

Trimble
April 2, 1985

Highlights of Remarks Made by Dean King
(April 1, 1985)

I want a junior-level comp course (346K) and a sophomore-level comp/lit course (316K). And I don't want a 306 taught here except in summer session.

E.306 is not, in my view, a university-level course. It's not quite a remedial course, but it almost is. Look, probably the top half of our entering freshmen exempt out. And roughly 50% of UT's students don't graduate from UT. So what these stats apparently mean is that we're teaching 306 to people who don't graduate from UT. I believe in literacy, but we can't afford to save the whole world, John.

There's a parallel to this in Math. Not long ago, the Math Dept had an intolerable burden teaching algebra (M301) to freshmen, so one day they simply said they wouldn't offer it here except during the summer. This policy forced students to explore other options--they could elect to take it before leaving high school, or at ACC, or even in night classes at UT where it would be taught not by regular faculty but by ACC faculty and other part-time teachers. This proved a creative solution to the problem. Moving it to the summer sessions sort of got it out of the way. And everybody understands that the summer sessions aren't really the same as the regular sessions. I mean, that's when our provisional students come in, right?

In my letter [of 11/15/84] to Fonken I said that the fundamental problem is enrollment, and everything else is secondary. I pointed out that UT teaches more required comp courses than any other comparable institution in the whole country--306, 316K, 346K, plus two SWC courses. The norm elsewhere is one course, not the three that the English Department is saddled with. I also proposed a Division of Composition, which would (1) have responsibility for 306 and 346K, (2) serve as a resource for College support of the SWC courses, (3) assume other responsibilities as they might accrue, and (4) hire Lecturers, who could be judged there according to their unique contribution rather than by the standards of the English Dept's tenured faculty. But I'm afraid it's too late to set up a Division of Composition. It's expensive--there's considerable administrative overhead, what with summer salaries for directors, release time, and that sort of thing. Where were you guys when I needed you last fall? All of you resisted the idea of splitting up the department. All of you said, "Oh, no, we can't do that."

I'll tell you what my bottom line is: I'm unwilling to return to a situation in the Department of English in which we have to rely on more than 15 lecturers. We have to get a control on our enrollment; we have to devise ways to cut down on the bodies in the English Department. And we have to do something about 306. Most people who take it don't graduate from UT, and it's not a university-level course. I also want to see some decentralization that will cut down on the burden of the English Dept and the sheer size of the department. I want to see a policy of exemptions for 346K--a large set of exemptions. It's important to shift our attention to 346K, which can be a splendid, truly useful course. I'd prefer leaving 306 to ACC and other

places. As for technical writing, it doesn't have to be taught in the English Dept. I'd prefer to see it taught where the students need it--in Engineering, Home Economics, Nursing, etc. The lecturers could be re-employed over in those places--could be spread out, in other words--so the English Department wouldn't be so massive and wouldn't be stuck with the Lecturer Problem it now buckles under.

"We can't hire 30 lecturers?" No. I'd prefer not to have any lecturers except the 5 super lecturers who are already in the budget and who are doing a fine job, from what I understand.

"Can 310 and 317 be reinstated if 346K isn't?" Yes, if it's part of the whole package. I like 310; I always have. It was a damned good course.

"Do the various deans want 346K?" Yes.

"Can those of us in Comp/Rhetoric get access to Institutional Studies information on enrollment figures and transfer students?" Sure. Here's a piece of my stationary, and here's my signature on the bottom. [He signs it.] Write the letter you need.

"What's the difference between a 'program' [of writing] and a 'division' [of composition]?" None, really, but "division" sounded more important to me, more substantial. I never really wanted a Division of Composition, you understand, because it would just about double my workload. That division would be reporting directly to me, for God's sake, so I'd inevitably be involved in hundreds of decisions, and everybody would always be trooping over to my office to put in his two cents. What I'm looking for is a comprehensive solution that may involve a Division of Composition or may not. If you folks don't come up with a workable plan soon, I'm going to have to devise it myself this summer. I really want your help.

"We have a Comp/Rhetoric meeting scheduled for this Thursday at 3:00 p.m. Would you will be willing to come by and bat ideas around with us?" Yes, sure--but only if the entire group invited me.