

Department plans structure of new English requirements

Editor's note: This is the last of a two-part series examining proposed changes in the English department.

By **SUZANNE TAYLOR**
Daily Texan Staff

The groundwork has been laid for restructuring English course requirements. Now construction, with all its implicit problems, will begin.

The first hurdle for the Department of English is phasing out E 306, a freshman course which still will be required for graduation. Students who do not take the course in the long session during the next two years will have to take it during a summer session or show proficiency by placing out, by transfer or by a University extension course.

Approximately 40 percent of entering freshmen currently place out of E 306.

"If, after all this, we still have students who get here and are short of proficiency in E 306, we'll work with them through the writing center to help them acquire that proficiency," said Joseph Kruppa, professor of

English and chairman of the English committee which authored the proposed course changes.

The department also is considering a composition test students could take to place out of E 306 instead of the standard English Composition Test.

"Some people write well but don't do well on multiple-choice exams," said Lester Faigley, associate professor of English. "The essay test would give students an alternate to the ECT."

James Kinneavy, professor of English, said the composition test is a bad idea, and he is skeptical the department can stop teaching E 306 in two years "unless they exempt people who should not be exempted."

The department plans to expand the current writing lab by boosting computer assisted instruction and offering short courses on a variety of subjects, including those designed to assist students with proficiency in E 306, Faigley said.

John Ruzskiewicz, associate professor of English and current direc-

tor of freshman English, said the department is "setting up a writing center that is really remedial."

"The great irony is that those who have been crying about standards are those that are creating the first remedial element in our department," Ruzskiewicz said.

Lance Bertelsen, assistant professor of English and incoming director of freshman English, said the new writing center will continue its current function as a referral lab, but will be broadened and "work at least as well or better than it does now."

The addition of E 309, a freshman level composition course which will have three variances, may pose additional problems for the department if there is no way for students to place out of the course, Ruzskiewicz said.

Kinneavy agreed the department could end up teaching more students in E 309 than it currently teaches in E 306. A relatively small English faculty and the desire not to hire temporary faculty was the orig-

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inal basis for many decisions on course changes.

Kruppa said students will be able to transfer credit for E 309 (transfer credit for E 346K was not accepted), and said the department is discussing other E 309 placement options.

"We are going to encourage other departments to teach some kind of course in technical writing that we would count for E 309," Kruppa said.

One course the department will not have to worry about is E 346K, a technical writing course which was deleted by University deans in February.

Alan Gribben, associate professor of English, said technical writing is moving more towards technical communications with the increasing use of computers and graphics.

"We tried to look into the future," Gribben said. "And we saw an era when technical communications would no longer be a suitable subject for the English department to specialize in."

Faigley said he would like to see various colleges cooperate to set up an interdisciplinary technical communications program.

"I'd like to see the English department play a part in that program but with other departments as well," Faigley said. "Students need training not only in speaking and

writing, but technically as well."

Ruszkiewicz said he thinks technical writing belongs in the English department.

William Sutherland, professor of English and chairman of the English department, said he disagrees with critics who have said the department does not teach enough writing. He pointed to E 325M, an expository writing course that has space for 100 students, but has only 66 enrolled.

"When people come say we need more expository sections, I say we need more expository students," Sutherland said.

Sutherland added that the department has been functioning better without a large number of temporary faculty (lecturers), and said he looks forward to a better English de-

partment with the course changes.

The Students' Association has been preparing a letter for the English department with suggestions for enacting the new changes.

"We want students to know that

if they don't like it they should let us know because there are ways we can influence these changes," said Angela Cotera, chairwoman of the Students' Association University Policy Committee.

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