

DOCUMENTS AND MINUTES OF THE GENERAL FACULTY
AND
DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Minutes of the University Council meeting of May 16, 1977, published below, have been prepared for the immediate use of the members of the University Council and are included in its Documents and Proceedings. They are also included in the Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty for the information of the members.

Bill D. Francis
Bill D. Francis, Secretary
The General Faculty

MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MAY 16, 1977

The ninth regular meeting of the University Council for the academic year 1976-77 was held in Main Building 212 on May 16, 1977 at 2:15 p.m. with President Rogers presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Barbara Aldave, Harold Billings, John Bordie, Harold Box, John Breen, Billye Brown, Robert Brooks, Ronald Brown, Patricia Cain, Vincente Cantarino, Heather Carter, C. T. Clark, Lyle Clark, James Daniel, James Duncan, John Durbin, Donald Foss, Bill Francis, Alan Friedman, Daniel Patrick (vice Peter Garvie), David Gavenda, Austin Gleeson, Earnest Gloyna, Philip Gough, R. L. Hardgrave, Thomas Hatfield, David Hershey, Clark Hubbs, James Hurst, Ira Iscoe, Robert Jeffrey, Paul Kelley, Robert King, George Kosmetsky, Irwin Lieb, William Livingston, Neill Megaw, Jack Otis, Fred Raschke, Bonnie Rickelman, Eugene Ripperger, Lorene Rogers, Elspeth Rostow, F. deWette (vice A. R. Schrank), James Sledd, C. G. Sparks, Waneen Spirduso, William Stott, Eldon Sutton, David Warner, Glenn Welsch, Stanley Werbow, Carter Wheelock, Leslie Willson, Baxter Womack, Lee Worrell, Ron Wyllys, Orville Wyss

Absent: Victor Baker, Rebecca Baltzer, L. Joe Berry (excused), Sinclair Black, George Blanco, Michel Breger, Jack Brokaw (excused), Barbara Chance, James Colvin, James Dailey, James Doluisio (excused), Michael Domjan, William Duesterhoeft, Thomas Edgar, Sue Gibson, William Glade (excused), David Harrison, William Hays, Kathy Johnson, Lorrin Kennamer (excused), Mark Luzzato, Kenneth Prescott (excused), Sandra Rosenbloom, Ernest Smith, Judy Spalding, Ralph White (excused), Martha Williams, Susan Wittig

Total members present: 58; total members absent: 27.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (D&P 6796-6809)

Rogers: The meeting will please come to order. This is a very elegant room but we are not very happy with the kinds of arrangements that we are able to get in here. If any of you have any better ideas, we would appreciate them.

The first item is the approval of the Minutes. The Minutes of April 18th were distributed to you. Are there any additions or corrections to those Minutes? If not, they will stand approved as distributed.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Rogers: Next is the Secretary's Report. His report has been circulated. Is there any discussion of the Secretary's Report.

Worrell: (Pharmacy) About middle way down on page 6881 under "Legislation Completed Since the Last Report," it says, Changes in Pass/Fail Grading System returned to the Educational Policy Committee for revision. Now, this has been listed as having been in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for the past several months after having been approved by the Council. I was curious as to what the status of that is now.

Rogers: I do not know the answer to that. Steve (Monti), can you give him an answer, please?

Monti: On the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, that was sent back to the Educational Policy Committee without his approval but with suggestions for reconsiderations which they might examine and return it to the Council.

Rogers: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Durbin

Durbin: I have a brief question about polygraphs. I do not know if this should come now or in "Questions to the President."

Rogers: I guess in "Questions to the President." If no one else has anything to say about the Minutes or the Secretary's Report, that is the next item.

QUESTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT

Durbin: Then I have two questions. One about the polygraph and one about grade inflation. The first will be short. There is a lot one could say about polygraphs and the way it has been handled from the time that the business was adopted in Dallas several years ago but I will not take all that up. I feel I must ask, though, Did the System say why it took them two years to decide this when it was the exclusive business of this campus? It seems like that decision could have been made quickly.

Rogers: I can ask the System. I am not at all certain that you will get an answer.

Durbin: Then I will go on to grade inflation. I heard some talk a year or two ago, I think some figures were distributed, but I am not sure of the details on grade inflation. I wondered if there is anything being done about it, if the administration has any ideas about it or if it is something we will just ignore.

Rogers: It is something that the administration has some concern about. We have discussed this in the Deans Council meetings on several occasions. We do not have any real program to deal with this as a University, although some of the colleges and several of the departments within the colleges do have such programs. With academic freedom being what it is, this almost has to come from the faculty. We can give leadership and express concern, but what is done about it has to be a faculty decision. Does anyone else have a comment to make on this? I know in the College of Business, for example, they have been working very hard to control grade inflation by rolling the grading back to what it was about ten years ago.

King: (Social and Behavioral Sciences) I think you are right that

it is fundamentally a faculty responsibility, but I have noticed that some universities, Berkeley for example, are adopting a sort of structural mechanism that works against that, such as not giving only a grade on a transcript but listing the number of people who took the course as well as the average grade that was given in the course. It sounds rather complicated, but it is not in practice. I think that would work almost automatically against grade inflation.

Rogers: It is a good idea even if complicated. Dr. Durbin, do you have any ideas about what should be done?

Durbin: Not that I would want to express now without preparing a little more on it.

Rogers: Thank you. Are there other questions?

REPORTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY, FACULTY SENATE, SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES AND COMMITTEES

Rogers: If not, the next item is Reports of the General Faculty, Faculty Senate, Schools and Colleges, and Committees.

1. The first is a Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Change in the Plan I, B.A., Lower-Division English Requirement. This was on the agenda for the General Faculty meeting. The General Faculty meeting was so poorly attended that there was not a quorum. According to our Rules this automatically refers back to the University Council. Dr. Hairston is here today to make the presentation.

Hairston: Thank you. On February 6, 1973, the General Faculty approved a change in the English requirement for the Plan I, B. A. degree, from two courses in freshman composition and two courses at the sophomore level to two courses in freshman composition and one course at the sophomore level. It also approved two options for the second semester freshman composition course; one to be a course in composition and literature and one to be a course in composition logic and rhetoric. The legislation providing for this change called for a review of the change in the requirements by a committee of the General Faculty at the end of three years after the change went into effect, and a report of that review to a regularly scheduled meeting of the General Faculty.

On December 1, 1976, President Rogers asked the persons whose names appear at the end of the report to serve on such an ad hoc committee to make this review. Those people were myself as chairman, Professor Robert Little of Physics, Professor Howard Miller of History, Professor Edmund Pincoffs of Philosophy, and Professor James Hitt of General and Comparative Studies. We interpreted our charge to include the following responsibilities: one, to determine whether changing the twelve-hour English requirement to a nine-hour English requirement by dropping three hours at the sophomore level had proved detrimental to students in the Plan I, B.A. degree. We took our second responsibility to be to determine whether offering students two options in the second semester of freshman composition, rather than one, is a useful thing to do and thus should be continued. The Committee did not think its charge included prescribing a specific content of the required English courses nor did it include specifying how and by whom these courses should be taught.

Conscious of wide-spread concern by faculty, parents, and the general public about dropping scores on college entrance exams and the apparent decline in students' ability to write and read English adequately, the Committee took seriously the task of trying to determine whether reducing the English requirement had adversely affected students' skills. As preparation for that task, its members studied several documents. Among them was a professional summary of a poll of The University of Texas

professors' and students' attitudes toward writing designed by Professor James Sledd and administered in the spring of 1975 by Measurement and Evaluation. We looked at an article reporting on the 1974 National Assessment of Education Progress report, a summary of a course instructor survey in all freshman English classes in 1974-75, the syllabi for freshman courses now. We also read pertinent articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Change magazine, the Association of English Bulletin, and looked at national surveys on the so-called writing crisis that have been conducted and published by the Los Angeles Times and New York Times. We reviewed English requirements at other universities. We talked with Professor Kinneavy who is currently Director of Freshman English, and we talked with Professor James Sledd. Finally, we conducted a very limited poll of the entire faculty asking about their views on the change in the lower-division English requirement. Eight hundred and seventy faculty members, or slightly over half of those polled, responded. More than 200 who responded, added comments. Both Professor Sledd's survey and the comments on the poll taken this spring reveal wide-spread faculty dissatisfaction with their students' writing ability. Clearly, most professors think it important that students learn to write better and support strengthening the writing program in the University. In the 1977 poll, 50.8% of the respondents favored a return to the twelve-hour English requirement. 89.2% opposed reducing the freshman composition requirement. After reviewing available data, however, the Review Committee concludes that the writing problems of students at this University are far too complex to be solved by tinkering either with the structure or the content of the required English courses for the Plan I degree. That is, we were asked to decide whether the structure of the lower-division English requirement in Plan I adversely affected students' writing skills. We do not know that it does. But we do not know that it does not. We think that the problem is much too difficult to be settled by simply changing requirements and I will come to another recommendation later that we would like to see carried out.

We concluded from our studies that the decline in traditional writing skills is a well-documented national phenomenon. For example, in 1974 the National Assessment of Education Progress reported that both 13 and 17 year old students were writing less coherently and using a simpler vocabulary and style than comparable groups four years earlier. Dozens of institutions, ranging from large state universities similar to ours to prestigious private universities such as Stanford and Harvard, report a marked decline in the writing ability of upper-division and graduate students as well as freshmen. Many schools that have dropped the composition requirement, say seven to ten years ago, are re-instituting it and are adding writing laboratories and skills centers to their programs. Across the nation in the last twelve years the average scores on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test have dropped 44 points to a low of 434 on a scale of from 200 to 800. So the deficiencies our faculty sees in students at The University of Texas seem to reflect the deficiencies of college and pre-college students throughout the country rather than to be the direct result of anything they are or are not learning in lower-division English courses. For several years both educators and laymen have been trying to determine the causes for this national decline in writing skills and general verbal abilities. So far they seem to agree only that the reasons are very complex and result from cultural influences as much as they do from our educational system. Some of the cultural factors involved are heavy television viewing which has decreased the student's exposure to experience with the printed and written word, reliance on the telephone for both business and personal communication, little or no writing being done in the home, and more relaxed attitudes in society about standard English usage. Among the educational factors involved are a marked decrease in the amount of writing most students are doing in high schools that allow students to choose courses that do not require writing (we found out

that when one California school system made English composition an elective rather than a required course, the enrollment dropped 77% in three years), increased reliance on machines for tests and less assigned essays or essay type exams, the shortage of teachers properly trained to teach composition, and very little research in or regard for the teaching of writing. Finally, schools do not teach enough writing on any level partly because to do so is expensive. No one has yet found a way to teach composition by lecture. Thus, while recognizing and sympathizing with the faculty's desire for improved writing instruction at The University of Texas, the Committee believes that the writing problems of our students are too complex and deep-rooted to be ameliorated by legislating an increase in the Plan I lower-division English requirement. If we were to restore it to what it was originally, it would mean an extra sophomore literature course. We are not convinced that adding that course would significantly improve students' writing skills. The Department of English has already attempted to meet some of the problems identified by Professor Sledd's 1975 survey by incorporating more instruction in grammar mechanics and logic in freshman courses; it has also substantially expanded its writing department at all levels, and now more than half of the regular faculty in the English Department are involved in teaching writing courses every year. Moreover, the Review Committee feels strongly that the responsibility for improving the writing of University students cannot be delegated solely to the English Department. If the faculty expects the students who graduate from the University to write decently, all faculty members must concern themselves about student writing. They should assign essays, and give essay exams, correct them for form as well as content, and consistently reward and reinforce good writing by their students. Writing competently is a skill, and students who do not have to practice it very quickly lose it.

The Review Committee, therefore, makes these recommendations: 1) The present Plan I, B. A. lower-division requirement of six hours of freshman composition and three hours of sophomore literature or writing should be retained. Explanation: Although 50.85% of the faculty responded favorably to the return for the twelve-hour requirement, the Committee could see no evidence that adding a three-hour literature course to the requirement would appreciably improve students' writing. Therefore, we are reluctant to recommend reinstating this requirement. 2) The two options for the second semester freshman composition course should be retained allowing students to choose, or their colleges to recommend, a choice between composition literature and composition logic and rhetoric. Explanation: The students should be allowed to choose the kind of writing course that they find more interesting in the hope that having such a choice would be their motivation to write. Finally, the Committee goes beyond the charge given to them by President Rogers, to recommend that the President appoint a University committee to study ways in which the writing of undergraduate students can be improved not only by improving curriculum instruction within the English Department, but also by generating wider University involvement in, and responsibility for, writing proficiency at all levels. The Committee believes that promoting proficiency in writing should be of primary and continuing concern of the whole faculty. On behalf of the Committee, I move the University Council accept this report, and I strongly urge the adoption of the recommendations we make. Thank you.

Rogers: Thank you, Dr. Hairston. Is there any discussion of this report?

Sledd: I do not want to repeat my speech at the no-meeting of the faculty where a total of 50 people out of 1,668 saw fit to concern themselves with 7 1/2% of an undergraduate's total curriculum. I said then that that was a disgrace, and in this year a potentially catastrophic disgrace. Instead of repeating that, I want to point to some of the promises that

were made and that have not been kept. In a letter to President Spurr on January 24, 1973, Professor Bernard Sagik who was chairman of the committee which reported on this matter, made some rather important promises. He promised a review and evaluation. If we agreed to review the program after it had been in effect for three years, we will have the opportunity for evaluation which is obviously important. With these explanatory comments, hopefully, the refurbished version of our recommendation will be acceptable to the faculty. So here was the promise of a real evaluation and it was used to get approval of the Sagik report. The second promise was that there would be, as a second course in freshman English, a choice between literature and composition, and a course which would not utilize the belletristic approach but instead emphasize the writing of expository themes exploring problems, suggesting and testing hypotheses while providing indepth study of inductive and deductive evidence. So we were promised a real review and evaluation and we were promised that one of the two second semester courses would be a hard-nosed course in logical composition. That report came to the University Council on January 29, 1973, and the promises were reinforced. Dean Werbow raised the question, "Could this report be modified in a particular way without coming back to the Council and the faculty?" Specifically he asked the question about the exemption score. Mr. Kinneavy replied to the discussion of this suggestion and said that since this matter would have to be reviewed three years from now he suspected that it would have to be reviewed as a University Council regulation, the present legislation would be freezing the matter for three years, in effect. Now anybody reading those Minutes gets the impression that the Sagik Committee report was to be carried out, and that it would not be significantly changed without bringing it back to the Council and to the faculty.

My own remarks at that meeting make it perfectly plain that I did not oppose the report precisely because we had these promises, and because I took them as genuine. I did raise a question, which I would like to repeat now, and that is the question, "What is done with blacks and chicanos who come to this University quite unable to write acceptably?" I taught two of them this past semester. One of those students tested out a good 30 points below anybody else in a rather bad class. He did not have a snowball's change in Hell of passing that course, and there is nothing whatever that this University provided which could help him. These promises were ratified by the Board of Regents on June 1st, 1973, so they have the highest authority which our system can give to them. There was, however, no review in 1975 when we were promised one. We were told that the courses had not been in effect long enough, and so we were to wait two more years. We have waited two years and we have a nothing report.

Meanwhile, in October of 1975 that hard-nosed second course in composition started down the drain. There was set up as an alternative to it, a course entitled "The Rhetoric of Popular Culture." One of the subjects studied in The Rhetoric of Popular Culture last year, when I had a TA who was teaching it, was the adventures of Wonder Warthog. Now it is not my impression that Wonder Warthog makes a really hard-nosed composition course. But Wonder Warthog has been popular, and now in the spring of 1977 we have a communique from the English Department, for all practical purposes English 308 regular has disappeared from the curriculum. So there we were promised a hard-nosed composition course, and now in the same spring time when this report comes to us, we are told that hard-nosed composition course has disappeared from the curriculum. The report itself is not the promised evaluation. It simply says, "Oh dear, things are tough all over but we cannot change them." Then why, in God's name, did we ever worry about getting rid of a twelve-hour requirement? What is the point of any academic discussion if you simply throw up your hands and say, "This is a complicated problem. We can't touch it." That argument justifies the closing down of this institution with the exception of the track team and the football team. At least Johnny Jones is a man of

real excellence.

Now what are some of the facts which have not been presented? The English Department's own figures show that a substantial number of our teaching assistants have only Bachelor degrees. Years ago the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges said that people with only Bachelor degrees ought not to teach at the university level. The English Department's own figures show that as many as 43% of all TA's who teach freshman English come to us with no previous teaching experience; as many as 64% with no experience at the college level; as many as 39% with no previous training in pedagogy. Many of these TA's are not from the English Department at all. Many of them have had no course in composition themselves. Many of them know no logic and very little rhetoric. Yet these same TA's are asked to teach an average of 1.75 sections while taking nine hours themselves while getting paid for a twenty-hour week. Now there is one big set of reasons why the requirement is not working. We have overworked, underpaid, underprepared teachers.

Student evaluations of freshman English have shown that about 25% of the freshmen are uncertain or negative about the value of the program. In retrospect, the students' evaluation grows much more unfavorable. In the survey which I prepared, a clear majority of sophomores refused to call freshman English even so much as moderately helpful. Seniors who called the course not at all helpful were almost four times as numerous as the seniors who remembered it as very helpful. Of a total of over 1,500 respondents from all the academic classes, it was only among the freshmen that a majority called the course so much as moderately helpful. When all the classes are taken together, 57% of the respondents found the course only slightly helpful or not helpful at all.

Last spring the English Department conducted its own evaluation of freshman English. When grades on 77 pre-test essays were compared with grades on 77 post-test essays it was discovered that during the semester the average grade declined from C+ to C-. Now when I said that in the faculty meeting the response was, "It's dreadfully difficult to get uniform grading." The defense is worse than the accusation. To say we cannot agree on how to grade papers is to say: 1) either we do not know what good writing is, or 2) if we have an abstract agreement we cannot apply it when we come to particular papers.

In the survey that Mrs. Hairston mentioned, an overwhelming majority of faculty respondents voted for an alternative which would allow one of the required composition courses to be taken in the junior or senior year when the student knew what he wanted to do, had chosen a major, and knew what the demands on his writing would be. That was overwhelmingly approved by the faculty. When I brought up that proposal in the English Department, the answer was quite different. "We do not want to have a required junior-senior course because it is no fun teaching required courses." And the people who made that argument are people who often say, "Good teaching is an act of love." Self love.

Now what has happened recently? There are two main things that I want to mention and a great many that I will not mention. One is that there was no quorum. Here was a year when this University has been bitterly attacked for neglect of undergraduate teaching. Here was a proposal for three of an undergraduate's total of forty courses. How many people from the English Department turned out to discuss it? Less than 10; we have over 80 ranked faculty members in that department; 10% of the department whose requirement was concerned thought it worth their time to attend the meeting. We cannot possibly say that we care anything about undergraduate teaching when we act like that. That attitude is not new in the English Department. In the spring of 1975, Neill Megaw and I made a motion that every member of the English Department would teach at least one composition

course every three semesters. It could be at any level - freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate. And that proposal was voted down after indignant oratory in which our Graduate Adviser made the deathless remark, "Composition stinks."

Now this year, on instructions from the Graduate Studies Committee of the English Department, the chairman of the Committee, Max Westbrook, has worked very hard to get a relaxation of the nine-hour rule. That rule requires most of our TA's to teach two sections while they take three. Now remember the indignant oratory at the suggestion that a work load be imposed upon the general faculty. The sky falls. Chicken Litte is nothing to what happens on this campus when a work load is proposed. But we have imposed a back-breaking work load upon dozens of TA's. What happened when we tried to get that work load lightened? Here is Westbrook's report. We were asked, "Find a way of teaching freshman English that would take less time and energy." In other words, spend less time on your teaching. If the University admitted that teaching two sections of freshman English takes 30 hours a week instead of 20, the University would have to raise the pay scale. The TA's have told us how long they work. They have taken censuses of that. It comes out to over 30 hours a week for two sections. Here, a fact which is known and has been known for four years is apparently brushed off because if we face the truth we would have to pay them for the work they do. This is Westbrook's conclusion, "My conclusion from all this is that I am reluctantly pushed toward agreeing with those who say the important thing is not the quality of teaching in freshman English or the quality of graduate work but the money produced by formula funding." There is the situation we are in. I want now to make a substitute motion, that we receive this report but not accept it because it is not an acceptable report; and that we urge the President to appoint a serious committee to make a serious study of the English requirement immediately.

Rogers: Are there other comments? Yes.

Lieb: May I raise a question with Dr. Sledd?

Rogers: Yes.

Lieb: Were the last comments you made, Dr. Sledd, reporting Professor Westbrook's opinion, taken from a letter I wrote to him?

Sledd: No, sir.

Lieb: I would like to submit, Madame President, that I was very seriously misquoted. The remark about 20 hours was made in the context of asking whether or not graduate students in English are properly employed at one-half time, or at two-thirds time. The suggestion of the letter was that if their responsibilities require more than 20 hours a week employment, they should be appointed at two-thirds time, and that would be a matter that the Graduate School would endorse.

Rogers: Thank you.

Sledd: Mr. Westbrook also reports that when he asked, "Would there be money to appoint them at two-thirds time," he was told no.

Lieb: Madame President, may I ask who Professor Westbrook asked?

Sledd: I will be happy to see this letter included in the Minutes of this meeting, President Rogers. I will make it available.

Werbow: (College of Humanities) I do not wish to exculpate those members of the faculty who came to the meeting to which Mr. Sledd has referred, it should be noted that the matter which was to be discussed

at that meeting was not on the agenda which was circulated for that meeting. To be sure, the report of the Committee had been circulated earlier and it was specified that it would be discussed at the April 26 meeting. But by the time the agenda for the postponed General Faculty meeting was prepared and circulated, the intention to discuss that report was no longer there.

I suppose it is in order to discuss the substitution, that is the general question under the heading of the substitute amendment, which is tantamount to the same thing, and it is directed to the question whether the nine-hour requirement in English should be continued, as has been recommended by the Hairston Committee, or whether it should be further studied, as is the thrust of the substitute amendment. I agree with the recommendation of the Hairston Committee that the improvement of teaching students in the University would probably not be markedly improved by a further semester of sophomore literature instruction although it is my further conviction that our ability to speak and to write is closely related to what we read and how much we read. If there were studies to show that the reading of literature and the discussion of it for a semester would bring about a marked improvement in writing, I would be willing to go with that. I do believe, however, that the other recommendations of the Hairston Committee are more likely to bring about improvement in the writing of our students, and that is careful attention in all classes to the writing which the students do, and a greater requirement of writing by students in all courses over the University with the taking of time to read what the students have written and to react critically, not only to discuss this but also to the form of English in which these reports and examination papers are written.

I am assured by the College of Engineering that this is a prodigious task. One faculty member reported to me that because of the amount of time that he has to devote to reading the reports of, I think he said 70 students who wrote 3 reports each, that he has to neglect many other aspects of his professional career, and devote himself to the writing in the College of Engineering. In addition they have employed English Department graduates or ADP's who have counseled with students about their writing. I wish to come back to this subject again in a moment. The fact is that the Department of English has a battery of courses intended to meet the needs of the various students - 603, 306Q for foreign students, two versions of 306, including language that is self-paced and computer-assisted and which I believe, in its further development, may very well ease the problem Professor Sledd has raised about special attention for students who come with deficiencies in English who need much drill and assistance in basic writing. In addition, more advanced courses, particularly English 317-Technical Writing and English 325-Advanced Composition, are being elected by our students in larger numbers all the time. I believe, as a result of legislation which will be before us latter in this session, the College of Engineering is now requiring English 317 of a great many more students than it has before. We are already offering about a dozen sessions of it. I assume that there will be no question that a vast majority of the regular faculty in the Department of English will be teaching either 325M-Advanced Composition or 317-Technical Writing.

Back to the question of how the University as a whole might take up the recommendation of the Hairston Committee in order to relieve the pressure on the School of Communication, the College of Engineering, and the College of Business, and provide some assistance. I believe we should have a University committee, not to further review the present set of requirements but to work out ways in which the University as a whole can be responsible to the problem. One way would be the establishment of adequate funding for a University writing laboratory to which students who are having difficulty in English writing can be referred for assistance by their faculty members. I have already tried out, as a trial ballon which

floundered somewhat, at the Deans Council the possibility of a finishing examination. There is, in the state of Georgia, a legislative requirement that all students in public institutions of higher learning must take, somewhere between the 45th and 60th hours and after they have completed their English requirement, an examination in the writing of English or an essay - and retake this examination until they are able to pass it. I would suggest that we might consider such an examination either for the University as a whole or as part of the administration of the required courses in the Plan I degree in the Department of English. Whether the students come for the Plan I degree or come to the English Department from other colleges and schools, these students would still be reached by an examination offered through the Department of English. In short, I would say that I would vote against the Sledd proposal and confirm the further review of the current required courses for the B. A., Plan I degree, then set about other means of assuring that our students' English is improved. I will say one last thing. The ECT College Board has now re-instated a writing sample in their College Board Examinations and the success of that writing sample will depend upon how seriously the results are taken by us, how successful examinations are administered, and whether they are encouraged to keep that writing sample in, which they abandoned some ten years ago.

Rogers: Thank you.

Hairston: I would like to speak this time primarily as a member of the English Department, as a person who has invested much of my professional energy in the teaching of writing rather than as the chairman of the Committee. I do want to say briefly that the Committee did not feel that it had the right to tell the English Department how it ought to run its store. To be going back to being a member of the English Department, if we are to find out what, in fact, we need to do to improve our students' writing I think we must have an investigation that will take much longer than two months. It will involve communication with universities all across the country. It will take a great deal of work and new research.

I am in rather close touch with what goes on in the field of composition and rhetoric and to my knowledge, and I am sure James Kinneavy who is very active in this field will reinforce this, we do not know what it takes to help people learn to write better. Reinforcement and feedback of their efforts is about all we know. We are trying to find out. I also want to say that neither as the chairman of the ad hoc committee or as a member of any other committee, am I willing to put my name to a report that does no more than express noble wishes and high ideals when I know quite well that neither the money nor the time nor the expertise is available to attain these ideals. I consider this an irresponsible thing to do and until we can find out what it takes to improve people's writing and then decide whether we are willing to pay what it costs to do that, then I do not want to get connected with that kind of report.

Kinneavy: I would like to request the privilege of the floor.

Rogers: Is there any objection?

Kinneavy: (English and Curriculum and Instruction) Thank you. At the meeting of the General Faculty when Mr. Sledd spoke in response to the Committee report, I sat and listened to Mr. Sledd's negative remarks and I said, "Well, I don't really think many people are going to take that as seriously as they seem to be intended," and I said nothing. However, some people who came out of the meeting, and some questions asked at the meeting, did seem to imply the faculty did take Mr. Sledd very seriously. What I would like to do right now is something of a nature similar to what Mr. Lieb just did. He wrecked some contexts, renounced some of the statements of Mr. Sledd.

For one, I would like to assure you that there is a viable alternative between a course in literature and composition, that is English 307 and English 308 which is the second course in the sequence. These are alternatives, both to the second course. The English 307, Literature and Composition, was very attractive and adopted by many people in the first several years of the experiment, including the time during which Mr. Sledd was in charge of freshman English. It was only when we put in the alternative for English 308, the Pop Culture variant which he denigrates, that more people began to take the 308 course. Actually to choose one tiny item mentioned in the syllabus, "Wonder Warthog," I am not even sure it's in the syllabus, it is certainly not a major part of the syllabus if it is even in the syllabus, and to misrepresent the whole syllabus for something as frivolous as that is really fundamentally irresponsible. I ask you to look at the syllabus of 308, Rhetoric of Popular Culture, originally written by Mr. Hilfer, amended, and worked at by several other people. I think you will find that is a serious syllabus.

Secondly, I would like to support the recommendation of Dean Werbow and Mrs. Hairston, that is to say, to repudiate the substitute amendment. Mrs. Hairston did not say that there was nothing that could be done. As a matter of fact, she made a series of recommendations, one of which is very similar to what Mr. Sledd is recommending - that a committee be appointed to look into ways of further examining the problem of teaching English. Number one, I can assure you that there have been many people who have put a lot of time into the problems of teaching English. We have rewritten the syllabus of English 306 three times in the last three years. I will be rewriting it again this summer, trying to improve it, feeding it to the teachers, getting reactions from them, and trying to improve it. I sent Dean Werbow a list of variations which we are trying, and experimental projects which we are trying in 306, 307 and 308, and a list of the other composition courses in the Department. I came up with the amazing figure that, counting variations, we have something like 43 different kinds of composition courses in the Department of English.

Let me put into the proper context at least one set of figures which Mr. Sledd has now used twice. He says 25% of the freshmen who take freshman English say that the course is only of uncertain value to them, or of not much value to them, or of no value to them. The context for that figure is from the study that Mrs. Hairston alluded to for 1974-75. Some 4,000 freshmen were given a question. One of the questions was, "What is the value of the course to date?" I do not remember the first two columns, it's a scale of five, something like an A, B, C, D, F scale - extremely helpful, moderately helpful, the middle column is called "Uncertain," the next column is called "Slightly Helpful," and the next column is called "Not Helpful at All," I think. Most people looking at that might say, "Well, for heaven's sake, 75% of the people are fairly happy with the course." Mr. Sledd takes a look at it somewhat differently. He takes the middle column, which is roughly the C column, includes that with the four and the five and ends up with 25. Had he turned a page or two further he could have found instead of the four which was the F column, there was one that had "1". I could choose to do what Mr. Sledd has done with those figures and say, "99% of the freshmen said that the course was of some help to them." That would be the kind of way Mr. Sledd uses figures. I would ask you to go back and look at those figures and the overwhelming reaction would be that the freshmen in general find this to be a fairly useful course. Mr. Sledd is playing with logistics in a very irresponsible way. If Mr. Sledd questions me on this, I would like to take his interpretation of these figures and present it to any neutrally accepted statistician on campus and I would be willing to adjudicate it.

I would like to return to another set of his remarks. Mr. Sledd says that we ran a little experiment last year and we came up with the

conclusion that the people who are given a pre-imposed test have worse results on the final test than they had on the pre-test. He had used this in his original speech to show that nothing was happening in freshman English. I pointed out in my remarks that it is very difficult to get rater reliability. This was a fairly sizable experiment, but it was not a grandiose experiment. We had no money to run this. To get rater reliability we used classes in the College of Education. We have been very successful with this technique in the past. We gave one or two periods of construction on the norms of the rating, and we have had at least two or three good doctoral dissertations in which our rater reliability was up in the 80%'s. We used the courses that we used for graders. We again used some courses in the undergraduate school of the College of Education. It was during the summer; things were given at the wrong time; it was the end of the term; the training was not good. We got poor rater reliability and consequently the validity of the experiment was nil, in effect. The only thing that one can say about the experiment was that we did not have good rater reliability. Anybody who has been into experimentation understands this. We had no money to run it, and we could not rehire other people. The semester was over and so among ourselves we reported this experiment. I would hope that anybody who has done any experimentation could understand this.

I would like to repeat what I said at the General Faculty. The University of Texas has a pretty fair freshman English program. I would have said that before I was ever Director of the Freshman English program. We did not drop our freshman English composition requirement in the 60's as many places across the country did. We still have a solid six-hour freshman English requirement. We have a good counselor program. We have a fine 398T program. We have a department and freshman English policy committee which is continually looking at ways of improving the freshman English program. I would hope that is the spirit of the Hairston Committee recommendation and people around campus would assist the English Department in attempting to improve its own program. But I would like to remove some of the negativism that Mr. Sledd's remarks do seem to imply. Thank you.

Megaw: (English Department) I would like to get back to the central issue raised by Mr. Sledd that it was disgraceful there were only 50 members at the General Faculty meeting. I called for a quorum at that meeting precisely because I thought it would be highly inappropriate for us to not only receive but to approve the recommendations of the Committee as much as I sympathize with the two months of work of the Committee.

I can understand your wishing to have the thing terminated neatly. I think it is the case that it has got to be brought back to the General Faculty. I believe that the central thrust of Mr. Sledd's substitute motion is that this committee would come up with proposals which would then go back to the General Faculty. I do not care about the mechanism by which the question is returned to the General Faculty, but I think it would be a mistake for this assembly to receive or endorse the recommendations of the report.

This is a problem that is not going to go away. It seems to me that again and again as we discussed it, it was discussed at cross purposes. Mr. Sledd gets up again and again and says the job is not being done. Should we not see that the job is done? The answer is, again and again that we are doing the best we possibly can. That is not a straight rejoinder to the question, and I think it has got to go back to the General Faculty. The Committee itself emphasizes the importance. Moreover, the Review Committee feels strongly that the responsibility for improving the writing of the University students cannot be delegated solely to the English Department. If the faculty expects the students who graduate from The University of Texas to write decently, all the

faculty members must concern themselves about student writing. All means something a little bit closer to 1,600 than to 50. I do not think even if we endorse the report, including that section, that we would necessarily be gaining the attention of the General Faculty. I strongly urge that we bring this back to the attention of the General Faculty. We cannot do that this summer, but it should be done next year. The first General Faculty meeting is towards the end of October. I do not think any committee or any other body can come up with recommendations for the General Faculty to decide upon by the end of October. The only other regularly scheduled General Faculty meeting is late in the spring and is likely to have an attendance similar to the attendance at our recent faculty meeting. I think the only appropriate thing is for this body to say, "Let us have a special faculty meeting scheduled in January or February and have concrete proposals brought to the General Faculty." I would urge the President to put on the agenda directly in front of this a discussion of new policies on salary merit increases, and to follow it with a topic on the possibility of mandated early retirement. We need to get the attention of the General Faculty.

Another reason for bringing it back is that the Faculty Senate did establish a committee on the implementation of the resolutions of the General Faculty meeting of March the 3rd. We are obviously not going to be able to work very heavily during the summer but we are addressing the items in that set of resolutions of March 3rd. One of them has to do with the care and feeding of teaching assistants. They should be properly trained, they should not be exploited, they should not be asked to teach courses that they are not qualified to teach, they should be properly supervised and they should be given adequate clerical support. There are a lot of items in there and most importantly, the item that if they are on half-time they should be on half-time, not on three-quarters time or two-thirds time. A lot of things relate to money. The Legislature has not finished its business and some of the things they do may affect how we consider the best way of handling the lower-division English requirement and the question of our TA system in general.

I think a number of things are going to be shaping up during the summer and in the early fall. I urge that we either accept the Sledd substitute motion, or modify it so that we can bring matters back to the General Faculty meeting. We still must incorporate some of the things said by Professor DeCamp at the General Faculty meeting. These would be the training that is provided now for black and chicano students and others who are in need of special attention. The enthusiastically endorsed proposal a couple of years ago for a floating second semester of composition which would be required in the junior-senior year must be re-examined, if not by Professor Sledd's suggested committee, then by some other group. I would like the matters to be thrashed out in front of the General Faculty not just in the University Council. There are things that are going to be happening which will affect the ability of the English Department to handle its requirements in English with limited funding and staffing. We must confront the issue, and by we, I mean the General Faculty, not this assembly.

Womack: (Engineering) I would like to speak against it. I would like to give an example which I hope you will not feel trite as it is a real example. Last week we gave a final oral examination to a doctoral student and one of the members of the Committee made the remark in describing the work that, "He had worked on a particular problem for two years. He had put in a lot of serious work, and what this doctoral candidate had just proven is that there was no solution to the problem he was working on. He could not find the solution to his problem." What I submit is this: the problem being discussed here begins back in the elementary school by the way they are now teaching writing and reading today. In the high school, the problem gets worse each year. I think

that to propose a course at the college level which would solve all the problems oversimplifies the existence of the problem itself. Dean Werbow's remarks about an examination in English, I feel, is good. Possibly establishing an English laboratory course for helping people with writing problems is basically good. I would like to propose to the committee that studies the problem that a sampling procedure for regular course work such as term papers would be examined and a decision made based on these reports as to whether a given student must take remedial writing. I know when I went to Graduate School this had a profound effect on students. They took a lot more care when this requirement was in effect. I feel if we examine a person's writing ability within the context of the various disciplines we might get a little closer to solving the problem.

Gavenda: (Physics) I think that is a good point. Most of this discussion today has been carried on by members of the English faculty. There are problems in other disciplines besides English. I would like the people in English to be aware that people in Mathematics, the sciences, etc., believe that the ability of our students to function at a minimal level of literacy has greatly declined in recent years. Just a few days ago I received a publication of the American Association of Physics Teachers which contained an article of the teeth-gnashing, hand-wringing sort pointing out that the scientific literacy of a sample of high school students had declined by 25% in the last 8-10 years. If we are going to address ourselves to problems of this nature, let's address all the problems and include the sciences, mathematics, as well as English.

The fact there was such a small turnout at the General Faculty meeting the other day I think reflects the recognition by most people on the campus that abilities of students at the entering college level have declined. Everyone has recognized this in his own subject matter. I think if you call for a meeting of the General Faculty to debate this issue one more time, you will probably have half the number of people you had at the last meeting. The debate today has revolved around details on how the English program should be taught. I think most people on the faculty believe that the English Department should work out those details and submit a proposal. The proposal that was submitted to the faculty essentially was to maintain the status quo. My colleagues said, "Well, that's fine. Continue the status quo. Why go to a large meeting to debate that issue?" Unless you have some striking new proposal to present and unless you can present it in a short, concise fashion, don't expect the faculty to come out to another meeting.

Rogers: I would second what Dr. Gavenda had to say because I never taught freshman Chemistry but what I had to stop and teach ratio and proportion and how to handle fractions. It is not just in the English area that they come here deficient in their abilities.

If there are no further comments, are you ready for the question? We will vote first on the substitute amendment that was submitted by Dr. Sledd, that the report be received but not accepted and approved.

Livingston: I should not want part of Dr. Sledd's motion to be left out inadvertently. As I read it, it is to ask the President to appoint a serious committee to conduct a serious inquiry. Am I correct there?

Sledd: You are.

Rogers: Thank you. I forgot that.

Livingston: Because of that conclusion I will be forced to vote against it.

Rogers: All in favor of Dr. Sledd's substitute motion say aye.

All opposed, no. According to my ear, it fails. We are back to the original motion. Dr. Hairston would you state that briefly again for me, please?

Hairston: The Review Committee makes these recommendations: 1) the present Plan I, B. A. lower-division English requirement of six hours of freshman composition and three hours of sophomore literature or writing should be retained; 2) the two options for the second semester composition course should be retained allowing students to choose, or their colleges to recommend, one course or the other; the Committee goes beyond the charge given it by President Rogers to recommend, to ask the President to appoint a University committee to study ways in which the writing of undergraduate students can be improved.

The Committee seconds that the University Council accept this report with the additional recommendation.

Friedman: Although I am from the English Department, I am going to ask a question. My question is perhaps a naive one, but I wonder what will be the effect today should this Council vote down the Committee's report? That is, the recommendation that the status quo be retained. What happens if we vote against this recommendation?

Rogers: I am not sure what the outcome of that would be either. The Committee has been asked to evaluate. If they come in with an evaluation and it is not received, then I suppose the status quo remains until we have a recommendation that something be changed.

Friedman: Then it really does not matter which way we vote, does it?

Rogers: It does not matter as far as what will be done about the English courses, but their report and recommendations went beyond that.

Friedman: I understand but I think there are serious problems with the situation as it exists, and the third recommendation suggests that the situation be seriously investigated, explored, and perhaps further recommendations will follow. I support that, and I support it strongly. I wonder whether a positive vote or negative vote on the motion, on the entire report, would more strongly say that.

Hairston: I interpret it this way. I and my Committee felt that two months of work was simply not ample to make any indepth study of the effectiveness of the change in the requirement. We felt there was no evidence to show that we would do any better to go back to twelve hours and we might as well continue with the nine-hour requirement. However, we think there is a great deal to be done. Therefore, we ask this be of continuing concern to the faculty and the President.

Sledd: I am firmly baffled now. I thought we were going to vote on a committee, a recommendation to the President that you appoint a committee to make a study. That is in Mrs. Hairston's report, is it not?

Rogers: It is.

Sledd: Then I would like to suggest that these various things be separated. I am going to vote against accepting the report. I want to vote very much for a committee. And if there is anything to what Mr. Friedman finds, a statement there are some things in a muddle and they should be sorted out, I want to vote for that too. So may we vote separately on these three things?

Rogers: So far as I am concerned. Anyone have any objections?

Let us vote first on the motion that we accept the report.

Megaw: Does acceptance just mean we receive it gratefully?

Rogers: No, I think it means approved.

Megaw: It does mean endorsed.

Rogers: Yes.

Werbow: (College of Humanities) I believe that the response to Dr. Sledd's question is not to vote to accept the report, but to vote on items one, two and three in the report individually.

Rogers: The first recommendation is that the present Plan I, B. A. lower-division English requirement of six hours of freshman composition and three hours of sophomore literature or writing should be retained. All in favor say aye. All opposed, no. They ayes have it.

Number two. The two options for the second semester freshman composition course would be retained allowing students to choose, or their colleges to recommend, a choice between composition and literature or composition logic and rhetoric. All in favor say aye. Opposed, no. The ayes have it.

Now, number three. The recommendation that the President appoint a University committee to study ways in which the writing of undergraduate students can be improved, not only by improving curriculum and instruction within the English Department, but also by generating wider University involvement in and responsibility for writing proficiency at all levels. All in favor say aye. Opposed, no. The ayes have it unanimously.

Dr. Durbin: I am sorry, I did not see your hand in time.

Durbin: I have a question. Is that committee to report to the General Faculty?

Rogers: It does not say that. If you want it to report to the General Faculty, I will be happy to have it do so.

Durbin: I would hope it comes up again next spring at the latest.

Rogers: Let me just ask for a voice vote. All who would like to have the recommendation from the committee, once it is made, come back to the General Faculty, say aye. Opposed, no. (Carried)

Livingston: (Government) Madame Chairman, the resolution we just adopted recommends to the President that she appoint a University committee to study ways in which the writing of undergraduate students can be improved. One of the problems, it seems to me, was the narrowness of the committee's terms of reference as they construed those terms of reference. I take it there are no limitations on what the new committee can inquire into. Given the phrase, "To study ways in which," ought to cover anything they want to address themselves to.

Rogers: There are also no constrictions on time as I read that. The present committee said two months was not enough. They have not said how much is enough.