputation of economic good, and our ability to attract good students is based on the institution's reputation of the students we have graduated. Maintaining the highest quality of education we can deliver is paramount to keeping UCSC successful in its mission.

A density plot of student attendance, classroom occupancy, and capacity as it varies throughout the year would be instructive; CPE was unaware if such data had been gathered. Several fixes might accommodate both current schedule and physical classrooms if such data can be analyzed in the near future. CPE hoped other alternatives would be considered.

Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Procedural Request Change for Holds

ELWR Coordinator Parameter updated members on students who are not ELWR satisfied. These students are required to be enrolled in ELWR writing courses to satisfy the requirement before their fourth quarter or face having a hold placed on their enrollment for the next quarter. Students who have not satisfied ELWR by the fourth quarter may be barred from enrolling in a fifth quarter. This practice does not take into consideration the students who do pass ELWR at the end of the fourth quarter. While the hold is being removed, the affirmed students miss out on first and second pass enrollment deadlines, which can delay major coursework, progress to degree, visa status, and enrollment into a Community College course, if needed. It sends a mixed message that is part of a broader retention/student success issue.

The current process (which is labor intensive) for preventing enrollment is to place a hold on ELWR-required students' records midway through the quarter. The hold is then lifted after (and only if) the student satisfies ELWR. This procedure follows the letter of the law but results in difficulties for the students, and these difficulties have increased significantly as the number of fourth quarter ELWR-required students has increased. (Ten years ago, the ELWR Coordinator might have placed 10-20 such holds. This year 116 holds were placed.)

The current process results in fourth quarter ELWR-required students missing both first and second pass enrollment. Thus, by time they can begin enrolling, all other students have had a chance to complete enrollment, leaving very few openings in highly impacted courses and in major courses. As a result, many students who satisfy ELWR in the fourth quarter find themselves off-sequence in a major course series, which can significantly impact time to degree. We are also concerned that fourth quarter International students in this situation will face worries about their visa status if they are unable to enroll for classes at the usual time.

We suggest discontinuing placing holds on fourth quarter ELWR-required students, allowing them to enroll normally since during the enrollment period they have not yet failed to meet the ELWR timeline. Once the ELWR results are available, any fourth quarter students who do not satisfy ELWR would be administratively dropped. This eliminates an unfair penalty currently

placed on an increasingly large cohort of students and honors the spirit of system-wide ELWR regulations. CPE sent a formal request to CEP for a change to the procedures we use to prevent ELWR-required students from taking classes beyond the fourth quarter. CEP will review CPE's request fall quarter.

Santa Cruz Regulation (SCR) 10.5.2: ELWR Satisfaction Criteria

The Committee may consider any issue regarding undergraduate preparatory education and its administration. In consultation with the Writing Program, it proposes the means by which students may satisfy the University Entry Level Writing Requirement and it oversees ELWR instruction in consultation with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). CEP proposed changes to SCR 10.5.2 this year in consultation with CPE, members found the changes unproblematic but had concerns with the change from an ELWR satisfying writing section to an ELWR satisfying writing course without the final outcome of the re-design of the College Core courses.

Systemwide Proposed Revisions to Senate Regulations 417 & 621

The Committee on Preparatory Education did not, as a committee, review the proposed revisions to remove any language referencing community college credit for Senate Regulation SR 417 or the change in title for SR 621 from Advanced Placement to Standardized Examination Credit. The Committee Chair agreed with the changes for updating and clarifying the language for both SR 417 and SR 621 and did not feel this proposal required full committee review.

Recommendations for CPE 2016-17:

- ELWR Procedural Request Change for Holds, follow up with CEP decision
- Review data on the ALEKS PPL results for students who enrolled in Math 2 or Math 2T
- Review the updated data report on the Multilingual Curriculum program due fall quarter

Respectfully submitted;

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

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August 31, 2016