

To: FEPC members

From: Richard Hart

Date: November 12, 1978

The FEPC will meet Monday, November 13 in Parlin 8C to consider the following items on the agenda:

1. Approval of minutes

2. Information from Sterling Swift on what publishing the 306 syllabus for students would involve

3. 398T

4. Grading criteria statement

5. Spring semester textbooks

Minutes, Freshman English Policy Committee

November 6, 1978

Parlin 8C

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

Agenda:

- Approval of minutes
- Report from 398T Subcommittee
- Burns request

1. Minutes of October 30 were corrected and approved.
2. After briefly summarizing the deliberations of the 398T Subcommittee, Dr. Kinneavy read a prospective memo and questionnaire which the subcommittee had drafted to elicit responses from current and former 398T instructors and students. (Copies of the original memo and a revised draft the committee produced later are attached. Dr. Newcomb will circulate copies of the questions before the next meeting.)

The solutions offered in the memo provoked immediate discussion. Dr. Newcomb asked whether TA's would have to take 383L before they began teaching, and Dr. Kinneavy replied that, yes, they would need 383L or perhaps 381L, 393L, or 393M before they started to teach and a 306-398T during their first semester in the classroom. Ms. Byars pointed out that we would need to inform the graduate advisors of this policy so that they would not continue to discourage non-teachers from taking pedagogical courses.

Dr. Kinneavy mentioned that the proposed policy might be somewhat inequitable since it would require two pedagogical courses for TA's but only one for AI's. Ms. Allaire, who had come to the meeting to offer advice on the 398T problem, said that limiting TA's to one course, a 306-398T prior to teaching, would not be a good idea since 398T is nearly worthless to students unless they take it while teaching. Mr. Hart looked up long enough to speculate that since 383L would perform the same credentialling function for TA's that prior experience does for AI's, we would be making, in effect, two similar requirements for both groups.

Interest then shifted to legal matters when Mr. Creel asked whether the proposed policy would meet the legislative requirements for instructors of record. Dr. Kinneavy answered that it would, especially since TA's are also interning now. Dr. Trimble said that given both the Handbook regulation--permitting us to require only one 398T for inexperienced teachers, none for experienced ones--and the Graduate School's interpretation of it, our policy would seem virtually to defy regulations. Ms. Byars responded that we need to negotiate these matters because the rhetorical basis of our 306 course might be jeopardized if we can't require our instructors to take 398T. Dr. Kinneavy said that according to his understanding of Dr. Underwood's discussion with Dr. Lieb this summer, we could never

require two pedagogical courses for AI's but that Dr. Lieb would probably approve our requiring one such course as a hiring regulation. Pressing further, Dr. Trimble said that if Dr. Underwood had raised the question with Dr. Lieb, it would seem that the Dean had understood our intentions and had disapproved. Dr. Kinneavy observed that Dr. Lieb might not have full authority to disapprove of our requirements: they are a matter of undergraduate teaching, and since he is the Graduate Dean, they become his concern only if we make them requirements of our graduate program.

Dr. Trimble asked whether we should proceed by determining departmental needs, formulating reasonable policy to satisfy them, and then taking it to Dr. Lieb. Dr. Kinneavy said that this would be a wise course to follow and that our memo and questionnaire would constitute the first step in doing so. He further advised that we maintain our plans for the spring semester and not require TA's to take another 398T. Dr. Trimble asked what effect this would have on Dr. Lindemann's spring course assignment, and Dr. Kinneavy replied that she would teach 383L instead of 307-398T but that the content of her course would not change.

Next, the committee carefully revised the "solutions" section of the memo Dr. Kinneavy had read at the first of the meeting, though unfortunately no students were present to benefit immediately. While considering the memo's wording, various members brought up several noteworthy points. Dr. Kinneavy said that we should decide on an individual basis whether an AI's prior teaching experience is adequate for our purposes since, for example, someone who had taught only in elementary schools would probably be ill prepared to teach E306. Ms. Byars suggested that we also not exempt AI's from 398T unless one of their prior pedagogical courses closely resembles that course. Dr. Trimble asked whether high-school English teachers would likely have a solid grounding in rhetoric, and Dr. Kinneavy answered that they probably would, especially if they had taken a course like our 360M.

Mr. Cameron inquired about what would become of 307-398T, and Dr. Witte asked about 308-398T. Their functions would fall to 383L, Dr. Kinneavy replied. Dr. Trimble wondered why we need offer a 306-398T in the spring, and Dr. Kinneavy said that TA's who become AI's in the spring must have it then. Dr. Ruszkiewicz asked if 398T would now refer only to 306-398T, and Dr. Kinneavy agreed that it would. Ms. Byars questioned whether it would be advisable to have one large spring section of 383L. Responding negatively and with a nod of agreement from Dr. Trimble, Ms. Allaire said that students in such courses need to develop closer ties with one another than a large section would permit. Ms. Byars then reminded the committee that we should reserve a place with the GPC for a spring 398T. As the discussion neared an end, Dr. Trimble and Ms. Byars said that they would like to see our questionnaire include an inquiry about mixing

TA's and AI's in the pedagogical courses, and Dr. Newcomb agreed to add one. Finally, Dr. Witte offered a motion, seconded by Ms. Byars, that the FEPC support a change of E398T (307 and 308) to E383L. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion of the Burns request began with Dr. Witte observing that in places the supporting documents Mr. Burns had sent us raise the same questions we did about the project. Dr. Newcomb reminded us that the computer variable, which Mr. Burns does not plan to test, is logically prior to his examination of the heuristic models. Dr. Witte added that without a control for the computer variable, the dissertation will be useless to us.

Mr. Creel said that although in questioning Mr. Burns's aims we are doing what we should, we are nonetheless interfering with his dissertation committee. We need to protect our program, though, Ms. Byars said. Dr. Newcomb agreed but pointed out that our concern with the project's usefulness may miss the mark in this regard and that we have at least ascertained that the experiment will not harm our program. Dr. Kinneavy concurred and added that we might even be able to use Mr. Burns's computer programs. Dr. Newcomb responded that we might not want to use them without their effectiveness having been proven.

Dr. Newcomb then moved that we approve the Burns request as is, and Dr. Witte seconded. Dr. Trimble, prompted by a characteristic spasm of kindness, expressed reservations about withdrawing our advice. Dr. Kinneavy jovially reflected that the Burns project is already a much finer experiment than some the committee has approved in the past. Still smiling, the members were polled, and the motion won unanimous approval.

The problem

For several reasons it seems desirable to reconsider the present structure of the 398T courses. The university requirement (Handbook of Operating Procedures) is that all TA/AI's take one teacher training course. The Graduate School's interpretation of this requirement is that TA/AI's are considered to have met this requirement by previous teaching or by any teacher training course in any area. The application of this interpretation in effect exempts all AI's from any E398T whatsoever. By contrast the Department of English customarily required two E398T courses of all entering TA/AI's. Several years ago TA's were only given 3 hours credit for these 2 courses; now they are given 6 hours credit but can only count 1 of the courses towards any degree program. In addition the distinction between TA's (who do not handle a class autonomously) and AI's (who do) has created another dimension of the problem. Finally, it is apparent that three E398T sections a semester is a drain on our graduate offerings.

The solution

In an attempt to resolve the several aspects of the problem outlined above, a subcommittee of the Freshman English Policy Committee is considering the following solutions:

- 1) Requiring only one E398T of entering AI's - the E398T for E306. This would be a departmental hiring regulation. The only people who would be exempt from this would be people who have taught a solid rhetorically based composition course for several years or who have taken a graduate equivalent to our E398T.
- 2) Changing the E398T's for E307 and E308 into voluntary E383L courses. Thus the annual offering might be as follows: First Semester: E398T(306), E383L; Second Semester: E383L (for teaching literature and composition as preparation for E307, 308, 314K), as needed; and a 398T(306), when it is needed. Students will be able to count the E383L towards both an M.A. and a Ph. D.