

Dec. 1, 1992

The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will have greater responsibilities than the current writing program within the English Department, but will give the university a composition program equal to the best in the country while enhancing the resources and energies of the English Department itself. Faculty from the division will maintain and develop all of the existing writing courses--providing training, syllabi, and course materials for composition classes routinely taught by Assistant Instructors from the Department of English (E306, E 306Q, and the three versions of E309). Faculty will reconsider the rationale and instrument for placing students out of E 306 and look for alternatives to current requirements that make it difficult for students testing out of E 306 to receive lower-division instruction in writing. They will support or offer composition courses designed to enhance the retention of minority or special students. They will coordinate upper division composition offerings and consider new undergraduate courses in rhetorical theory and history.

The division will make the training of new elementary and secondary teachers of English a priority. We expect every future teacher the English Department graduates to be a competent writer and a capable teacher of composition. Expanding what is already done in E 360M, the division hopes to make supervised tutoring opportunities available to these English Education majors and to establish a portfolio system to evaluate their own progress as writers.

The division will explore ways of enhancing the training of AIs, especially those teaching E 306Q and E 309 who currently receive little or no training. Faculty will explore new procedures for evaluating AI teaching so that assistant instructors are assured of evaluations useful

when they approach the job market. AIs having difficulty with their teaching will have regular and dependable assistance from the administrators of the division.

Faculty in the division will establish procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of its courses, programs, and facilities. (There are currently no programmatic evaluations of writing courses in the English Department.)

The division will move quickly to computerize most of its composition classes, thereby assisting the College of Liberal Arts in claiming a fair share of computer assets on this campus. The division will provide support for the computer writing research lab, which will continue as a facility interested in literature, language, and composition. In addition, the division has been encouraged to consider the establishment of a drop-in writing center for students in composition or substantial writing component courses.

Finally, faculty in the Division of Rhetoric and Composition have been encouraged to take a leading role in improving the university's substantial writing component courses. This is a major new responsibility, but one with great potential for encouraging faculty across the disciplines to understand what they can do to enhance literacy on this campus.