SANTA CRUZ: OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

June 17, 2015

VPAA Herbert Lee
Chancellor’s Office

Re: Multilingual Program Proposal

Dear Herbie,

Thank you for submitting the Multilingual Curriculum to the Senate for consideration. CEP reviewed the proposal for the Multilingual Program over several meetings, and conflicted members Shearer (Chair, Writing Program), Crosby (Provost, Cowell College) and Keilen (Provost, Porter College) recused themselves from making any decisions about this proposal. Members determined that these courses would address a serious campus need related to the reading, writing, and comprehension skills of international students; the curriculum as proposed is designed to address the needs of international students related to vocabulary and culture in a way that is currently absent on this campus (although it does exist on other UC campuses). CEP believes that this program is required to serve this population of students adequately. The committee also recognizes, however, that many questions about this program remain unanswered, and concerns remain about the effectiveness of this program and its consequences, both in terms of and in terms of the relation between these courses and other campus writing requirements, including College Core/C1. In light of the need for the classes and the unanswered questions that this proposal raises, CEP recommends approving this 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 ongoing discussion about the relationship of the lower-division writing courses to the College Core courses.

The proposed multilingual curriculum addresses an important population of students currently underserved at UCSC: the classes are designed for English language learners from other countries, and thus contain pedagogical approaches best tailored to these students. For instance, these classes contain cultural information and vocabulary instruction that are appropriate for international students (and specifically, students who are new to the US educational context), rather than attempting to combine the education of this population with domestic students who need more grammatical (rather than vocabulary) help. Thus, from a pedagogical perspective, these classes seem well-designed, and 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 of these students currently take if they do not satisfy ELWR in their Core courses in the Fall. CEP believes that the courses will help international students acquire the skills they need to more effectively write and communicate in future classes; these classes address issues about writing that have been brought to the attention of this committee that go beyond mere ELWR satisfaction.

The committee recommended various minor changes to the proposed courses, including suggesting that Writing 24 carry workload only credit, as the course seems to be remedial (as
defined by Senate guidelines). The committee also discussed the appropriate enrollment restrictions for these classes, and determined that these courses should be restricted to students who were required to take the TOEFL prior to enrolling.

This proposal provides a single, unified, sequential experience of early writing instruction for international students, which is in contrast to the various kinds of College Core classes taken by domestic students. In terms of the relation of these classes to the College Core classes, there are many difficult issues that ultimately need to be resolved. CEP has received several proposals from provosts about course offerings that international students might take in the fall quarter if the multilingual curriculum is approved; while the committee is reviewing these courses, it cannot be assumed that these courses will be approved in time to be offered in the fall. The committee will not have time to make detailed recommendations about other courses these students should take upon entry to UCSC, beyond the suggestion that it is critical for students to get the tools they need to satisfy ELWR as soon as possible. The committee notes the core courses serve an important community-building role, and that these courses are presented as a unique feature of this campus. This is a very complex issue that CEP will continue to discuss next year.

Questions about whether these courses are an appropriate use of resources are in the purview of CPB. In their letter to CEP dated June 11, 2015, they note concerns about the “overall cost structure of this proposal, which seems to involve an entire series of courses that replicates in modified form the regular Writing 20 series, and believes that over the long term it would be wiser to devote resources to recruiting better prepared international students rather than continuing to invest in “remedial” student support.” CPB “continues to stress that the most cost-effective solution for our campus would be targeted international outreach and recruitment.” While CEP does not disagree that it would ultimately be more cost-effective to target more prepared students, it also notes that the students currently being recruited require this help, and that the campus has an obligation to support the students it accepts.

CPB also notes a “grave concern [of] the lack of timely consultation on this matter,” noting that “[c]ourse proposals were created and put forward in advance of the actual program proposal” and that “Summer orientation plans are well on their way.” CPB holds that this issue illustrates a failure of shared governance. We share CPB’s concerns about the submission of the proposal relatively late in the academic year, which left us little time to consult with other Senate committees, the College Provosts, or other relevant parties. This concern is balanced by our understanding that the proposal was motivated by a sincere desire to help incoming international students acquire the critical reading and writing skills required to satisfy ELWR and the C1 and C2 general education requirements.

After reviewing CPB’s feedback concerning the proposal, we asked the Writing Program to provide an update on the number of students who failed to satisfy ELWR by the end of the current academic year to assess the need for this program and its potential redundancy with the existing Writing 20 sequence. In the fall of 2012, the Writing Program offered two sections of Writing 23 (the fourth-quarter course for students who have yet to satisfy ELWR) with a total enrollment of 24 students. In Fall 2013, the first fall in which the impact of the small 2012-2013 international cohort would have been felt, the Writing Program offered three sections of Writing
23 with a total enrollment of 49 students. In Fall 2014, the Writing Program offered three sections of Writing 23 with a total enrollment of 56 students. Based on the results of the portfolio reviews that were scored at the end of the current term, the Writing Program will need to offer more than six sections of Writing 23 next fall to a total of approximately 135 students, an increase of more than 100% relative to last year. Although we do not have detailed information on the background of these students, anecdotal information suggests that a high percentage are international students. These data stress the importance of offering writing courses tailored to the needs of international students as soon as possible.

CPB concludes their letter by wondering who will bear the cost of this program and whether “this program [will] create friction over resources between Undergraduate Education and the Humanities Division.” In light of this concern, CEP requested clarification from the Humanities Dean and the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education about their coordination with respect to the resource needs of this curriculum. In a letter to CEP date June 16, 2015, the Vice Provost and Dean indicated that “enrollment-based funds that the division receives for the Writing Program will be used to fund the new courses” and that “the expenses for the curriculum should be matched by the savings from not having to offer a larger number of Writing 20-23 courses.” The letter also noted that the overall expense may be lower due to the design of the new sequence and may be further offset by the increased retention of these students. Determining whether this sequence is actually cost-neutral is beyond the purview of CEP, but the committee notes that this issue has been considered by the administration.

In conclusion, CEP is convinced that the Writing 24-27 courses are in the best pedagogical interests of international students and must be available to international students entering as freshmen next fall. 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 CEP ultimately favors. CEP strongly recommends approval of this program for a year, given that it deems that these courses are important for the success of this population, even though a great many questions remain unanswered. The committee looks forward to a report on this curriculum that addresses how these students performed, and how ELWR satisfaction rates compare to other methods of instruction.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Tamkun, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: VPDUE Hughey
    Assistant Dean Codding
    VC Delaney
    Principal Analyst Lehr
    Chair Shearer
June 11, 2015

John Tamkun, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Multilingual Pilot Program Proposal

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) has reviewed the proposal for the Multilingual Pilot Program. While the committee agrees that it is important to address student writing needs for student success, the proposed program is lacking in some key areas. It focuses heavily on writing support for international students, leaving out of consideration the many California Resident students, including some from non-English-speaking backgrounds, who would also benefit from additional writing support. Further -- perhaps a minor point -- the committee feels that the title of this program is a bit misleading: it does not present a true multilingual curriculum, in contrast, for example, to the Applied Linguistics & Multilingualism BA program which recently came forward. Finally, while the Humanities Division in its latest FTE plan requests permission to hire an LSOE specializing in teaching ESOL in the coming academic year (2015-16), the Multilingual Pilot proposal, which emanates from the same division, does not address how the new writing curriculum would be coordinated with any instruction in the English language such a hire might oversee.

CPB is also concerned with the overall cost structure of this proposal, which seems to involve an entire series of courses that replicates in modified form the regular Writing 20 series, and believes that over the long term it would be wiser to devote resources to recruiting better prepared international students rather than continuing to invest in “remedial” student support. CPB wishes once again to stress that the most cost-effective solution for our campus would be targeted international outreach and recruitment.

Additionally, the program that has been proposed would assist only newly matriculating international students. While we see the near-term benefits of the glide path created for students who are admitted without the requisite English skills, it is unclear what will be done to support students who are already on campus and struggling. Any proposal going forward should include at least an opt-in option for California Residents to address needs across our student body. We have not provided adequate writing support for ESL or bilingual students who are already here. This program represents a huge reconfiguration of how writing in the curriculum is delivered on this campus that is driven solely by the needs of international students. With reports indicating that only three international students failed to complete their ELWR requirement by their fourth quarter this year, the committee is not convinced that this is the best course of action at this particular juncture.

A matter of grave concern was the lack of timely consultation on this matter. Course proposals were created and put forward in advance of the actual program proposal, and both tiers of review will have questionable impact, with the whole program having the aura of a fait accompli. Summer orientation plans incorporating some aspects of the plan are already well underway and have been publicly announced, so in our opinion, shared governance has completely broken down in this area, one in which the Academic Senate has plenary authority. Furthermore, based on the materials that were submitted to CPB, there was no indication that a broader consultation with the College Provosts had taken place.

While CPB agrees that it is unethical to bring underprepared students to UCSC whom the campus is unwilling or unable to support, we are also convinced that it represents poor planning to draft, propose,
and implement all at once a new curriculum without adequate Senate consultation and without the
provision even of basic cost estimates. CPB is not aware of any other area where such large resource
investments have been made without any known scale for the required investment. Will this program
create friction over resources between Undergraduate Education and the Humanities Division? Who is
going to pay for all this? Without this level of detail, CPB is left emphatically questioning the wisdom of
approving this pilot.

Sincerely,

Daniel Friedman, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: VPAA Lee