

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

The Academic Literacy Curriculum (ALC) was introduced at UC Santa Cruz in the Fall of 2018. The components are

- A restructured College Core course (called College 1, with “College” replaced with the appropriate course code for each of the ten colleges). This is a one-quarter 5-credit course in each college. The multiple versions for students with different levels of writing skills have been eliminated. The course teaches critical reading and critical thinking skills, and is a prerequisite to the Writing courses in the ALC, enabling them to be taught more efficiently. However, College 1 does not teach writing.
- A course, WRIT 1, that is for students who enter UC Santa Cruz without satisfying the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). An alternative version of this course, WRIT 1E, is aimed at multilingual students. College 1 is a prerequisite to both these courses.
- A course, WRIT 2, that is taken by all students after satisfying ELWR and completing College 1. An alternative honors version of this course, WRIT 2H, caters to students who wish to go beyond the level of WRIT 2 and are (by various measures) considered suitable for the course.
- A “Multilingual Curriculum,” consisting of WRIT 25 and WRIT 26, for multilingual students who need extra training in academic reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These students are asked to start in WRIT 25 or WRIT 26, depending on their level, after which they take WRIT 1 or 1E. College 1 is not a prerequisite for these courses. The Multilingual Curriculum existed before the ALC, but it was limited to international students with F1 Visa status; it is now open to all students for whom it is appropriate.

With such a major restructuring of a foundational part of the curriculum, it is important to see what the outcomes are, and to make adjustments where needed. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has reviewed the assessment studies for the Academic Literacy Curriculum (ALC), specifically for College 1 (fall 2019) and Writing Program courses (fall 2018-fall 2019). These studies were conducted by the Institutional Research and Academic Policy Studies (IRAPS) unit. The following report

- Summarizes the major findings from the assessment studies and offers recommendations for the Colleges and the Writing Program.
- Discusses the special provision endorsed by CEP for the winter-term core course STEV 2 at Stevenson College.
- Describes the change from 2020 in how students satisfy ELWR before coming to UC Santa Cruz; this change was triggered by the challenges associated with the pandemic, but it is possible that the change will not be temporary.
- Touches upon the budgetary challenge to provide adequate funding for the ALC.

College 1 Assessment Findings

Based on its 2018 assessment of College 1 (Academic Literacy and Ethos), the Colleges revised the College 1 curriculum for fall 2019 to better serve international students. In this effort, the Colleges implemented new specialized programs, including a multilingual tutoring program at College Nine and College Ten and the use of “Class Captains” at Crown College. IRAPS generated two assessment studies for College 1, one that measured the success of these programs and one that compared fall 2018 international students’ academic proficiencies in College 1 with the fall 2019 cohort.

Overall, the studies show that (1) the Colleges’ specialized programs positively benefit international students; (2) international students in fall 2019 developed higher proficiencies in understanding the relationship between genre and context than the fall 2018 cohort; and (3) international students in fall 2019 developed slightly higher proficiencies in analyzing texts to identify main ideas and use a range of strategies to understand texts. Further, the studies indicate that the fall 2019 cohort had an increase in an academic

sense of belonging to their college as a result of College 1, as well as a higher frequency of interaction with course faculty and course assistants.

With respect to (1), students who participated in Crown's Class Captain program and College Nine and College Ten's multilingual tutoring program experienced more success in applying reading strategies to difficult readings, felt more connected with the course readings, and were more engaged in College 1 overall. These students were also more likely to make use of campus academic resources and to communicate with their peers, faculty, and course assistants. Thus, these programs positively impacted students' learning experiences in College 1.

With respect to (2) and (3), while international students improved in all criteria assessed, students' rubric results demonstrated language-based differences for both the fall 2018 and fall 2019 cohorts. For instance, late bilingual students (those who started learning English after the age of five), demonstrated lower proficiencies across all criteria than their peers who learned English and another language before the age of five. Additionally, students who placed into the Writing Program's Multilingual Curriculum (WRIT 25 or WRIT 26) demonstrated some improvement in analyzing texts and understanding the relationship between genre and context, and fewer students generally or fully met expectations for use of reading strategies. These findings indicate the need for additional language support for late bilingual students overall and for students who place into the Multilingual Curriculum.

Recommendations

1. Overall, international students' improved experiences in College 1 in fall 2019 suggest that the curricular interventions at Crown College, College Nine, and College Ten are serving students well. These programs should be continued and expanded to other colleges to the extent that there is student demand.
2. To continue supporting international students' language development, Global Engagement should work with the Department of Languages and Applied Linguistics to develop an online language course appropriate for students who are late learners of English, to be offered in the summer, ahead of the academic year. Such a course would help these students develop the speaking, listening, and reading skills needed to better acclimate to the demands of College 1.

Writing Program Assessment Findings

The Writing Program collaborated with IRAPS to assess the fall 2018 cohort of ALC students and evaluated students' proficiencies in four courses: WRIT 25, Writing about Place, and WRIT 26, Writing about Language (courses that comprise the Multilingual Curriculum); WRIT 1, Introduction to Composition; and WRIT 2, Rhetoric and Inquiry. Each of these assessment studies focused on the course learning outcomes and evaluated students' performance across subpopulations, with attention to equity. The overall target for students who met or exceeded expectations in any given criteria was 75%.

In the **Multilingual Curriculum** (MLC), students were assessed for all learning outcomes, and most students met or exceeded expectations, with the exception of one criterion, "use of language." Only 73% of students who began their ALC pathway in WRIT 25 met or exceeded expectations in this criterion, indicating that these students need more time to develop their use of language and that they may benefit from additional language support.

In **WRIT 1**, students were assessed specifically in their cognitive and metacognitive abilities, and a majority of students met the 75% threshold, with the exception of one criterion, "developing a strengths plan," where only 71% of students met or exceeded expectations. Of note in this study were the following findings: (1) With respect to metacognition, MLC students outperformed their peers, which suggests that the MLC effectively introduced students to these important skills and that they were able to build upon them in WRIT

1. Additionally, across the criteria, MLC students who took WRIT 1 demonstrated similar proficiencies to their non-MLC peers, indicating that WRIT 25 and WRIT 26 adequately prepare MLC students for their work in WRIT 1. (2) Winter quarter WRIT 1 students outperformed spring quarter WRIT 1 students in all criteria except “developing a strengths plan. The lower results in spring reflect students who repeated WRIT 1 or were not enrolled in the MLC. (3) 81-89% of students with AWPE scores of 6 (highest level of preparation) demonstrated developing/advanced proficiency across the criteria, compared with 65-69% of students with scores of 2-5, 2-5E, and 6E.

The Writing Program also offers WRIT 1E, designed for heritage speakers and multilingual students (international or domestic). Overall, students in WRIT 1 and 1E displayed similar proficiencies, but no analysis was conducted to determine if the students the course was designed for are better served by WRIT 1 or WRIT 1E. Thus, future assessments may focus on this aspect.

In **WRIT 2**, students’ proficiencies in information literacy were assessed. Overall, a majority of students met or exceeded expectations (81-88%). Additionally, in a survey-based assessment, most students indicated improvement in information literacy over the course of the quarter.

The assessment results reveal differences in student performances based on curricular pathways and student preparation levels. For instance, ELWR-Satisfied students performed consistently better across all categories than ELWR-Required students who took WRIT 1 before WRIT 2 and ELWR-Required students who took WRIT 25 and/or WRIT 26 before WRIT 2. These differences were most notable in two criteria: (1) in “appropriately cites source material,” only 75% of students who took WRIT 1 and 67% of MLC students met or exceeded expectations, compared with 84% of ELWR-Satisfied students; and (2) in “appropriately attributes source material,” only 71% of MLC students met or exceeded expectations, compared with 89% of ELWR-Satisfied students and 83% of WRIT 1 students. As a whole, however, MLC students performed similarly demonstrated similar competencies as their ELWR-Required peers who took WRIT 1 before WRIT 2.

The overall differences in student performance based on curricular pathways in the ALC indicates that information literacy outcomes should be articulated and scaffolded in College1 and WRIT 1 to better prepare students for WRIT 2. Specifically, this includes the explicit teaching of digital research skills and the integration of library resources into class assignments and instruction.

WRIT 2 students were also evaluated according to curricula: legacy students who took WRIT 2 in their second year of enrollment and were part of the old writing curriculum and ALC students who took WRIT 2 in their first year of enrollment. Overall, there were statistically significant differences in ALC students’ performance vs. non-ALC students’ performance, indicating that the ALC better prepared students for WRIT 2. However, with respect to incoming preparation levels, the ALC provided only slightly better support for ELWR-Required students, compared with the old curriculum.

With respect to WRIT 2 Honors, no assessment data was provided.

Recommendations

1. WRIT 1E and WRIT 2H should be assessed in the future to determine how well these courses serve students.
2. Similar to the College 1 recommendation, international students, especially those in the MLC, may benefit from additional instruction in the summer ahead of the academic year. Such a course may better prepare students for the MLC, WRIT 1, and WRIT 2.

3. There is concern about the Writing Program's ability to offer enough seats of each course each term. While the program has bolstered its summer course offerings of WRIT 2 (10 sections) and WRIT 1 (1 section), the program needs to investigate potential bottlenecks for students who need to complete the C Requirement by the start of their seventh quarter.

For instance, in the 2020-2021 AY, there are roughly 25 students who will start their seventh quarter of enrollment without having met the C Requirement; while a blanket petition has been submitted to CCI to resolve this issue, this number is compounded by an additional 2100 returning students who will need WRIT 2 in the 2020-2021 AY (in addition to the new cohort of ELWR-Satisfied ALC students in 2020-2021 AY). As a result, the Writing Program needs to hire additional lecturers to provide enough seats in WRIT 2, specifically, to ensure timely progress to degree.

Overall Assessment of the ALC

The ALC is a joint program administered by two academic units (the Colleges and the Writing Program), each of which oversee specific courses in the curriculum (College 1 for the Colleges and Writing 25, 26, 1, and 2 for the Writing Program) and provides assessment of those courses. Thus, formal evaluation of the ALC has been conducted on a course-by-course basis, rather than holistically across all courses.

However, IRAPS conducted a correlation analysis of the learning outcomes in College 1, WRIT 25, WRIT 26, WRIT 1/1E, and WRIT 2, focusing on metacognition and genre awareness. This analysis demonstrated the following: (1) For MLC students who took College 1 and then moved to WRIT 1 and WRIT 2 respectively, most students continually met or exceeded expectations as they advanced in the curriculum; (2) Most MLC students who underperformed in College 1 and the MLC improved their proficiencies in WRIT 1; (3) Most ELWR-Satisfied students who underperformed in College 1 met or exceeded expectations in WRIT 2; and (4) entering students who were most prepared in College 1 and exceeded expectations tended to exceed expectations in WRIT 2.

These results show that students do appear to improve their proficiencies over the course of the ALC, at least in some criteria.

Recommendations

In the future, the Colleges and the Writing Program should coordinate their assessment efforts to better understand student migration through the ALC and the overall proficiencies students develop as a result of the ALC. Such assessment efforts may paint a better picture of the extent to which the ALC prepares students for their disciplinary communication courses.

Stevenson College Core Course

In 2015-16, when CEP was specifying the conditions that the proposals from the colleges and Writing Program for a revised curriculum would have to satisfy, it stated that the college core courses would all be limited to one term. Colleges had a variety of different systems at that point, as detailed in [this](#) report. With the exception of Stevenson College, these were all aimed at students who had not satisfied ELWR prior to matriculating at UCSC. Stevenson College, on the other hand, had had a two-quarter core course requirement for all its students for many years.

When the ALC was proposed in 2017, it had a one-quarter College 1 core course for all colleges. It was then approved by CEP and presented to the Academic Senate, where the enabling legislation was approved. With the exception of Stevenson College, all the variants of the college core course — which were aimed at ELWR-required students — were discontinued. However, the second quarter of the Stevenson College core course, renumbered as STEV 2, remained as a college requirement.

This situation was reviewed by CEP in 2019. Following discussion with the college, CEP asked IRAPS to survey Stevenson College alumni about their two-quarter core course. The results were available to CEP in early 2020. Although the response rate was not very high, the key conclusions of the survey were that

- Nearly 90% of the respondents said that the core course was essential or helpful for their academic growth.
- Approximately one-third of respondents said that Core influenced their choice of major, and approximately one quarter of respondents said that it influenced their choice of career.
- Approximately 80% of the respondents said that a multi-term Core was essential or helpful for them to gain academic skills and social connections.

Keeping these in mind, CEP decided to approve the continuation of STEV 2 as a college requirement at Stevenson College, with the following provisions:

- Stevenson College students in the Multilingual Curriculum, i.e. students who place into WRIT 25 or WRIT 26 upon matriculation at UC Santa Cruz, would be exempt from being required to take STEV 2.
- On the Stevenson College website describing the core course, and in the program statement for the college in the General Catalog, students in major programs with a large number of requirements would be advised to consider carefully if a second core course would fit their schedule.
- Entering frosh would only be placed in Stevenson College if they listed it as their first or second preference. That is, a student who did not list any college, or listed Stevenson College as their third preference (or lower), would not be placed in Stevenson College.

These were agreed to by the college and the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education.

Changes to Writing Course Placement for 2020-2021

On March 12, 2020, the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) sent a memo to all UCs announcing that the in-person Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) would not be offered. Because this exam, in conjunction with other standardized tests, is used to determine whether or not incoming students have met the system-wide Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), all UC campuses were asked to develop localized placement processes to serve students who would have otherwise taken the AWPE.¹ For UCSC, the total number of students who would typically take the AWPE for placement into developmentally appropriate writing courses is ~1900.

After consulting with colleagues at UCD, UCSB, and UCI — all of whom had started developing localized placement processes modeled on directed self-placement — UCSC designed and implemented Directed Self-Placement (DSP). DSP, as a whole, is a placement process that guides students in selecting the course that is right for them. Research shows that it empowers students, and that with support, students typically do pick the courses that are best for them. There is also evidence that students are more invested in courses when they participate in the decision-making process (Gere, et al. 2010; Toth and Aull 2013). Finally, DSP provides an alternative to placing students in writing courses using standardized testing and test scores, which do not consistently reflect writing ability. Given that the ACT and SAT will no longer be required for admission to a UC, this model seemed most appropriate for our local campus context.

Roughly 4000 students completed DSP in Course 2 of Slug Orientation (July 6-July 16). They were provided a survey made up of three main parts: Introduction, survey, and recommendation:

- **Introduction:** Students were offered information about what DSP is, why the Writing Program uses it, the steps of the process, and basic Writing Program course information.

¹ Subsequent to the issuance of this memo, an online version of the AWPE was developed and administered in July 2020, and all students who intended to SIR at a UC were invited--not required--to take this exam for placement purposes.

- **Survey:** Students were asked to review authentic Writing Program course materials and answer questions about their readiness for and needs around that material. This portion was not a writing exam, but students' responses were scored and mapped onto the student learning outcomes of Writing Program courses.
- **Recommendation:** Within a few weeks of completing the survey, students received a course recommendation, along with detailed information about the day-to-day expectations and support structures of each course. Students weighed this information and responded with their course selection. Multilingual students who placed themselves higher than the recommended course and student who selected a course more than one level higher than their placement recommendation were offered advising from Writing Program faculty to help inform their decisions.

In this model, ELWR satisfaction is determined by the course student self-select, based on their placement recommendation. For ELWR-Satisfied students who did not complete DSP, we accepted standardized test scores and credits (e.g., SAT, IB, ACT, AP credit, community college credit) or online AWPE scores (if applicable) for placement.

Results from this process--not taking into account student deferrals, summer melt, and other unknown enrollment factors--were as follows:

Course	Students
Writing 25	1%
Writing 26	3%
Writing 1E	3%
Writing 1	59%
Writing 2	34%
Total	100%

These results show that 34% of students will move from College 1 directly into WRIT 2, a significantly lower percentage than in previous years (for reference, roughly 65% of students place into WRIT 2 after College 1). The Writing Program Chair is collaborating with the Humanities Dean on curriculum planning for the 2020-2021 academic year in light of these placement results.

Recommendations

Since these results were not available until August, CEP has not discussed them or come up with recommendations. The incoming committee, which will also have the responsibilities hitherto assigned to the Committee on Preparatory Education, should look into this early in Fall 2020.

Budgetary Concerns

When the Academic Literacy Curriculum was reviewed by the Academic Senate, it came with a statement from the Administration that it was within the resource envelope to which the Administration had committed. In Spring 2019, the Humanities Division made the case that they were not adequately funded for the Writing Program courses in the ALC. Both CEP and the Committee on Planning and Budget were consulted on this, after which it has been pending with the Administration. (One-time supplementary funding was provided to the Humanities Division in 2019-20.) The appropriate funding for the Writing Program part of the ALC should be determined as soon as possible, and provided on a permanent basis to the Humanities Division. This is especially important in the light of the big increase in students placing into Writing 1 under Directed Self Placement, discussed in the previous section of this report. CEP recommends that the funding for these courses be based on the actual number of students enrolled in these courses, similar to the way College 1 is funded, instead, of basing it on the number of students matriculating at UCSC each year and using formulae that predate the ALC.

Respectfully submitted;

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