

FEPC members

Richard Hart

2/20/79

Here are the agenda, the minutes of Feb. 14, and a revision of item 5 of the Jan. 24 minutes. I've left this last in rough form to show the changes in process and to avoid perhaps a third typing job. If you have any objections to item 5 as it now stands, please let me know before the meeting.

To: FEPC members

From: Richard Hart

Date: 2/20/79

The FEPC will meet as scheduled tomorrow in Parlin 214. The agenda will include the following items:

- (1) report on memo to Dean King
- (2) discussion of Cameron report on lab course
- (3) report on "Checkers Speech"
- (4) 306 syllabus

Minutes, Freshman English Policy Committee

February 14, 1979

Parlin 214

Members present: Kinneavy, Trimble, Ruszkiewicz, Witte, Newcomb,  
Cameron, Creel, Byars, Hart

Agenda:

Approval of minutes

Report on meeting with Hershey

Discussion of implications for Freshman English of Dean King's  
remarks

Report on relations with Athletic Department

Stroud request to purchase "Checkers Speech" film

Discussion of Cameron report on lab course

1. Because Dr. Kinneavy was attempting to get Dr. Abrahams and Dr. Moldenhauer to attend, the meeting began late and the agenda order was abandoned. The second and third agenda items blended into a single discussion. Near the end of the meeting, the minutes of January 24 were submitted for approval, but no action was taken on them. The committee also deferred discussion of the Cameron report until the February 21 meeting.

2. Dr. Kinneavy reported that the admissions process is running faster this year and that Dr. Hershey agreed to supply us with weekly updates on current figures. Although Dr. Hershey still cannot give us firm estimates of fall enrollment, he guesses conservatively that 500 more freshmen will attend in Fall 1979 than in Fall 1978--an increase of 1000 in the last two years. This guess is based on the following data:

2747 more freshmen have applied now than at this time  
last year (7851 vs. 5104)

1539 more freshmen have been admitted than at this time  
last year (4139 vs. 2600)

5450 freshmen enrolled last fall  
out-of-state applications have increased.

Dr. Kinneavy went on to say that he and Dr. Trimble had discussed with Dr. Hershey three options for limiting freshman enrollment: proposing higher entrance standards, proposing an earlier application deadline, and asking President Rogers to invoke the so-called 5500 quota.

The current admissions standards for in-state students are as follows:

- (1) standing in top 10% of high-school class +  
no SAT score

- (2) standing in top 50% of high-school class + SAT 800 total
- (3) standing in top 75% of high-school class + SAT 1000 total
- (4) provisional admission (which gets us approximately 350 students each summer and 50 each spring).

Out-of-state students must have graduated in the top half of their high-school class and have scored at least 1000 on the SAT. Dr. Hershey would like to see provisional admission (which was instituted in response to a write-in campaign by parents in the Richardson school district) abolished and the second and third standards collapsed into a single one: standing in the top 50% of the high-school class + SAT 900 total. Since most of our minority students score over 900 on the SAT and nearly all graduate in the top half, this change would not hurt minority enrollment, according to Dr. Hershey, although a rise to SAT 1000 would. A change in admissions requirements would probably take a year to make its way through the University Council, the general faculty, the UT System, and the regents (and maybe even the coordinating board). When approved, it would have to be submitted a year in advance for inclusion in the catalogue.

An application deadline earlier than the current July 1 would tend to limit enrollment, would bring UT policy into closer alignment with most other schools, and would allow us extra time to staff fall courses since Hershey can provide reliable estimates only after all acceptances have been granted. A deadline change would probably require approval at the system level, at least, and would also take much time to implement.

Thus the only option for meeting the crisis this fall is to ask the president to invoke the 5500 quota, a power granted several years ago by the regents. President Rogers is on record as having said that this power was limited to the year in which it was granted, but the General Information Bulletin states, "When there are more qualified applicants than can be adequately instructed by the available faculty or accommodated in the available facilities, the University may control enrollment in specific programs by limiting the admission of new students" (p. 36). Dr. Kinneavy concluded his report by saying that the math department faces a staffing crisis similar to ours and that Dr. Abrahams will ask Dean King to call a dean's meeting to advise Dr. Rogers that she should invoke the 5500 quota.

Dr. Witte asked whether we might simply have some freshmen postpone taking 306, but Dr. Kinneavy replied that when another

institution tried this strategy it soon ran up a 10,000-student backlog. Mr. Creel added that one of his students had told him that for similar reasons freshman English at Montana State has become a course primarily for juniors and seniors. Dr. Witte then remarked on the irony of Dean King's wanting English professors to teach more freshmen at a time when we will be understaffed. Dr. Kinneavy responded that Dean King is not fully informed about our problems but that he will listen to us if we stress their urgency. Especially since Dr. Hershey cannot accurately predict enrollment, Dr. Kinneavy continued, we need to have on record a formal notice to the dean.

Mr. Cameron inquired whether the FEPC might unilaterally limit enrollment in freshman English, but Dr. Kinneavy said that only the president has this prerogative. Dr. Witte wondered whether the math department has to scrape the Drag for instructors, and Dr. Kinneavy said yes. Dr. Trimble then asked whether the president might be more willing to act if we told her that we cannot find quality staff to teach more freshmen than we now have. Ms. Byars asked whether our supply of temporary staff is exhausted, and Dr. Kinneavy replied that it is.

Can we not use the 5500 quota as a merely temporary limit, Ms. Byars then asked. Yes, Dr. Kinneavy responded; we should use higher standards and an earlier deadline to control the size of the freshman class in the long run, saving the quota for use as a fail-safe device. But, Dr. Witte remarked, if Dr. Hershey's enrollment predictions are not reliable, perhaps we should look askance at his predictions about the impact new admissions standards would have on minority students. This comment brought sighs of agreement from several members and an observation from Dr. Trimble about the irony of our having been alerted to a possible registration increase earlier this year than last but still having to guess about actual figures until after July 1.

In view of the poor quality of instruction given by last-minute hirees, Dr. Trimble continued, we must go on record as saying that we will not make eleventh-hour appointments again. Dean King, he added, ought to know about our situation to help him add urgency to his letter to the president. Dr. Kinneavy agreed that Dean King should get a memo from us, and Mr. Hart suggested that Dr. Kinneavy and Dr. Trimble would be the logical authors. Following two more sighs, Dr. Kinneavy asked what issues the committee would like included in the memo.

He began the list himself by mentioning inadequate staff. Dr. Newcomb said that remedial students should also be mentioned. Dr. Witte thought the Dean should know that we are forced to run a seat-of-the-pants operation and to sacrifice continuity in our

program, and Dr. Ruskiewicz added that having to hire temporary staff changes the nature of the department--suggestions which prompted Ms. Byars to observe that AI's bring more continuity to our program than many one-year instructors. Dr. Witte said further that hiring temporary people to teach four composition courses severely reduces their effectiveness and that this practice is unfair to the students, the program, the department, and the university, as well as to the teachers themselves. Dr. Newcomb mentioned that our points could be set in the framework of Dean King's remarks at the departmental meeting of February 13. Dr. Kinneavy added that we should insist on an early response to give us recruiting time.

A brief discussion of recruitment procedures followed when Dr. Ruskiewicz pointed out that we could not yet advertise three-year appointments (since they haven't been approved) and asked whether we could recruit for the fall at the CCCC convention. Dr. Kinneavy said that it's too late to recruit at Four C's, and advised that we would have to forego interviews and rely instead on paper criteria.

Dr. Kinneavy then turned attention back to the memo to Dean King by saying that we shouldn't clutter it with issues but should instead focus on the enrollment problem. Dr. Kinneavy asked for Dr. Newcomb's opinion, and he said that we could have a two-part letter (information on enrollment plus a section on related issues) or a letter which sticks to the central issue but offers to supply supporting information. We could even invite the dean to an FEPC meeting, Dr. Kinneavy said, and Dr. Witte added that this might be a good idea, especially since the departmental meeting had not provided a forum for specific discussion with the dean. Dr. Ruskiewicz extended this point, saying that the enrollment problem relates directly to issues raised at the departmental meeting. Dr. Kinneavy agreed, and Dr. Witte formally moved that Dr. Kinneavy and Dr. Trimble compose the memo the committee had described. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Dr. Kinneavy then asked what committee members thought of the Texan story about our efforts to investigate outside interference. One of our secretaries, he said, had thought that one of the athletic sources had not spoken forthrightly. Although public airing of the issue is regrettable, he added, it might have an unexpected benefit: we're likely to have fewer problems, at least with the athletic program.

Dr. Kinneavy then said that Mr. Royal had recommended that we talk to Donna Lopiano about the women's tennis schedule but that

he didn't want to do so because Royal is the director of men's athletics only. Like Royal, Ms. Lopiano reports directly to the president. Dr. Ruskiewicz asked whether the memo had drawn any responses, and Dr. Kinneavy replied that three or four instructors had come by to talk but that no written responses had been received. Mr. Cameron volunteered that in his experience failure notices usually bring recalcitrant student athletes into line.

4. Dr. Newcomb agreed to research the availability of video-tape versions of the "Checkers Speech" to see whether we might do better to purchase one of these rather than a film. Ms. Byars asked whether the department owns video-tape decks, and Dr. Newcomb replied that bids are out for some. One problem with video tapes, he added, is that they wear out more quickly than films.

5. Dr. Trimble pointed out that the time had come to begin the textbook selection process and asked whether the committee would recommend sending out a questionnaire to get staff reaction to this year's texts. Dr. Witte thought that this would be a good idea and that we should also inquire about possible replacements. Mr. Cameron agreed but said that he'd like to see the questionnaire worded so as not to encourage complaints and recommendations for substitutions.

complete the experiment for various reasons.

Mr. Cameron mentioned that a corner of the lab has now been sectioned off to be used by people working on the project. His remark prompted Dr. Kinneavy to say that Dr. Wittig has suggested replacing her at the associate professor level in the freshman writing program. The EC will approve the replacement, Dr. Kinneavy added, and he asked the committee to reflect on possible appointments.

4. Dr. Kinneavy called for a report on the Grading Criteria statement, and Dr. Witte asked Dr. Trimble to oblige. Dr. Trimble said that there was little to report: being merely a consultant on the project, he could not perform his duties before receiving a new draft from Dr. Witte. Dr. Witte in turn explained that he had not hurried to produce a draft because Dr. Kinneavy had advised him that the matter was not a pressing one.

At this point a feeling of responsibility crept over Mr. Hart, who promptly confessed that he had caused a misunderstanding by notifying both professors one day the previous week when all copies of the old statement had seemed to have disappeared from the Freshman English Office. Later that day the copies had been located just as Dr. Witte had walked up to, and Dr. Kinneavy had walked out of, Parlin 16. Mr. Hart had hurried into the hall from Parlin 14, announcing the discovery, whereupon Dr. Kinneavy had observed to Dr. Witte that there was no rush to write a new statement. Unfortunately, Mr. Hart had not talked to Dr. Trimble until several days after this meeting in the hall, by which time the momentary grading criteria crisis had receded in his memory.

Undisturbed by this unusual report, the committee acted with its customary wisdom. It determined that the copies of the old statement would last through the summer and that, indeed, Drs. Witte and Trimble need not hurry to compose a new one.

5. Next, Dr. Kinneavy began a long discussion of relations between the athletic program and the freshman English program. A student on the women's tennis team, ~~Ms. Ruman~~, had come to his office with a spring tournament schedule which she figured would require her to miss thirteen of her thirty English classes. She and her instructor had agreed that her studies would suffer, but <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ academic advisor for women athletes, ~~Sheila Rice~~, had told her that she must follow the schedule and that anyhow only ten classes would be involved. Dr. Kinneavy had advised the student to drop but she had not wanted to do so.



no ↑

*the student*

← He had solved this particular problem by switching ~~Mr. Ruman~~ into ~~Mary Jean Cross's~~ <sup>an</sup> tutorial section, Dr. Kinneavy said; but, he added, policy issues remain. We have had trouble with the men's athletic program, he continued, <sup>for some time now, and apparently the women's</sup> ever since Darrell Royal turned the program's academic advising duties over to Joe Evans, <sup>athletic program is</sup> an ambiguous, vague, and sometimes blatantly deceitful man. <sup>Now,</sup> it seems, Dr. Rice is imitating Mr. Evans. <sup>starting to imitate the men's.</sup>

Dr. Witte suggested that we remind the athletic department that this is an institution of higher learning and that students should attend classes--unless UT has a policy like Oklahoma State's that approves absences for university-sanctioned events. Dr. Kinneavy said that such a policy, which would interfere with academic freedom, does not exist at UT.

<sup>an athletic advisor</sup> Mr. Hart then described a further problem. During drop/add week, <sup>an English Department</sup> Dr. Rice had phoned <sup>the Freshman English Office</sup> ~~Sheria Wallace~~ to find ~~freshman English~~ sections for women athletes. After receiving a list of times and instructors for all open sections and an explanation of why her students could not be added to closed sections, <sup>the advisor</sup> Dr. Rice had vowed that she would not think of asking instructors to add athletes to closed sections. The next day, however, <sup>a freshman English instructor</sup> David Hansard had come to the FEO with a letter from <sup>the advisor</sup> Dr. Rice indirectly asking him to add <sup>an athlete</sup> a swimmer to his closed section.

Next Mr. Creel related his experience with student athletes. He has taught seven football players, he said, all of whom always came to class regularly and called him "Sir." Three years ago, however, he taught ~~Kevin Curran~~, a top seeded tennis player, who asked permission to miss some classes. Mr. Creel agreed, and when <sup>the student</sup> ~~Mr. Curran~~ was to miss class on days papers were due, he submitted his work early. Although <sup>the student</sup> ~~Mr. Curran~~ made a few 0's on in-class work and thus received a C in the course rather than a B, Mr. Creel said that their arrangement had worked satisfactorily. Since an instructor's right to set classroom policy involves academic freedom, he continued, we should let individual instructors resolve absence problems with their student athletes unless we decide to establish a program-wide policy. Our chief concern, he added, should be with athletic department attempts to pack sections of freshman English.

Dr. Kinneavy spoke again now to describe how athletes' absences and athletic department pressure on instructors can merge into a single problem. <sup>When</sup> ~~When Ron Baxter~~, a basketball player,

missed the last three-fourths of his E306 classes in the fall of 1977, ~~Joe Evans~~ <sup>an athletic advisor</sup> pleaded for an arrangement with ~~Mr. Baxter~~ <sup>the student</sup> TA, who came to Dr. Kinneavy for advice. Dr. Kinneavy recommended giving the student an F, but when the instructor talked to ~~Mr. Evans~~ <sup>the advisor</sup> again, he threatened to interfere at the dean's level. Subsequently, the instructor agreed to let ~~Mr. Baxter~~ <sup>the student</sup> complete his work under supervision during the holiday, and ~~Mr. Evans~~ <sup>the advisor</sup> agreed to keep ~~Mr. Baxter~~ <sup>the student</sup> in town throughout the break. ~~Mr. Baxter~~ <sup>the student</sup> completed his work and received a D in the course, but he took a trip to New York with the basketball team during the holiday.

The following spring ~~Mr. Baxter~~ <sup>the same student</sup> came to his English class for a few weeks and then again quit attending. His new instructor came to Dr. Kinneavy, who ~~advised~~ <sup>recommended</sup> dropping the student with an F if he missed any more classes. Meanwhile, ~~Mr. Evans~~ <sup>the advisor</sup> invited Dr. Kinneavy to join the players on the bench during a basketball game, an invitation Dr. Kinneavy declined. ~~Mr. Baxter~~ <sup>the student</sup> did no work this semester but passed English again.

At this point Dr. Trimble recalled that Dr. Ayers is a member of the Athletic Council and suggested that we explain our problems to him. Dr. Ruszkiewicz proposed that we also notify AI's and remind them that they have no obligation to grant extensions though they may do so if they like.

Mr. Cameron then related the lab's experience with athletes. Last semester, he said, although forty of them took the lab course, ~~Mr. Evans~~ <sup>the athletic department</sup> applied no pressure, perhaps because the lab's flexible arrangement of hours did not make it necessary for him to do so. One student who fell behind in his work but could not drop below twelve hours was advised to stay in the course for an F and did so. Dr. Kinneavy added that the lab had been fortunate that semester: <sup>the previous year</sup> ~~the previous year~~ <sup>in the lab course had obtained</sup> ~~athletic tutors in the lab had~~ <sup>supplied</sup> ~~supplied~~ <sup>some of the</sup> ~~athletes with answers to tests.~~

Discussion now began to focus solely on solutions. Dr. Trimble asked whether the University Council might help, but Dr. Kinneavy replied that he thought not, <sup>since</sup> ~~at least not as long as~~ the Athletic Council membership includes J. Neils Thompson, who has a history of ignoring UC advice. Dr. Witte suggested that in order to determine the extent of our problem we institute a policy calling for AI's approached by the athletic department to report to the FEO. Ms. Byars supported this suggestion, saying that instructors would probably comply gladly since they dislike pressure. Dr. Witte said further that the athletic department has no business contacting graduate students, who may be more vulnerable to pressure than professors are.

Dr. Ruszkiewicz added that the problem here resembles the one with plagiarism: AI's are uncertain where they stand.

*leave*  
Mr. Creel proposed that we send a memorandum to instructors indicating that we are investigating <sup>outside</sup> athletic department pressure *leave* on our staff and are asking for their cooperation in building a file. Ms. Byars suggested that we enlarge the investigation to include any outside pressure whatsoever; and Mr. Creel asked whether many instructors would find an attempt to pressure in a letter such as the one <sup>indirectly asking an instructor to add athletes beyond the 25-student limit</sup> from Dr. Rice to Mr. Hansard. Ms. Byars and Dr. Ruszkiewicz both said that with <sup>an</sup> its official letterhead, <sup>such a</sup> the Rice letter <sup>would</sup> seem ~~ed~~ intimidating. Dr. Trimble, however, pointed out that we were conjecturing about motives and asked whether Dr. Kinneavy had talked to <sup>the athletic advisor</sup> Dr. Rice about the letter. He had not, but several members rushed to say that given a context of athletic department subterfuge and harassment, <sup>the</sup> Dr. Rice's motives *behind the* were discernible. *letter* <sup>(as qualified by Ms. Byars' suggestion)</sup>

Mr. Creel restated his proposal as a motion, and the committee busied itself with the precise wording. Mr. Hart, though, suggested that the committee was phrasing the resulting memo rather than the motion itself and asked that the discussion end. The committee agreed, Dr. Witte seconded the Creel motion, and it carried unanimously.