

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH MINUTES

JAN 25 1960

The departmental meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m., Mr. Moldenhauer presiding.

The Chairman introduced new faculty: Drs. Alice Kerach, temporary Instructor; Jacky Martin, Visiting Lecturer from France; and Mary Robertson, Assistant Professor. Also introduced was Pam Wheeler, Administrative Secretary effective 4 February. He then announced the appointment of Mr. Garrison as Undergraduate Advisor for the current semester, and remarked on the forthcoming guide to "Who Does What" among the Classified staff.

Attention was directed to the related and problematical subjects of Freshman Composition and the size, makeup, and selection of the teaching staff. A call for records of past proposals about Freshman Composition was reiterated by Mr. Moldenhauer; such materials should be given to Mr. Trimble, who is preparing a synopsis to aid the Department in its study of current options. The main objectives of the present meeting were 1) to identify those features of the composition-and-staffing complex which could be addressed purposively and 2) to plan a tentative course of presentation, discussion, and action at future meetings.

Mr. Moldenhauer observed that the problems could be understood in logistical terms: most simply, increasing student demand and limited departmental resources and controls. The logistics are severely taxing for the Dean, for the departmental administration, for individual members of the teaching staff, and for students (some of whom do not have composition teachers for several class days). Since the English Department itself knows Freshman Composition matters best, the Department should accept the opportunity to propose remedies, rather than waiting for the imposition of remedies--and perhaps unsatisfactory ones--from above. This is especially important since Freshman Composition is "central" to the Department by virtue of the size of the program. Changes in any one aspect of the composition program will have effects elsewhere in the program and in the Department's other operations. Present and past Directors of Composition, Associate Chairmen, and Chairmen would be available as resource persons to any departmental study or planning groups. Mr. Moldenhauer envisaged the development of a "package" of coordinated proposals on Freshman Composition issuing from the Department after a series of meetings. Several alternative packages might be approved; and interim measures and fall-back positions would probably be included in any large package. Different proposals would have to go through different levels in the approval chain--e.g., college, general faculty, Coordinating Board.

Several comments and questions were offered from the floor. Mr. Bowden spoke to the obvious expedient of admissions restrictions, but noted the Administration's resistance to this idea. Mr. Gordon remarked that Freshman English is not properly funded until the last minute. Mr. Moldenhauer replied that "soft money" (temporarily free funds) is used to pay for temporary Instructor posts, and that this staffing can be completed only when registration figures are known. In addition, the amount of soft money is limited: the Dean releases it only on a direct need basis. A related concern was the availability, at the time of staffing needs, of sufficient numbers of qualified Instructor applicants. This could not be predicted or taken for granted. Mr. Reed asked why students might not be turned away from classes not staffed in advance. Mr. Moldenhauer answered that the Administration required us to accept all lower-division students. Mr. Gordon suggested deferring Freshman English to the student's sophomore year. Mr. Gibben stated that some students would take the course elsewhere (thus missing the creditable UF experience and perhaps compounding their difficulties and ours); and Mr. Kruppa remarked on

the attrition rate among lower-division students after one, two, and three semesters. Mention was also made of Mr. Sledd's proposal to defer the second required composition course until the student had completed 60 credit hours. Mr. Sutherland observed that students might learn enough to place out of a required course if we allowed them to defer the requirement. Tutorial assistance might further such exemptions. Mr. Trimble suggested we look at other universities' approaches, and he alluded to the differing test scores of those prospective freshmen who take achievement tests early in the college-application season, on the one hand, and of those who wait until they arrive at UT, on the other. Mr. Kinneavy favored a cut-off date for taking English achievement tests. Approaches involving stricter grading standards were touched upon; the impact of such approaches on student evaluations and perceived instructional quality was remarked as a potential objection. Computer-assisted instruction and enlarged sections were mentioned as two of several possible routes to a more efficient student-teacher ratio. Mr. Rebhorn expressed the belief that Freshman Composition courses (in the standard classroom format) required twice as much work as other classes and should count double in the faculty workload calculations. Mr. Malof thought 4.5 TLC (the number of workload points earned for a graduate class) would be appropriate. Mr. Lynn spoke to the need for Administration support of adequate workforce to meet the demands for composition instruction. Mr. Graham urged that the effects on the Sophomore Literature program of any contemplated changes in Freshman Composition be considered.

During this floor discussion Mr. Moldenhauer identified on the chalk-board various categories and subcategories for the possible actions mentioned or implied by the speakers; and he observed that the following out of implications of each possible change was essential at the next stage of departmental study. Mr. Wimsatt felt it would be appropriate to establish another category, "Content," to assure departmental deliberation about the nature, objectives, and materials of the course. The question of the kind(s) of student population enrolled in Freshman Composition, raised by Mr. Witte, was provisionally placed in the "Content" category by Mr. Moldenhauer. (See list of categories, attached.)

The following sequence of activities was ventured by Mr. Moldenhauer: members of the Department would form teams working on possible proposals in the several areas or categories, each member basing his or her choice on a strong preference for, aversion to, or abstract intellectual interest in a potential proposal or group of proposals in that category; each team would give its best thinking to the area and to the possible alterations which might be effected in that area, identifying the ramifications of every alteration entertained; any member of the Department could volunteer ideas to any team; when the teams had surveyed the fields and identified feasible proposals, a task force including one member of each team would be formed; this task force would coordinate the various proposals and present one or more coherent packages of proposals for departmental debate and votes. Should such an operating procedure be adopted, Mr. Moldenhauer hoped that all bright ideas be fed into the process early on, and not presented to the Department by individuals at the last minute. He also noted the large amounts of intelligence, energy, and good will the process would require, but thought that the subject was quite important enough to the future of the Department to merit the expenditure. He further opined that proposals should not be excluded from consideration on the grounds they might be rejected at a higher level: a fully rationalized plan with the weight of the Department's approval behind it would command Administrative consideration, although fall-back positions should be devised for proposals requiring approval beyond the departmental level.

A desire to discuss the question of "content" (course purposes, philosophy, etc.) in plenary session before work began in the more obviously logistical areas was expressed by Mr. Wadlington, Mr. Hilfer, and Ms. McElroy. Mr. Malof agreed, and suggested that procedures for further work be determined as soon as the Department had discussed the "content" issues. Mr. Moldenhauer said he would attempt to schedule another meeting within a week, with course content and procedures for further work as the agenda items.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Admissions and Registration

cut-off dates  
limits on admits: numbers  
limits on admits: quality  
credit or non-credit courses

Degree Requirements

0, 3, 6, 9, etc.  
courses satisfying re-  
quirements

Exemptions

cutting scores  
instrument (307, 308)  
timing of exams

Format

sequence in student's career  
class size, stud.-chr. ration  
large sections  
labs  
computer instruction  
use of graders  
workload for student  
grading curves

Staffing

size of staff  
levels (AI, temp., reg.  
departmental affiliation  
workload for faculty

Content

course objectives  
philosophy  
type(s) of student(s)  
participation of other depts.

Administrative Rearrangement

Rhetoric Department

TO: Faculty of the Department of English

DATE: Jan. 31, 1980

FROM: John Trimble

Subject: Synopsis of past proposals affecting the logistics of  
Freshman Composition

Background:

In October 1979, Professor Moldenhauer, on behalf of the EC, asked me to chair a small three-person committee "to review & summarize in writing all departmental, committee, & even formal individual proposals of the last 10 or so years bearing on freshman comp. requirements, staffing, curriculum patterns, sequence (e.g., 2nd required course after sophomore year), etc., etc. The review would include some major matters which go back more than 10 years, e.g., large section arrangements."

The Archival Committee (as it came to be known) was supposed to have gotten underway promptly so that its report would be ready by Christmas break. Other commitments of mine kept taking precedence, though, so that when mid-December came and I had still not even convened the committee, I guiltily offered to do its work single-handed. This explains why an individual is reporting to you instead of a committee.

Having done the research alone, I'm sure I overlooked a good many proposals that deserved inclusion here, but I trust you will point them out to me in the weeks ahead. For the record, I relied chiefly on the following sources: Minutes of the Freshman English Policy Committee (1976-80), Minutes of the Department of English (1960-79), Minutes of the General Faculty and its Sagic Committee (1971-73), personal files (Professor Moldenhauer's and Professor Kinneavy's), and memos to me from interested colleagues. One major source which I just now realize I overlooked is the set of three departmental memos from Professor Moldenhauer entitled "Considerations Bearing on Recruitment Policy" (issued Sept. 18, Sept. 19, and Sept. 24, 1979). Not having copies at hand, I can't correct that oversight; I can only apologize for it and suggest that copies be appended to this report.

The Proposals

I. Staffing

A. Hire a permanent core staff of instructors who would handle 30-40 sections per semester, to be augmented by a stabilized TA staff of 50 or more. These instructors would be second-level faculty members. (See FEPC Minutes for 2/23/77, 4/6/77, 4/26/77, & 3/2/79; also see Minutes of the T.A. Study Committee (TASC), chaired by Professors Sutherland and Kruppa.)

B. Use regular faculty from other departments to teach sections of 306, 307, & 308. (See FEPC Minutes for 2/23/77.)

- C. Boost post-doctoral appointments. Create a formal Post-Doctoral Lectureship in Composition and Rhetoric. (See FEPC Minutes, 2/23/77, 3/23/77, & 4/6/77.)
- D. Increase the number of AI's from outside the department to about 30 more. This will raise the number of AI's to about 120 (up from 80 now), involve more of the university at large in teaching composition, cut the present pool in half, and prepare people for the differentiated 325M courses proposed below under the section entitled "Sequence." (See Professor Kinneavy's memo, "Some Suggestions to the Department, the College, and the University for Solving Some Major Problems of the English Department at the Present Time," filed with FEPC Minutes for 10/10/79. Also see FEPC Minutes for 3/23/77 & 4/6/77. Also see the report of the TA Study Committee, Spring 1977.)
- E. Increase size of pool. (See FEPC Minutes for 3/23/77 & 4/6/77.)
- F. Hire wives and husbands of UT faculty members, either on a part- or full-time basis, if they have advanced degrees in English (or other appropriate disciplines) and if they have teaching experience. (See Professor Rebhorn's proposal of 3/28/77 included with FEPC Minutes for 4/6/77.)
- G. Hire more assistant professors, giving special emphasis to those who have an interest and special competency in rhetoric/composition. (See FEPC Minutes for 3/2/79.)
- H. Offer some big lecture sections of Freshman Composition. (See T.A. Study Committee Report of 4/25/77 filed with FEPC Minutes for 4/26/77. Also see the section below entitled "Format.")
- I. Retain the UT graduates of the present pool but cut back their load to 3 courses per semester. This year almost exactly half of the pool is made up of UT graduates (19 out of 39), and most of these have full loads. With the UT post-graduates and the increased AI's and only 3-4 more faculty, we could handle the stabilized registrations for upper- and lower-division English courses. (See Professor Kinneavy's memo, "Some Suggestions to the Department . . .," filed with FEPC Minutes for 10/10/79.)
- J. Reward faculty who contribute significantly to the freshman program with some time off so they can pursue their research interests. Suggested formula: one course off for every three sections of Plan I freshmen taught. Additionally, reward faculty directly, when making promotion decisions, by considering contribution to the freshman program a valuable service to the department. (See recommendation #2j of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Composition, 4/24/75.)

## II. Format

- A. Offer a few big "lecture section" versions of 306 along with our regular small sections. (See Report of T.A. Study Comm., cited above; also see FEPC Minutes for 2/23/77 & 3/2/77.)

(1) This option was tried experimentally for three successive Fall semesters back in 1963-65. Professor David DeLaura, then Director of Freshman English, asked three regular faculty members--Professors Abrahams, Moldenhauer, & Slate--to coordinate special "lecture sections" of E601a (the prototype of today's E306). Each of the three lecture sections was comprised of 288 students who convened once a week in Batts Auditorium either for an hour-long lecture on rhetoric or for one of the five in-class themes. During the other two class hours each week, the students broke into 18 small 16-student "seminar sections" (discussion groups) taught by the 6 TA's assigned to each coordinator. Lecturing responsibilities were shared: the coordinator himself gave five lectures, and each of his six "seminar instructors" gave one. Here are several other points of possible antiquarian interest:

Course texts were: Martin & Ohmann, The Logic of Rhetoric and Exposition; Gorrell & Laird, Modern English Handbook; and H. Guth, Essay.

Any student who scored below 344 on the ECT was not eligible to take 601a. He either had to raise his score or pass E.O.B., a non-credit extension course referred to as "basic English."

601a required 10 papers, each of 500-700 words, five of them in-class.

The final exam was a departmental one given in the evening. It consisted of a theme of 500 words, graded by two instructors, neither of whom could be the student's own teacher. A student who failed the final exam failed the course.

As for grades, the syllabus said: "Although it is true that between 15% and 20% of the freshmen most proficient in reading and composition bypass E601a, it is not true that there are no good students left. No test [like the ECT] is that accurate. You should, however, expect that the bulk of your grades will probably be C or below."

During the final semester of this experiment (Fall 1965), the number of large lecture sections was raised from three to four. Each semester, incidentally, the coordinators were rotated so that no one had the job more than once. (See Professor Moldenhauer's folder on the course.)

(2) In Fall 1979, Michael Adams conflated three regular 306 sections of 306 into one lecture section on Mondays, and then broke them back up into regular sections on Wednesdays and Fridays. He team-taught these discussion classes with the two TA's assigned him. (See FEPC Minutes for 4/11/79 & accompanying proposal; also see FEPC Minutes for 4/25/79, 5/2/79, 10/17/79, and 10/24/79.)

(3) On 11/21/79, Professor Ruszkiewicz proposed to the FEPC that we consider running next fall two experimental 306 sections of 100 students apiece. Each would be staffed by a comp/rhetoric faculty member and 4 TA's, and each would use the lecture/discussion group format employed in the DeLaura experiment of 1963. The faculty member would be solely responsible for the lectures and demonstrations presented each Monday to the full section, however; he would also supervise

C. Allow students to defer taking the second semester of the University composition requirement until their junior year. The second-semester course might be 307 or 308 or a junior-level version of 325M (Advanced Expository Writing). Either might be offered in the following versions:

- Writing for Scientists
- Writing for Engineers
- Writing for Humanists (Philosophy, History, Gov't)
- Writing for Social Science Majors
- Writing about Literature (English, For. Lang.)
- Writing about Art (Fine Arts)

(See Professor Kinneavy's memo, "Some Suggestions to the Department, the College, and the University for Solving Some Major Problems of the English Department at the Present Time," filed with FEPC Minutes for 10/10/79.)

(1) Professor Sledd distributed a campus-wide questionnaire in Spring '75 to determine faculty and student opinions on the relationship between student success and the ability to write effectively. One question asked for response to a hypothetical question: Suppose one of the lower-division courses in English composition could, at the student's option, be replaced by one of several upper-division courses adapted to meet the needs of students pursuing different majors. Roughly 78% of the faculty approved this option. As for the students' reaction, roughly 34% of all freshmen and sophomores responding felt they would be "much more" motivated were they to study composition as upperclassmen rather than as freshmen; roughly 39% of all juniors and seniors responding felt they would be "much more" motivated. Roughly another 48% of the freshmen and sophomores said they would be "somewhat" more motivated, while another 44% of all juniors and seniors responding felt that would be "somewhat" more motivated. It would seem, then, that there is considerable support among both faculty and students alike for this option. (These and other findings are available in Susan Hereford's Measurement & Evaluation Center report of February 1976, "Academic Success and Writing Ability: A Survey of Faculty and Student Opinion." For a copy, see M&E, Professor Moldenhauer, or Professor Sledd.)

#### IV. Content

- A. Establish a systematic, continuous program encouraging experimentation with different approaches to teaching freshman composition, and devise procedures for on-going evaluation of experimental sections so that successful approaches can be adopted more widely. (See recommendation #1a of the Ad Hoc Committee on Composition Report of 4/24/75. See Professor Trimble for a copy.)
- B. Develop a competency-based English 306 course stating exact levels of student achievement and requiring students to reach those levels. (See FEPC Minutes for 2/23/77; also see T.A. Study Committee Minutes and Professor Sutherland.)
- C. Require a proficiency exam in 306, in lieu of a final exam, testing the student's knowledge of mechanics. Make credit for 306 dependent



- on his passing the exam with a fairly high grade (say, "B" or better). Students who have placed out of 306 and transfer students would also be obliged to pass the test. Each student might be allowed several chances to take it. This requirement would ensure that students leaving Freshman English have at least mastered certain fundamentals of grammar and mechanics. (See Professor Rebhorn's proposal accompanying FEPC Minutes for March & April 1977.)
- D. Reduce by one the number of themes required in 306, 307, and 308. (See memo from Professor Moldenhauer accompanying FEPC Minutes for 10/8/79.)
- E. In Spring of 1976, the FEPC's Subcommittee on Evaluation, chaired by Professor Carver, conducted evaluations of 23 sections of Freshman English involving 487 students. Each student was given pre- and post-semester grammar, usage, and spelling tests identical to the screening tests administered by the Journalism Department; each was also given a pre- and post-semester essay test. The average score on the pre-grammar/usage/spelling test was 65; on the post-test, 67. (The Journalism School sets passing at 70, and nearly 30% of their students initially flunk it--i.e., are not allowed to go on to take the basic sophomore course in journalism. Well over 50% of our freshmen flunked.) As for the essays, each was read by at least 3 people who assigned a grade of A through F. The average grade on the pre-test was C+; on the post-test, C-. The subcommittee pointed out several factors that may well have skewed the accuracy of these results. (For their complete report, see FEPC Minutes for 11/30/76.)
- F. Professors Kinneavy and Witte, along with A.I. Tom Cameron, are conducting another major evaluation of the Freshman Composition program which they expect to complete by mid-March 1980. This study seeks to determine whether the 306 regular and 306 lab courses are achieving their goals. The two key elements of the lab course, tutorial instruction and Christensen-based material, are being compared with the corresponding elements of regular 306, traditional classroom instruction and Kinneavy-based material. Five hundred students (20 sections) have completed pre and post standardized reading and writing tests and two pre and post writing samples. (See FEPC Minutes for 10/16/78.)
- G. For a one-page listing of other such Freshman Composition evaluations at U.T., see Professor Kinneavy's compilation of 1/31/80, "A Brief Survey of Recent Attempts to Evaluate UT-Composition Materials and Programs Empirically." (Filed with FEPC Minutes for 10/10/79.)
- H. On December 18, 1976 Professor Sledd proposed to the FEPC that we consider adopting a program devised by Professor Mina Shaughnessy at CUNY. There, comp teachers are assigned (and paid) to take certain big lower-division courses, especially courses which have high failure rates, so as to get a direct understanding of the kinds and amounts of reading and writing that lower-division students really have to do. Apparently both sets of courses profit from the program. (See FEPC Minutes for 5/3/77 with accompanying course proposals.)
- I. In October 1979, a new first-semester Freshman English course, "Composition and Humanities," was proposed to the FEPC by Professors Sutherland, Carver, Rossman, and Reed. "In this course," their proposal reads,

"students will learn to write not by focusing on formal rhetorical or logical concerns but by reading about complex, significant works drawn from literature, history, philosophy as well as from the visual arts." This course would have four units: "Defining a Self"; "Human Beings in Society"; "Discovering a Philosophy"; and "Love and Death." (See FEPC Minutes for 10/23/79 and 10/31/79, plus accompanying proposal.)

## V. Administration

- A. Abolish undergraduate sections (other than Honors sections) that enroll fewer than 15 students. Cancel after pre-registration any undergraduate section, except freshman, with fewer than 10. (See T.A. Study Committee Report of 4/25/77 filed with FEPC Minutes for 4/26/77.)
- B. Freeze admissions at 45,000 and roll back admissions in 1981 to March (instead of August). If more than 6,000 students request admission, take the better students (making provision for minorities). This will have the effect of raising admission standards without legally doing so. (See Professor Kinneavy's memo, "Some Suggestions to the Department, etc.," filed with FEPC Minutes for 10/10/79.)
- C. Since this is the first year in which the Teaching Load Credits (TLC) formula is being massively applied, and since the Coordinating Board is open to suggestions (we convinced them this year that they should fund some remedial courses in college work), we should examine its feasibility carefully and make recommendations. Here are two:
  - (1) Certain types of research assignments are not covered by the formula--indeed, the TLC formula could have the effect of upgrading community college instruction and downgrading university instruction to meet the level (for all) of the four-year college. Therefore: differentiate by type of institution.
  - (2) Because of the massive conferences involved, count a composition course as a para-tutorial course. This would have two effects: (a) give it a 4.5 count in TLCredits; (b) change the funding formula for composition courses.

(See Professor Kinneavy's memo, "Some Suggestions to the Department, etc.," filed with FEPC Minutes for 10/10/79.)

## VI. Exemption

- A. Discontinue use of the ECT as the placement test for 306 and substitute for it scores on the SAT. The SAT is already required for admission to UT anyway, whereas the ECT is not. And because roughly 1,000 students (one-fifth of those enrolling in Freshman Composition) fail to submit ECT scores before arriving here for Fall Registration and thus must take the ECT at that time, they create major administrative (scheduling) problems for the department.

An alternative solution: set a deadline for submission of ECT scores, and require those students who miss the deadline to defer enrollment in

the Freshman English sequence until the Spring Semester. (See FEPC Minutes for 9/20/77, plus accompanying conference notes, and FEPC Minutes for 9/30/77.)

- B. Re-examine the exemption policy for E307-308. As of 1976-77, partly for financial reasons, only about 30 students tried the exemption exam each semester. Perhaps the administration can find a way of financing this exam. (See "Position Paper" of T.A. Study Committee, chaired by Professors Sutherland & Kruppa, Spring 1977.)
- C. Raise entrance requirements. Specifically, make a 600 Verbal score an admission requirement. Approximately two-thirds of each freshman class now score below 550 on the ECT and thus are obliged to take 306. Even worse, about 83% of those students taking the ECT on campus during the summer or fall score below 550. (See FEPC Minutes for 10/23/78, 2/14/79, 10/30/78, & 9/19/79.)

## VII. Degree Requirements

- A. "One solution to the present situation in Freshman English would be to drop the uniform requirement for the course. . . . This would not mean an end to freshman composition, as evidence from schools where the requirement has been dropped indicates that many students enroll in the courses because they feel they need them. But without the requirement, the numbers would probably drop to a more manageable level, and the general motivation level of the students would probably be much higher." (Excerpt from George Nash, "Who's Minding Freshman English at U.T. Austin" [College English, October 1976].)
- B. In spring 1971, several English Department faculty presented proposals for the lower-division English requirement, which at the time included 6 hours of composition and 6 hours of sophomore literature. These proposals, each accompanied by a list of pros and cons, included:
  - (1) zero-course option (no required courses in English)
  - (2) 6-hour option (with several possibilities: 2 semesters of comp; 1 semester of comp, 1 of literature; 2 semesters of comp/literature combined)
  - (3) 7-hour option (4 hours of Rhetoric & Comp, 3 hours of 314K)
  - (4) 6/3 option (6 hours of comp, 3 hours of literature)
  - (5) 3/6 option (3 hours of comp, 6 hours of literature)
  - (6) 9-hour combination option (3 hours of 306, 3 hours of 307, 3 hours of 314K)
  - (7) 3/3/3 option (3 hours of comp, 3 hours of literature, 3 hours of comparative literature of Sophomore English)
  - (8) 9-hour option with advanced composition (3 hours of Freshman Composition, 3 hours of literature, 3 hours of advanced comp deferred until junior year)
  - (9) 3/6/3 option (3 hours of Freshman Composition, 6 hours of literature, 3 hours of upper-division composition)

Proposal #6, modified to include 308 as an alternative to 307, was adopted by the General Faculty in 1973.

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