

Minutes, Freshman English Policy Committee

October 23, 11:00 - 12:00

Parlin 8A

Members present: Kinneavy, Ruszkiewicz, Witte, Cameron, Creel, Byars, Hart

Agenda:

- Approval of minutes
- Burns request
- Subcommittee assignments
- 398T
- Admissions standards

1. Minutes of October 16, 1978, were approved after extensive corrections. Mr. Cameron, who kept the minutes last year, then asked to go on record as commending Mr. Hart for a good set of minutes. There was no laughter, and Mr. Hart expressed his thanks.

During discussion of the October 16 minutes, which state that for the last several years one-third of our freshmen have been placing out of 306, Mr. Cameron said that according to Dr. Wittig only 13% placed out this year. Dr. Kinneavy expressed concern and added that President Rogers recently told the University Council that this year's figure was down but that the admissions criteria had not changed and that although no policy meeting had been held to consider such changes, she would accept proposals regarding them and would not be averse to tightening admission standards. Dr. Kinneavy suggested that we consider proposing to make a 600 SAT Verbal score an admission requirement.

Ms. Byars asked what the current standards require, and Dr. Kinneavy provided the following chart:

Regular Admission:

- for Texas residents -
 - standing in top 10% of high school class + any SAT score
 - standing in top 30% of high school class + 800 SAT total
 - standing in top 75% of high school class + 1000 SAT total

- for non-Texas residents -
 - standing in top 50% of high school class + 1000 SAT total

Provisional Admission:

Students who do not meet regular requirements may enter in the spring or the summer and gain admission by taking four courses in math, English, foreign language, and science, and maintaining a C average in these courses.

Dr. Kinneavy also noted that some four hundred provisional students enter each year but that although the provisional program was instituted to increase minority enrollment, few minority students enter this way now.

2. Mr. Cameron asked to have subcommittee assignments considered next because he would need to leave early. The committee agreed to do so, and discussion followed. Mr. Cameron volunteered to serve on the New and Variant Course Subcommittee, and Dr. Kinneavy observed that having such a member would be especially important if we send an omnibus evaluation report to the U.C. Mr. Creel remarked that it might be difficult to find someone who could actually serve. There was general agreement on this point since scheduled leave periods and departmental

Ms Byars suggested that we add a dept. member who ~~is~~ is not an FER member to serve on this committee and

committee assignments might interfere. Dr. Kinneavy said that a former freshman director such as Dr. Hairston or Dr. Sutherland would make a helpful addition to the subcommittee, but Dr. Witte recalled that Dr. Hairston will be on leave in the spring. After adding Mr. Cameron to the New and Variant Course Subcommittee and Dr. Kinneavy to the 398T Subcommittee, the committee approved the previous list of assignments and agreed to reflect further on an outside member for the Program Evaluation Subcommittee.

3. Mr. Cameron began discussion of Hugh Burns's request by saying that he thinks Mr. Burns is a capable person and a thorough researcher whose project will likely produce a valuable curriculum design, one which will provide a useful invention process for all freshman writing courses, not just for computer-instructed ones. Dr. Kinneavy noted that the Burns project makes a rare "open" use of computers.

Dr. Witte said that although he doesn't see how a computer can be programmed to recognize variable sequences in an invention process and that although Mr. Burns's request doesn't describe the project very fully, he would be willing to approve the request in deference to Mr. Burns's dissertation committee, which is enthusiastic about the project. Pointing out that Mr. Burns had offered to appear before the FEPC, Mr. Creel suggested that we ask him to do so since some members had questions about his plans. Dr. Witte moved that Mr. Burns be invited to the next meeting, and the motion carried. Dr. Kinneavy added that Mr. Burns is here on leave from the Air Force Academy and that he is exploring computer applications at the Academy's request.

4. Dr. Kinneavy asked Ms. Byars whether the Graduate Program Committee had expressed any concerns about 398T. She replied that while none of the members seems worried yet about the fact that graduate students can count only one 398T toward a degree, there is much concern about graduate courses not making and about whether 398T drains enrollment from other courses, especially since three of the approximately twenty-five graduate courses usually offered are 398T's. Later, she added that she thinks the GPC is becoming aware of the legal problems associated with 398T.

Next, the committee discussed the merits of 398T, beginning with a statement by Ms. Byars that despite the benefits AI's derive from the program, it has the clear disadvantage of not really helping them progress toward their degrees. Dr. Ruzskiewicz said that, moreover, according to his students last spring, 307-398T isn't even very helpful for teaching purposes because AI's already know how to teach literature. Mr. Creel added that some AI's may find any 398T superfluous: he, for example, had already taken two 398T-equivalent courses before coming to UT. Dr. Kinneavy suggested that we seek opinions of former 307-398T instructors, and Ms. Byars observed that former students could also provide helpful information.

Dr. Kinneavy agreed and outlined a memorandum for polling these instructors and students, a memo that would pose the general problem in three parts -- (1) the Graduate School has gone on record as agreeing with the Operating Handbook that 398T can be required only of AI's without either prior experience or a prior course in pedagogy, (2) as many as seven 398T courses can be offered each year, a large enough number, perhaps, to interfere with other course offerings, and (3) AI's can count only one 398T toward their degrees -- and that would then solicit opinions on a proposal to make one 306-398T obligatory and to substitute

for the present 307-398T a 383 course which interested AI's could not only take but also count toward their degrees.

The prospective memo provoked several more comments. Ms. Byars reiterated her concern that AI's not be required to take courses which don't count. Mr. Creel responded by speculating that since required courses generate tuition money, some bias in favor of them may continue to exist for the sake of the balance sheet. Dr. Kinneavy then made a different fiscal observation: the proposed 383 option might be attractive as a further credential for AI's, who will soon be scrambling for jobs in a composition-oriented market. There was a unanimous murmur of agreement, after which the committee agreed to add a further question to the memo: should AI's be required to take 306-398T?

Mr. Creel pointed out that even if they don't have to, some new AI's will want to take the 306-398T for help with their teaching. Dr. Witte said that his TA students seem to think their 398T isn't a "real" teacher-preparation course and that they would like to meet with some experienced teachers. Dr. Ruskiewicz laughed and said that his TA's last spring complained because they had been thrown into a group with AI's. Dr. Witte then mentioned another possible motive in student attitudes toward 398T: Dr. Rebhorn has been urging TA's to take twelve hours each semester. Some discussion followed, during which Dr. Kinneavy noted that the current nine-hour requirement had been difficult to win approval for.

Dr. Witte suggested that we run an intensive two-week 398T course each August for new 306 instructors. Ms. Byars speculated that we might have problems getting AI's degree credit for such a course, but Dr. Kinneavy replied that such problems could probably be circumvented. Finally, Ms. Byars requested that the entire 398T problem be referred to the 398T subcommittee.