

To: Joe Kiskis, Chair of the Undergraduate Council
From: Committee on Courses of Instruction
Regarding: Proposed Undergraduate Writing Program
Date: 4 May 2004

The Committee on Courses of Instruction enthusiastically supports the creation of an Undergraduate Writing Program (UWP). We agree that writing is an essential part of a college education and that UC Davis should do a better job teaching writing. We also agree that the responsibility to teach writing should be shared by the entire campus rather than by one department.

The first goal of the program should be improving student writing rather than *'enhancing the academic reputation of the University by adding a research component to the Writing Program'*. Given the title of this proposal and its underlying motivation, enhancing academic reputation must be secondary to teaching students. We are concerned that energy and resources will be wasted on promoting the program rather than on teaching students to write. We understand that a research component may substantially enhance and complement the teaching component, but we would hope that the research component could excel without misplaced emphasis on such superficial assessments as the university's 'academic reputation', 'national prominence', or 'national recognition'.

The Committee on Courses of Instruction likes the idea that new FTE will be devoted to teaching writing and that this FTE will be housed in departments and colleges across the campus. But for the FTE to remain loyal to the ideal of teaching writing, the departments housing the FTE and other committees who review personnel actions must support that ideal. If personnel actions do not support the goals of the UWP, the program will fail. We recognize that the research component should help with personnel actions. Personnel actions might

also remain sympathetic to the goals of UWP if some or all of the new FTE were fully housed in UWP.

The proposal suggests *'That four Senate faculty FTE be allocated for UWP, who may have joint appointments in other departments and colleges. These joint appointments could be in Education, Engineering, Biological Sciences, and/or Letters and Science.'* We strongly suggest that the *College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences* be added to this list.

Finally, the Committee on Courses of Instruction thanks the Undergraduate Council for proposing and developing the Undergraduate Writing Program.