

Report of
The Ad Hoc Committee on Composition

Submitted to
Professor Roger Abrahams, Chairman
Department of English

by

Wade Dorman	R. Val LeClercq
Anne Englander	Jan Swearingen
James Garrison	John Walter
Maxine Hairston	Robert Wilson
James Kinneavy	John Trimble (Chairman)

24 April 1975

Introduction:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Composition has met for eight weeks now. During most of that period we have convened on an average of thrice weekly, for 2-3 hours per meeting, and have also met separately numerous times in subcommittees.

It was a wearying but highly educational experience for all of us. Among other things, we came to appreciate the fact that our department is like a vast ecological system, each part of which is intricately dependent on a dozen other parts. Time and again one of us would propose an ingenious, seemingly magical solution only to find it dashed by some little known economic fact, or exigency of staffing, or whatever. After a while the status quo came to seem the unalterable quo.

Complicating matters still further was our awareness, heightened through reading the questionnaires, of the diverse opinions of the faculty on such basic matters as values, priorities, ends, and means. One respondent would hail Freshman Composition as the department's single most important course; the very next respondent would describe it as a jailhouse. One would complain that even our English majors write abominably; the next would characterize this same group as generally proficient writers. One would assert flatly that the freshman course must have a strong rhetoric orientation to be useful; the next would just as flatly dismiss the formal study of rhetoric and logic by freshmen as worse than useless.

The task we faced, then, was a challenging one: to develop proposals that seemed both actually workable to ourselves and capable of satisfying the majority of our colleagues. Throughout, we have tried to respect the rich diversity of the department--our differences in age, in capacities, in interests, in priorities. We have also tried to keep uppermost in our minds perhaps the most basic of questions, "What is best for our students?"

Our report is divided into four major sections. The first section ("Realities and Probabilities") attempts to be informative. Here we enumerate pertinent facts of our departmental life plus some conclusions one can fairly draw from them. These facts and conclusions, we believe, must necessarily form the context for whatever new staffing policies are proposed, be they our own or anyone else's.

The second section ("Summary") gathers up some of the main points of the first section and weaves them into a short position statement--an explanation of where the committee stands, and why.

The third section ("Statement of Principle and Recommendations") attempts first to separate general principles from specific solutions--in other words, separate ends from means. The principle that opens this section is consistent, we feel, with national and local trends, the needs of our students, and the staffing capabilities of our department. We hope it is also consistent with the department's own sense of its priorities. Immediately following the principle, and giving teeth to it, come our actual recommendations. These we have grouped

according to the agents best fitted to implement them. One set of recommendations, for example, is addressed to the Freshman English Policy Committee, another set to the Executive Committee, and a third set to the Chairman.

The last section ("Gloss on the Recommendations") offers a commentary on a few of our recommendations--sometimes clarifying their intent, sometimes pointing up their problematical aspects, sometimes merely giving helpful examples.

We will move that the department vote first on our statement of principle, then on our several recommendations individually so that each may be amended where appropriate. Our desire is not to propose a whole package but rather to suggest a number of possible changes. The motion includes only the principle and the recommendations; the remainder of the report is for informative purposes.

* * * * *

Part I: REALITIES AND PROBABILITIES

A. STAFFING REALITIES

1. The normal staffing formula: After graduate and upper-division courses have been assigned, sophomore and freshman courses are used to complete an individual's workload. These lower-division courses are normally assigned considerably later than the others. Current policy, incidentally, is to tell incoming faculty that they can expect to teach freshmen and sophomore courses.
2. Program requirements: When making teaching assignments, the Chairman and Associate Chairman must take into account various specialized staffing needs that most of us don't consider since we needn't worry about them. E. 306M, for example, must be adequately staffed each semester if our PTC program is not to suffer. So, too, must courses in Linguistics, Black Literature, Folklore, etc.--not to mention all our other graduate and upper-division offerings (120 sections in all).
3. Personnel requirements: In addition to having to keep our special programs adequately staffed, the Chairman and Associate Chairman operate under several other restraints when making staffing assignments:
 - a. A number of persons each semester are automatically exempt from teaching lower-division courses. These persons include: faculty on fractional time; faculty with 6-hour full load clauses in their contracts (at least 3 such); visiting faculty; faculty over 60 who are now being given a 6-hour load; and faculty on terminal contracts. *not for one reason or another in a position*
 - b. Faculty who have taken over ~~unpalatable~~ ^{emergency} assignments in emergencies are often given special consideration in the ensuing semester.
 - c. When faculty are on leave or on special assignment (recruitment, etc.), their regular courses must continue to be staffed.
 - d. Requests from other departments are usually honored.
4. Figures for faculty teaching composition, 1974-75:
 - a. Between them, TA's and Assistant Professors teach 97 1/2% of the entire Freshman Composition (FC) program. More specifically:

TA's	85%
Ass't Profs.	12.5%
Assoc. Profs.	2%
Profs.	.5%
 - b. This semester, 31 regular faculty are teaching at least one section of composition (all varieties). Only 15 of these people, however, are teaching FC. (They account for a total of 20 sections--out of 189--since some teach more than one.) Of these 15 people, 12 are Assistant Professors and 3 are Associate Professors. No Full Professors are currently teaching FC.
5. Figures for faculty teaching lower-division courses this year:
 - a. Fall 1974:
 - (1) 28 Assistant Professors taught 24 sections of FC (that excludes 603) and 23 sections of SL (Sophomore Literature).
 - (2) 12 Associate Professors taught 5 FC and 14 SL.
 - (3) 10 Full Professors taught 2 FC and 9 SL.
 - b. Spring 1975:
 - (1) 23 Assistant Professors taught 17 FC and 22 SL.
 - (2) 10 Associate Professors taught 3 FC and 11 SL.
 - (3) 7 Full Professors taught 0 FC and 7 SL.

- c. Average figures for this year:
 - (1) Of a total of 35 Assistant Professors, an average of 25 per semester account for 20 FC and 22 SL.
 - (2) Of a total of 20 Associate Professors, an average of 11 per semester account for 4 FC and 12 SL.
 - (3) Of a total of 35 Full Professors, an average of 8 per semester account for 1 FC and 8 SL.
6. Staffing figures for TA's (152 total):
 - a. TA's generally teach a load of either 3 FC or 4 SL per year.
 - b. TA's teach 57% of our undergraduate students, based on figures for the current semester.
 - c. TA's teach roughly 1/2 of all the SL courses.
 - (1) Last fall they taught 57 of the 106 sections; this spring they are teaching 36 of the 76 sections.
 - d. Of the ⁶⁷TA's who are in or beyond their 3rd year, all but ²³8 have taught SL. Of these ³³8, ¹³5 have chosen to be freshman counselors or teach 317 or teach in the GHE program.
 - e. 130 TA's teach an average of 175 sections of FC per semester.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The figure for total regular English faculty (90) seems to suggest a large pool of lower-division teaching resources. That figure, however, is highly deceptive, even misleading, because of the many staffing constraints enumerated above. Present program and personnel requirements make it mandatory, then, that the Chairman and Associate Chairman have sufficient flexibility to make numerous ad hoc shifts of our teaching resources. To hamstring these administrators even further with a rigid staffing policy, however equitable and well intentioned, could create more problems than it would solve. In fact, given the present programs our department offers, it would be extremely difficult to implement. What is wanted, perhaps, is a guideline, not a mechanical formula.
2. Of the regular faculty, Assistant Professors teach a disproportionate amount of Freshman Composition.
3. The higher one's rank, the greater the likelihood of one's lower-division assignment being Sophomore Literature.
4. At the present time, very few of our TA's who desire to teach SL are denied this opportunity in the course of their programs.

B. ENROLLMENT REALITIES

1. Graduate figures (1971-74):
 - a. Enrollment is down 34.7%.
 - b. Course offerings are down 25%.
2. Upper-division figures (1971-74):
 - a. Enrollment is down 36.9%.
 - b. Course offerings are down 20%.
3. Sophomore figures (1971-74):
 - a. Enrollment dropped 16.5%.
4. Freshman figures:
 - a. In Fall 1970 we had 118 sections of E.301 (2900 students).
In Fall 1974 we had 138 sections of E.306 (3370 students).

b. Explanations:

- (1) Enrollment has increased because the number of students exempted from FC has declined regularly since 1971, from 49% to 31%--this in spite of the fact that our ECT exemption score of 550 is low (the same as Ball State) compared to many other institutions. In the California State University system, for example, anyone who scores under 550 must take remedial English.
- (2) U.T.-Austin figures parallel the national decline in literacy. The SAT-Verbal is down from a national average of 478 in 1962 to 444 in 1974-- a drop of 15%.

- c. Abolishing the FC requirement in several other universities has had no appreciable effect on enrollment. Two recent national studies showed that when the requirement is dropped, there is usually little decline in enrollment. Why? Because students themselves apparently think they need the course and take it voluntarily. Also, the requirement is often reinstated as a collegial or departmental requirement.
- d. HEW has demanded that U.T.-Austin enroll more minority students.

5. Ratio of lower-division to upper-division and graduate enrollments:

- a. FC and SL constitute slightly over 75% of our departmental enrollments.

6. Enrollments in E.325M and E.325:

- a. Enrollment in E.325M ("Advanced Expository Writing") has jumped from 19 students/semester last year to approximately 60 students/semester this year (with additional students turned away because they could not be accommodated).
- b. Enrollment in E.325 ("Creative Writing") is also strong. Sections tend to be enrolled to capacity.

CONCLUSIONS:

- 1. Although graduate, upper-division, and sophomore enrollments have significantly declined since 1971, FC enrollment has increased. At the same time, our staffing resources (reg. faculty and TA's) have remained more or less stable. Consequently, more involvement in FC has been required of Assistant Professors.
- 2. If current trends continue, the number of FC sections will soon equal or surpass the combined number of our other offerings. Below are the average distributions of our course section offerings per semester:

FC	}	212	(increasing)
Soph	{	120	(decreasing)
Upper-div.		90	
Grad		30	

- 3. If the declines continue, the number of regular faculty teaching graduate and upper-division courses will necessarily be lowered. These faculty members will be forced to teach sophomore and freshman courses.
- 4. IF these faculty members are assigned to sophomore courses, they will displace the TA's currently involved in the sophomore program, thus depriving future TA's of any training in teaching literature.
- 5. While our cutting score for FC is already low, raising it would substantially increase the number of FC classes. For example, raising our present score of 550 to 600 would exempt 15% instead of 31% of the freshman class--an addition of 818 students in E.306.

That means 32 more sections at a cost of \$50,000. Lowering the cutting score, on the other hand, would result in our exempting students who seriously need the freshman course. Since neither option seems palatable, the present cutting score should probably not be altered appreciably.

6. We will almost inevitably need remedial lab sections in the FC program, owing to the advent of minority students and the general decline in literacy. It makes sense, we believe, to start developing our remedial resources now, not after the fact. In truth, a good many of our present FC students may already need the extra help badly, as attested by several respondents to our questionnaire.

C. ECONOMIC REALITIES

1. General and local situations:
 - a. In a period of spiraling inflation, English departments are further affected by the results of declining enrollments.
 - b. We have a "no new taxes" Governor and a University president who is attempting to shift resources from the College of Humanities to colleges with increasing enrollments.
2. Total salary budget (1974-75): \$2,237,450.
 - a. Of this, regular faculty (who teach approximately 47% of our total enrollment) get \$1,630,354.
 - b. Of this, TA's and AI's (who teach approximately 53% of our total enrollment) get \$607,096.
3. The University salary scale for TA's (at 50% time--i.e., 20 hrs/wk):
 - a.

TA I (B.A. only)	\$3200 (1st year)	\$3400 (2nd year)
TA II (M.A. only)	\$3600 (1st year)	\$3750 (2nd year)
TA III (candidate)	\$3750 (1st year)	\$4000 (2nd year)
 - b. Our minimal TA salary base (annual \$6400, half time \$3200) is \$200 below the Texas minimal public school teacher salary for beginning B.A.'s (\$6,600). This Texas minimal salary of \$6600 is ranked 39th nationally (1973-74).
4. Size of FC classes:
 - a. Some respondents in the questionnaire suggested reducing the size of our freshman sections. This spring, 4,326 students were taught in 197 FC sections--an average of 22.0 students per section. Were we to ask for a ceiling of 20 students per section, we would require 19 additional sections, which would mean an additional outlay of \$36-40,000 for the first semester alone. Were we to ask for a ceiling of 15 students per section, we would require 91 additional sections, which would mean an additional outlay of \$172,900, again for the first semester alone.
5. National trends with economic implications:
 - a. English enrollments have declined nationally much more significantly in upper-division and graduate courses than in Freshman English.
 - b. One trend has been to replace SL by a general humanities requirement.
 - c. A recent survey of 12 institutions similar in size and stature to U.T.-Austin revealed that 8 no longer have any college literature requirement.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Our financial situation is precarious. It would be hazardous to risk the loss of either FC or SL because they constitute 75% of

our total enrollment, and enrollments generate money--also because TA's constitute 54% of our graduate students and thus generate a substantial amount of our graduate budget.

2. TA salaries are far too low, especially considering the disproportionate number of contact hours our TA's have relative not only to other TA's on campus but to the regular English faculty as well.
3. Despite our shrinking financial base, the Ad Hoc Committee nevertheless concludes that the composition program needs more financial support, as will be seen in the Recommendations. In the future, this will probably require some reordering of priorities.

D. EDUCATIONAL REALITIES

1. Students:

- a. The University of Texas recognizes the importance of producing literate citizens by requiring its students to take English composition and literature.
- b. Freshmen are taught by 2 1/2% of our tenured faculty.

2. Senior faculty:

- a. A good number of our older senior colleagues have devoted many years of their professional careers to developing literate citizens by teaching FC.

3. Junior faculty:

- a. New Assistant Professors and Instructors realistically have about 4 years in which to achieve scholarly recognition sufficient to ensure likely promotion. During this period they must also develop some 5-7 courses from scratch, regularly teach FC, and shoulder a number of committee responsibilities.

4. TA's:

- a. They are required to take 9 hours of course work per semester (while usually teaching 6 hours).
- b. In a recent survey of graduate English departments, 51% did not require TA's to take any courses at all. U.T.-Austin was among the 3 or 4 most demanding in this area of all 108 institutions surveyed.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Since the lower-division English requirement is a University-wide requirement, presumably it embodies one of the main functions of this University.
2. The Freshman English program is not one of the major preoccupations of the senior staff.
3. In view of the past contributions to the FC program by many of our Full Professors, it seems unjust to use an inflexible formula to force them back into the freshman program.
4. Some Assistant Professors, because of their efforts in the FC program, often do not have the necessary time to achieve the scholarly recognition which the department expects of its full citizens.
5. Given the demands of their workload, it is almost impossible for TA's to be both effective teachers and serious students.
6. Given the increasing demand for composition generally, efforts should be made to exploit the potential of E.310 ("Expository Writing"). This entails staffing demands.

Part II: SUMMARY: THE COMMITTEE'S POSITION

The Charge to the Committee

At the departmental meeting of 18 February 1975, Mr. Megaw and Mr. Sledd moved the adoption of the following proposal:

That every member of the regular faculty of the Department of English will teach at least one section of Composition (Freshman, Sophomore, or Upper Division) every three semesters. Exceptions to this Departmental policy will be permitted with the consent of the Chairman after consultation with the E.C. and with Directors of courses in composition.

Because time ran short, discussion of the proposal was deferred until February 25th. After considerable debate at that later meeting, Mr. Kinneavy moved "that we refer the issue to a committee for further study" (Departmental Minutes, 25 February 1975). This motion was unanimously approved. Thereupon, Mr. Abrahams appointed an ad hoc committee, asking it to report to the full department by April 15th. Because of a calendar conflict, however, the date of the departmental meeting was subsequently changed to April 24th.

For the past eight weeks, then, the Ad Hoc Committee on Composition has addressed itself to the issue raised by the proposal, its intent, and its feasibility. We report here our conclusions.

The Issue and Its Intent

At the February 18th meeting, Mr. Megaw, in explaining the rationale of the proposal, stressed these points:

- Because Freshman Composition is a required University course, we have an obligation to other departments to assume responsible charge of the freshman program.
- Involving senior faculty in the FC program will help to unify the department and enrich the program.
- One further effect of the proposal would be to preserve an adequate number of Sophomore Literature sections for training TA's to teach literature.

At the following departmental meeting, Mr. Sledd briefly summarized the purpose of the proposal as he understood it: "He [Sledd] emphasized its intent--to recover a tradition in which English departments concern themselves with teaching writing as well as literature" (Departmental Minutes, 25 February 1975).

After considerable deliberation, the Ad Hoc Committee strongly endorses these various statements of intent. We see them as embodying four major components.

First, the English Department has an obligation to educate to literacy the students entrusted to us by the University. This obligation is embodied in the University's 9-hour lower-division English requirement. As long as the requirement

exists, and as long as the English Department receives major emoluments because of it, we have a contractual obligation to turn out literate students. Implicitly, we also assume a moral obligation to do the best job of it that we are capable of.

Second, meeting merely this one obligation is a major function of the department, providing it with a central part of its raison d'etre. It could hardly be otherwise since Freshman Composition and Sophomore Literature constitute slightly over 75% of our total enrollment. However, the department must also meet several further obligations--to its own undergraduate majors, to other upper-division students who take its courses, to its graduate students, and to the world of scholarship and research. This being the case, the department's contractual obligation to its lower-division students must necessarily be construed as a group obligation, not the individual responsibility of all its members, some of whom may be engaged in meeting the department's other major responsibilities. The economic corollary to this is that, given our many program and staffing requirements, we must decide upon the most efficient allocation of limited resources.

Third, because historically (and unavoidably) the department has met its lower-division obligation by extensive use of TA's, the department, the college, and the University must guarantee that these TA's are responsibly trained as students and teachers, and fairly treated as integral members of the English Department.

Fourth, recognizing the importance of the TA's carries with it the implicit recognition of the integral nature of our lower-division program in the entire departmental structure.

The concepts embodied in the four preceding paragraphs form the basis for our Statement of Principle, which follows in Part III.

The Feasibility of the Megaw-Sledd Proposal

The committee began by carefully evaluating the merits and possible drawbacks of applying the Megaw-Sledd formula in the light of the departmental obligations discussed above.

We concluded that the proposal undoubtedly has many merits. Among other things, it would put freshmen in contact with more of our experienced and illustrious teachers, many of whom they might never otherwise meet; it would put these same senior professors in touch with the problems and minds of freshmen, many of whom they might not otherwise meet either; it would result in the introduction of some new, creative techniques for teaching the course; it would distribute much more equitably the so-called "drudgery" of teaching FC; it would increase the sense of collegueship between TA's and regular faculty since all of them would periodically be teaching the same courses; it would demonstrate to our freshmen (and to the legislature) that our department really does care about providing quality instruction for all students, not simply those in the upper-division and graduate ranks; it would convince at least a few professors that teaching FC is not the boring, tedious experience they had heard it was; it would give everyone a definite stake in seeing the FC courses improved, and thus would increase the amount of thought, training, and money put into them.

The policy has evident merits, then. But it also has drawbacks so serious as to cancel out many of these merits, making them merely theoretical. One obvious drawback is this: being coercive, the policy would inevitably breed resentment and

and resistance in those faculty members who, for whatever reason, have no interest in FC. This negativism would just as inevitably get communicated to the students, and the students (not to mention the faculty) would ironically find themselves even worse off than before. Here is how an E.308sp student viewed the matter when a TA recently assigned his class a paper in which they were to weigh the merits of the Megaw-Sledd proposal:

If a professor dislikes a course which he is teaching, in this case a Freshman English course, he will soon come to abhor it. This abhorrence will seriously interfere with his ability to prepare and teach that particular course. The students of this course will be confronted with an air of animosity and drudgery toward the professor and the course. Such an atmosphere will destroy any hope of the students learning what they were intended to learn. The freshman student is, therefore, injured because he will be expected to know, in later semesters, that which he was never taught.

An overwhelming majority of this student's classmates, although strongly approving the proposal's intent, expressed similar misgivings as to its feasibility. One of them remarked, for example:

I would rather be taught by a less than qualified, though interested, T.A. than by a brilliant professor who thoroughly disliked teaching freshmen. If one of these well-respected academicians was dragged into my class and forced to teach under threat of his job, I would drop the course and find a willing computer. If a teacher is unwilling to teach me, then, of course, I have no use for him. . . .

In summary, let me state that I am opposed to the Megaw-Sledd motion, if not in principle, then in practice. The most compelling reason, for me, is simply that I do not want to try to learn from anyone who does not want to teach. . . .

And still another:

I, for one, would not want to sit in a class and feel the wrath of a bored professor for a whole semester.

(It would be wrong, incidentally, to assume that these students were merely parroting the view of their TA. He himself would vote for the Megaw-Sledd proposal.)

A second drawback is that not every English professor is suited to teaching Freshman Composition, just as not every English professor is suited to teaching linguistics. Doing a competent job in FC requires two skills: the ability to teach composition, and the ability to reach freshmen. Some of us have one skill but not the other; some of us have neither skill and openly acknowledge the fact. Surely our Director of Freshman English (whoever that person happens to be) would be as reluctant to have as staffmembers people unqualified for the job as he would people openly hostile to the job. Not only would his program suffer, but his own position as Director would be uncomfortable, to say the least.

A third drawback is that the policy would subvert other departmental offerings by regularly transferring the personnel who staff them. While none of us are finally indispensable, some of us, by virtue of special expertise, are genuinely needed by

certain programs. Would it make sense to jeopardize, or perhaps even sacrifice, those programs merely to rotate their staffmembers through the freshman program? Surely the students who eventually reached those programs would shout a loud "No."

A fourth drawback, mentioned repeatedly in the questionnaires, was one already sounded by Mr. Rebhorn in his position paper, namely, the "inherent inequity [concerning] the matter of exemptions." Since his paper illuminated the problem well, we need not reconsider it here.

Finally and most seriously, the application of the Megaw-Sledd proposal does not appreciably increase the participation of regular faculty in the freshman program--if by "participation" one means the number of people teaching FC at any one time. (It would, however, increase the number of different personnel involved in FC, since the teachers would be rotated. This could be regarded as an advantage or disadvantage, depending on the importance one attaches to having a continuing staff in the program.) Even the most ruthless application of the Megaw-Sledd formula--that is, ignoring all program requirements except composition--yields at most 4 to 7 additional sections of FC staffed by regular faculty each semester. We found, moreover, that the preceding objections are inherent in any mechanical staffing formula, for we tried others with very similar results. Consequently, we regard such inflexible formulas as infeasible.

The Committee's Suggestions

So where does all this leave us? We cannot legislate commitment and interest; we cannot ask people to assume talents or traits they don't possess; we cannot remove key personnel from various programs that we have spent years and considerable money to develop. Perhaps the sheer force of economic or numerical necessity can do these things--and indeed it may--but we cannot.★

There are, however, some things that we can do. One of them is to sensitize ourselves to the imperatives that confront us. As an Associate Professor observed on his questionnaire: "We have a moral imperative to at least attempt to bring these victims of cultural narcosis [i.e., freshmen] to full conscious awareness. Otherwise we are directly implicated in the decline and fall of the literacy and humane culture we profess to profess." The same theme was sounded even more pointedly by a Full Professor: "I do regard [teaching freshmen] as an obligation for every one of us. Literacy is our business, finally. If we leave literacy to its own devices it will die." We can also sensitize ourselves to the glaring inequities of the present situation. Examples:

Freshmen get to be taught by a mere 2 1/2% of our tenured faculty; and those people by whom they are primarily taught--the TA's--are given no systematic training to prepare them for the task.

Some of our TA's, soon to be professors like ourselves, may be deprived of adequate experience in teaching literature.

Assistant Professors teach nearly 6 times the amount of FC as their tenured colleagues.

This semester 3 Associate Professors, out of 20, are teaching FC.

There are still other, more concrete things we can do, some of which we have incorporated into our recommendations that follow. However, we are not proposing, nor even contemplating, a radical restructuring of the department's curriculum. Nor are we interested in seeing composition become the dominant emphasis of the department. This we wish to make plain. We would like to see, however, a deeper, more widespread commitment to the Freshman program--which means more people involved in FC, more people thinking about FC, more people sharing the work that FC demands. It is our biggest program and surely one of our most important programs, and it deserves our support. Even self-interest argues this, for the better job we do with our freshmen, the more we are likely to attract as majors--plus the better trained they will be when they arrive in our upper-division courses.

We would also like to see the department strengthen those other courses which, like FC, are concerned with the development of expressive skills. (Examples are E.310 and E.325M.) If a person is not able to use his own language, he is able to do precious little that is worth doing. Communication, persuasion, even just plain thinking--all are dependent on the language arts. And, as our colleague noted, "Literacy is our business, finally."

- 1 - improve comp. course: more flexible, attractive
- 2 - improve TA training
- 3 - recruit teachers of comp.
- 4 - rewards for commitment to program.

Part III: STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE:

The department recognizes composition as an important, integral element in its total program of instruction and research, and commits itself to strengthening its composition courses at all levels.

rhetoric 5 - lower enrollment:

of equal status of other elements in the program

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The department encourages the efforts of the Freshman English Policy Committee to develop a more flexible freshman program and to improve the quality of the freshman composition courses (306, 307, 308). Specifically, regarding the courses themselves, the department instructs the FEPC to:
 - (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 gloss)
 - (b) Invite regular faculty participation in planning the freshman program by holding well-publicized open meetings each year at which time new directions and possibilities for experimentation would be discussed.
 - (c) Through the CIC, periodically circulate reports of experimental courses, results of earlier experiments, and suggestions for further innovations to keep the faculty abreast of what is happening in the freshman program.
 - (d) Consider the establishment of a referral lab for remedial students who require special help in addition to what they are already receiving in their regular freshman English course.

Regarding supervision of teaching assistants, the department instructs the FEPC to:

- (e) Accelerate efforts to establish a summer orientation program to be required of inexperienced TA's. (See gloss)
- (f) Expand the existing peer TA counseling program to include counseling of TA's by a few volunteers from the regular faculty. (See gloss)

P: 6/24/68

2. The department asks the Executive Committee to establish policies with regard to recruitment and promotion that will recognize excellence in teaching composition and research related to composition. Specifically, in the area of staffing, the EC is urged to:

- (a) Request that the administration allow us to employ TA's beyond the present 7-semester term of service. (See gloss) *(end of 9-hr rule) support movement in grad. assembly to reduce the requirements*
- (b) Offer a limited number of one-year appointments as Assistant Professors to new Texas Ph.D.'s to teach two sections of FC per semester. (These could be 2/3 time appointments or, adding a sophomore course to the load, full time.)
- (c) Hire new Assistant Professors who, in addition to other qualifications, can demonstrate willingness and ability to teach composition. (See gloss)
- (d) Hire some faculty trained as composition/rhetoric specialists. (See gloss)
- (e) Cooperate with the GSC in giving full support to the experimental in-service training program for junior college teachers, most of whom will teach freshman composition courses while they are here.
- (f) Require inexperienced TA's to take graduate work in teaching English. (See gloss)

> recommend 9-hr rule change
In the area of promotion and reward, the EC is urged to:

- (g) Weigh excellence in teaching composition equally with excellence in teaching literature when making promotion decisions involving junior faculty and merit pay increases involving all regular faculty.
- (h) Give some priority to the requests for summer employment to those who have participated in the freshman program.
- (i) Allow any faculty member who volunteers to teach a composition course beyond the freshman level a one-course load reduction during the first semester that he teaches the course.
- (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.

- (k) Reward TA's who have contributed significantly to the freshman program with a course off during the semester in which they take their orals. (See gloss)
 - (l) Continue to press efforts to increase TA salaries.
3. The department encourages the Chairman to use his authority to assist -- in any way he can -- those who volunteer to teach composition courses, and to keep these courses adequately staffed as student need requires. Specifically, the department urges the chairman to:
- (a) Provide more secretarial assistance to composition teachers, perhaps by hiring two clerk-typists to be used exclusively by them.
 - (b) ~~Resist any~~ ^{initiate/encourage} administration efforts to ~~increase the~~ ^{reduce} ~~size~~ ^{max.} of freshman classes.
 - (c) Set up a committee to coordinate and improve composition courses at all levels, the membership to be composed of representatives of the FEPC and the other composition course committees.
 - (d) Should the decline in our upper-division and graduate enrollment continue, the chairman is urged to use his discretion in assigning regular faculty to all composition courses, relying -- insofar as possible -- on the following guideline: at least every other time a regular faculty member is scheduled to teach a lower-division course as part of his normal load, that course shall be in freshman composition. (See gloss)

→ breastfully remis.
A Meeting of Travis delegation.
Legis. budget board.
(-I-C- do Francis

Part IV: GLOSS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1a In a recent document forwarded to the Chairman, the EC, and the Dean, the FEPC has already committed itself to pluralism both in texts and approaches. It intends to encourage continual innovation and experimentation. For the fall semester, for example, the FEPC will depart from the traditional practice of using only one basic composition text in all sections of 306 and, instead, will use four different texts. In addition this fall, alternative approaches will be tried in E.306 (Susan Wittig's individualized instructional techniques -- 10 sections), E.307 (Wilma Ebbitt's syllabus -- 1/2 the total number of sections), E.308 (Tony Hilfer's popular culture variant -- 1/3 of the total number of sections). One Full Professor, responding to the questionnaire, happened to state the FEPC's philosophy succinctly: "The course should be organized but not dictated. Principles of reason and writing and grammar may be prescribed; but the individual teacher must have a margin in methods and materials. Approval of an individual's plan, especially the beginner's, should be required."
- 1e This recommendation presupposes that, insofar as possible, TA's will be hired during the spring and early summer. Indeed, we also hope that in the future regular staff will receive their lower division assignments early enough to allow for adequate preparation. As one Full Professor complained: "I find most troublesome not knowing just what I'm supposed to teach until the day before or weekend before. Give us at least a month's notice of the kind of course."
- 1f The FEPC is currently considering the adoption of various sections of E.398T to parallel the experimental approaches being developed in the FC program. Each section would be taught by a volunteer member of the regular faculty, who would also supervise and counsel the TA's in his section.
- 2a This request has already been made and granted for next year. We would, nevertheless, like to have some assurance from the administration that extended service for TA's will be possible on a regular basis.
- 2c All other qualifications being equal, the EC should give preference to applicants who can enrich the Freshman English program. This policy presupposes that such participation is regarded as a significant contribution counting toward promotion. Hiring under this new guideline and then subsequently penalizing participation in the FC program would be morally reprehensible.
- 2d This suggestion had its genesis in the discovery that every application of mechanical formulae (like the Megaw-Sledd proposal) resulted in only 4 to 7 additional sections,

staffed under coercion. An equivalent number of sections could be obtained by hiring two composition/rhetoric specialists, who would be voluntarily committed to teaching composition.

- 2f At least four courses in English presently exist for this purpose (E.381L, E.383L, E.393M, E.398T).
- 2k This is not mere lipservice; similar alleviations are granted at some other institutions.
- 3c This committee is not intended to preempt the coordinating function of the CIC, nor the autonomy of individual course committees, nor the final responsibility of the department to determine the nature of each of its courses. Its general purpose, rather, is to develop and coordinate a unified departmental composition program, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- 3d Such discretionary power is, of course, already the prerogative of the Chairman. However, this committee feels that what it has learned in studying the staffing, enrollment, economic, and educational realities of the current situation, makes the exercise of such a discretionary power mandatory. These realities make equally mandatory the establishment of a continuing policy, derivative of the department and independent of any individual chairman, a policy which will obviate for the future both departmental and administrative caprice. The adoption of this guideline should provide a basis for the hard staffing decisions which will face us in the future should current enrollment and economic trends continue.