



Davis Division Academic Senate

Request for Consultation Responses

Special Academic Program Establishment Request

January 29, 2016

The Office of the Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education has submitted a revised proposal requesting establishment of a Special Academic Program in International and Academic English (IAE). A previous proposal to establish IAE was reviewed by the Division late last spring. The Division did not approve the establishment request. The Divisional response communicating disapproval of the proposal last spring is included in the documentation provided for review.

FEC: College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

November 30, 2015 4:37 PM

The CAES FEC strongly endorses this proposal. The proposed program will greatly benefit both undergraduate and graduate students, and will fill a gap that would be left by the disappearance of a previous program. This appears to be a reasonable and responsible way to deliver needed instruction in English for nonnative speakers. We have not carefully reviewed financial aspects and are commenting specifically on the great need for the proposed courses.

FEC: College of Engineering

January 6, 2016 5:50 PM

The CoE FEC has no specific comments in this regard.

FEC: College of Letters and Science

December 9, 2015 8:44 AM

L & S Executive Committee Response

December 8

Re: Letter dated October 12, 2015 to Chair Knoesen in regards to a Special Academic Program Proposal for International Academic English

Overview: History, Inquiry, and Recommendations

History:

The L & S executive committee discussed this proposal for a special academic program charged with International Academic English instruction for graduate student TAs at its November meeting (November 2). Concerns about the proposal were raised at the meeting, among which were the following:

1. What was the role of the University Writing Program, which would directly affect L&S?
2. The undergraduate ESL instruction had been ceded to the UWP in 2013 and it was unclear as to why the graduate section had not.
3. The Executive Committee was curious about the funding for this program.
4. Since this would be a quite distinct kind of program to the more common special program model, we wanted to know how academic, grade-bearing courses could now be moved to the office of Undergraduate Education, and who would teach them and evaluate the instructors.

The L & S Executive Committee charged me as chair to investigate these concerns. I received a complete response both from the Undergraduate Education office and also from Professor Dana Ferris representing ESL in the University Writing Program. Professor Ferris's concerns about this proposal are included with this response.

Inquiry

1. The answers to the above concerns were sent to me in a note signed by the undergraduate Vice-Provost but prepared by the International Academic English director. In an effort to be completely transparent, I quote directly:

“First moving the lower division ESL writing courses for undergraduates to the University Writing Program in 2013 was a well-thought out campus decision. These courses had traditionally been taught by lecturers and only occasionally by graduate students in a thriving MATESOL program. Budget cuts in 2006 followed by annually decreasing numbers of domestic ESL students and decreasing MATESOL applicants had led to skeletal offerings in a program that was in decline and

certainly not well suited to handle the massive increase in international ESL students that the 2020 initiative indicated would follow. Furthermore, Linguistics was in the process of reconsidering its priorities and departmental goals and was very supportive of moving these courses to the University Writing Program, knowing full well that it would benefit being in an environment accustomed to offering courses with lower enrollments and thrive under the direction of Dr. Dana Ferris, a nationally recognized ESL writing faculty member and administrator. Unlike the undergraduate ESL courses in Linguistics, the graduate courses served a different population and purpose. LIN 25 and LIN 391 primarily served to prepare graduate students for their future roles as teaching assistants, focusing on oral English language skills and the foundations needed to build sufficient oral English language skills to communicate in the classroom. The background and preparation the instructors/lecturers need to teach these courses is related but different from the skills needed to teach ESL writing.

Second, on funding, The Office of Undergraduate Education budget includes funds for the IAE director position and for support staff. Funds for instructors for IAE come out of the Provost's allocation, since this program is no longer housed in L&S/Linguistics. The program is not in L&S because no department has offered to house these courses and none of the deans' offices has generated their own proposal to administer the program. It is important to note that what's outlined in the SAP goes beyond just course offerings. The proposal includes a series of workshops and seminars that increase the flexibility of the program making it possible to quickly adapt to changing student needs and demographics.

Third, the mission of SAP is to provide English language support needed for domestic and international ESL students to become communicatively competent so that can participate as full members of the larger academic community at UC Davis."

2. Response from UWP (Bold is intervention of BDS)

November 11, 2015

Dear Brenda:

Thank you for asking for our input about this proposal. What follows is a bit of history and context, followed by some "big-picture" points, followed by a few specific comments on the current version of the proposal as it stands.

History and Context

Until 2013, the campus ESL program for matriculated UCD students was housed entirely in the Linguistics Department, where it had been for about 20 years after moving from its original home in the English Department. In 2013, as part of a series of meetings led by Carolyn Thomas, it was communicated that the Linguistics Department no longer wanted responsibility for the growing

undergraduate ESL writing program (then known as LIN 21-23, now UWP 21-23). This, together with the UWP's charge to oversee undergraduate writing at UCD and with the presence in UWP of an experienced writing program administrator with expertise in ESL writing (Professor Dana Ferris), led to the fairly abrupt decision to move those courses as a package from Linguistics to UWP. We began teaching them in Fall 2013; since then, the program has grown from 32 sections of ESL (2012-13 in Linguistics) to 116 this year (2015-16 in UWP). We have also gone from one full-time lecturer to over 20.

At the time the move of LIN 21-23 to UWP was being discussed, **the idea of the other ESL courses in LIN (the ones described in the current proposal) moving to UWP was never raised as a question or an option.** It was our understanding that LIN preferred to keep those courses because they had faculty still interested in teaching them and graduate students to support with TAs. Subsequently, LIN has voted to divest itself of all ESL teaching responsibilities, but it is worth noting that UWP was never asked at any point to consider taking these additional courses into our program.

Big Picture Considerations

As the Senate has noted and UE has acknowledged in its response to the rejection of the first proposal, this proposal is a short-term approach to a large and complex set of ongoing concerns. On the one hand, it's understandable that someone would suggest a quick fix for a practical problem: These courses are valuable, their previous departmental home doesn't want them anymore, and someone needs to take responsibility for them. We certainly would not argue that classes in oral skills, TA training, and language classes for graduate students are not needed. On the contrary, we would argue that oral skills offerings for multilingual undergraduates and a range of offerings for multilingual graduate students are so important that they need a lot more attention and a lot more resources than they have previously received.

However, we do not view setting up a second separate program in UE as the optimal long-term approach to addressing these important needs. We are concerned that there will be a competition for resources between UE and UWP. Administratively, two separate programs means two sets of staff resources [\[1\]](#) and two campus programs competing over the same teachers in the region—TESOL-trained teachers usually can teach both writing and oral skills, so the same people might be qualified for jobs in both programs. It all seems unwieldy and not well poised to meet current needs or sustain continued growth.

Finally, the proposal and the cover letter overstate the amount of consultation UE has done with UWP over this matter. We did not even know it existed until after the Senate had rejected the first version, and we never saw a copy of it until July of this year. We had never seen the second version until you sent it to us a few days ago. In short, we have not been in the loop about this at all. This strikes us as odd considering that with our rapidly growing program and teaching staff, the UWP has by far the largest concentration of ESL expertise on the UCD campus.

We assume that the relative lack of consultation and communication is due to the busyness of all parties. It may also be true that UE assumes we're not interested in/qualified for classes in oral skills (being a writing program), but as noted, most of our instructors have general TESOL/applied linguistics training. **It's also worth noting that in other UC programs (such as Irvine and UCLA), ESL classes in oral skills, for graduate students, and for transfer students are all taught under the same academic roof.**^[2] In any case, we share the concerns that have been raised by the Senate about the lack of coordination that might ensue (or continue) between the two programs.

Specific Questions and Concerns

If the Senate decides to approve the current version of the proposal, either as a short-term stopgap or a long-term structure, we have some specific feedback and suggestions:

1. The program should be directed by someone holding a faculty title, not a staff title. An academic program should be directed by a faculty member.
2. If there is a decision to allow UE to run an ESL program separate from the one in UWP, we think the delineation of responsibilities should be described more clearly: Is the division between oral skills and writing? Between undergraduate and graduate students? Right now it just appears to be a package of orphaned courses that cross several boundaries.
3. We are also a bit confused/concerned by the statement near the end of the proposal that UE will oversee all student testing. UWP administers the English Language Placement Examination (ELPE) used to place freshmen into our three-course sequence or into WLD 57; though UE provides funding and gives us the list of students whom we need to test, we do everything else. We'd want it clear that we maintain control over the ELPE and the placement process for ESL courses in the UWP.
4. We think the class now known as LIN 25 should move to UWP rather than being part of this new program. We've already been asked to take LIN 26 (a writing course for graduate students). LIN 25-26 has been a package of graduate courses for many years, and we do not see a good reason to split them up now. Even though LIN 25 is a multi-skills course, it includes reading and writing, and UWP can do a good job of creating a coherent two-course sequence that will support graduate students' academic language development.
5. The oversight board for this academic program, if established, should include representation from UWP. The cover letter mentions that UE is already talking to potential members of this board, but that apparently (thus far) does not include UWP.

To summarize, we think it is well past time that the campus develops a comprehensive plan for the language support of multilingual students—international or domestic, graduate or undergraduate, freshmen or transfers, writing or oral skills. While we understand that such a plan can't be created overnight, we also wonder whether continuing with piecemeal short-term solutions—one program in UE, one in UWP, tutoring in SASC, etc.—is really the best way to go.

We are happy to respond to any questions or comments, and again, we appreciate being asked for our input.

Final Recommendation of the L & S Executive Committee

At our December meeting (December 7, 2015), we discussed all the additional information we had received. We share the concerns of the University Writing Program.

We voted unanimously to recommend that the petition to recognize a new special academic program in the undergraduate vice-provost's office be denied on the following grounds:

1. Following the initiative of the 2020 plan, the university needs to have a comprehensive program to serve both undergraduate and graduate students needing training in ESL.
2. Because the University Writing Program has the academic personnel trained to supervise such a program, and indeed has been doing so for several years, it seems appropriate that they should also prepare non-native English speakers to function as TAs.
3. We do not see any academic rationale to redirect resources to support a special program.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Deen Schildgen, Chair

L & S Executive Committee

[1] We couldn't help but note that the proposal refers to "two full-time administrative staff positions" to support the relatively small program to be administered in UE. UWP currently has one .5 FTE staff position to support a program that is at least 5-6 times as big. While this is something we plan to negotiate further with our Dean's office and with UE, it illustrates the concern that two ESL programs will be competing for resources.

[2] At UC Irvine, the ESL program is a stand-alone program called Academic English that reports to the Dean of Humanities (directed by Linguistics Professor Robin Scarcella). At UCLA, the ESL program moved from Linguistics to the writing program some years ago, but the whole program (not just the writing classes for freshmen) moved, including oral skills, graduate, and upper-division transfer student courses.

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Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Deen Schildgen, Chair
L & S Executive Committee

FEC: School of Law

December 7, 2015 11:42 AM

Response continued on next page.

FEC: School of Law

December 7, 2015

The School of Law FEC has no specific position or comments on this proposal.

FEC: School of Medicine

January 20, 2016 1:44 PM

No response at this time.

Graduate Council

January 26, 2016 8:48 AM

Response continued on next page.

January 26, 2016

To: Academic Chair Knoesen
Re: Special Academic Program Establishment Request

In response to your request for comment, the Graduate Council, partially based on the deliberations of its subcommittee on Academic Planning and Development, acknowledges there is much value in the proposed Special Academic Program for International and Academic English, which would serve several campus needs.

Housing of the program in Undergraduate Education is sensible, since the primary beneficiaries would be undergraduate students in TA instructed courses and sessions. English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, formerly offered by the Department of Linguistics, have been a means for assessing and training graduate student TAs whose English communication skills are deemed inadequate. The loss of such operations would negatively impact undergraduate instruction and the career trajectories of graduate students who need such training.

A previous version of this proposal underwent review by the Academic Senate. The review process has led to various improvements in the proposal, including a fuller understanding of how the program aligns with campus needs for ESL instruction. The proposal is forward-thinking and has benefited from consultations with many knowledgeable parties on campus, including the University Writing Program.

There are lingering concerns regarding the modest budget. In particular, one wonders whether two lecturers can handle the bulk of the workload, which will likely increase with the growing number of international graduate students. The question of whether graduate students might lose funding, upon failure to qualify for TA positions, lies outside of this proposal. Nonetheless, this potential for loss of funding deserves mention.

Related the use of the two lecturers, it is important that the courses offered are supervised by Academic Senate Instructors of Record. Another issue was the proposal to change a course currently with a lower division numbering to a graduate level number, with little justification or indication of a change in course content. Has this course change/creation been approved by the appropriate Senate committees? Finally Graduate Council assumes that these classes will undergo the same universal end of the quarter confidential course and instructor evaluations; in this case the Undergraduate Education would be responsible for these and a plan for some Senate oversight of these evaluations should be

UC DAVIS: ACADEMIC SENATE
GRADUATE COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

described, analogous to departmental and the merit/promotion oversight currently in place for Senate Faculty.

The proposal should address what happens if a graduate student fails these classes (391 seems the most important):

- Do they need to repeat them until they pass?
- How often can they be taken?
- Are the classes offered each quarter, so the student can repeat until proficient?
- Is it realistic to believe that a student who comes in with insufficient language skills can become proficient in just one quarter (i.e. 10 weeks)?
- Once they pass 391 or the other classes - do they retake the exam - and what happens if they fail again?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kyaw Tha Paw U". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Kyaw Tha Paw U, Chair
Graduate Council

Planning & Budget

January 24, 2016 11:04 AM

CPB reviewed the Special Academic Program Establishment Request including the additional budget information provided by Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education.

CPB does not support the proposal. The committee unanimously agrees that an academic program should not be housed in an administrative unit. CPB agrees that the ESL program would be better housed in an academic unit such as the University Writing Program, the Department of Linguistics, or even the College of Letters and Science. In addition, CPB has the following specific concerns with the proposal:

Budget

Despite the Vice Provost's update, it is still unclear as to where the 19900 base allocation originates.

In the spreadsheet for the 2014-2015 estimates, the proposed revenues exceed the proposed expenses by about 40K. If there is no short-fall, why is an additional \$31K being requested from the Provost?

Program Name

- The rationale for the program's name in the additional information provided is, in CPB's view, not persuasive. The original proposal continues to use the term "English as a second language" and the acronym ESL when discussing its faculty. CPB does not see the need for an additional layering of names. ESL is the standard name and seems appropriate for this program.
- The phrase "academic English" is misleading and obviously risks confusion with the regular Department of English.

Essentially the proposed name could be perceived as separating oral and written English. CPB notes that UC Irvine and UCLA teach both English and ESL under the same department.

Undergraduate Council

February 12, 2016 1:12 PM

Response continued on next 2 pages.

February 12, 2016

Dear Andre:

At its meeting on Feb. 12, 2016, the UGC discussed the proposal for the Special Academic Program in International and Academic English.

The UGC agrees that there is an urgent need for the oral English Language training that is described in the proposal, and it is needed soon. The UE Training proposed for graduate students in oral communication is extremely important for TAs, and represents not only an academic consideration but also a potential safety issue relative to communication on lab safety issues in the sciences.

The SAP as proposed was explicitly described as a short-term solution to meet campus language training needs. The UGC notes that a better, satisfactory, unified long-term, campus approach to provide this language training is needed. UGC also noted that there are some concerns with the proposal, for example the faculty oversight committee is not established. The UGC expressed concern that the faculty oversight committee be established soon, and that its membership include faculty representatives from appropriate stakeholder departments (particularly the sciences). The UGC was also concerned that the funding necessary to support the SAP be committed to support it as it progresses. In addition, UGC was concerned about the relatively small staff proposed to deliver the SAP program, and noted that there must be adequate structure and personnel for the continuity of the SAP program if personnel do change.

In summary, with some reservations, the UGC supports the implementation of the SAP for a period of two years, at which time the SAP should sunset. During those two years, UGC expects the appropriate campus entities (e.g., UE, UWP, OGS, and Deans) to work together to realize a long-term, unified solution for the campus that will guarantee appropriate language instruction for our increasing numbers of ESL students. Perhaps the approaches used at other UC campuses can provide a model that could be implemented on the Davis campus.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the UGC.

Sincerely,

Edward P. Caswell-Chen
Chair, UGC