



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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SEPTEMBER 1, 1992

TO: MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT
FROM: JOE KRUPPA 

DEAN KING GAVE ME THESE DOCUMENTS THIS MORNING. HE INDICATED THAT THIS PROPOSAL WILL TAKE EFFECT ON JUNE 1, 1993.

HE EXPRESSED A WISH TO WORK WITH MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE SURE THAT THIS CHANGE TAKES PLACE IN AN ORDERLY AND REASONABLE MANNER.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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August 28, 1992

Interim Dean Robert D. King
College of Liberal Arts
WMB 201 (52600)

Dear Bob:

I am very pleased to approve the proposal to establish a Division of Rhetoric and Composition as an instructional unit of the College of Liberal Arts that is to be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses. I ask that you proceed to develop a detailed operating plan for the Division. Subject to fiscal review and approval of the operating plan by the Provost, it is understood that the Division will become operational on June 1, 1993, or as soon thereafter as may be feasible.

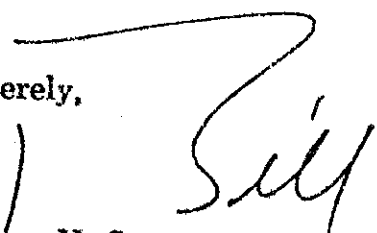
The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition that would be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses was strongly recommended by the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience. As the Committee noted, The University has made in the past decade a number of significant efforts to provide opportunities for students to improve their writing skills. The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition as recommended by the Committee represents a bold new initiative and reemphasizes The University's commitment to the central importance of writing skills in higher education.

The report of the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience and my responses to the recommendations contained in that report received wide distribution through the December 9, 1991 and May 11, 1992 issues of *On Campus*. The University community responded very favorably to the Committee's recommendation to establish a Division of Rhetoric and Composition. I also asked the deans of The University's colleges and schools to review this recommendation from the perspective of the needs of their students and their curricula. They gave it their enthusiastic endorsement and expressed the view that the establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition would bring about a new and valuable focus to the improvement of writing skills that are critically needed by students in all undergraduate program areas.

Interim Dean Robert D. King
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The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be a great step forward in the continuing improvement of the undergraduate educational experience. It is one of the most exciting undertakings that I have been privileged to participate in during my years as President of The University.

Sincerely,



William H. Cunningham
President

WHC/sts

xc: Academic Deans
Vice President William S. Livingston
Vice President Gerhard J. Fonken

A Proposal for a Division of Rhetoric and Composition

- I. Function
- II. Structure
- III. Logistics
- IV. Faculty
- V. Rationale

I. Function

The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be responsible for administering, staffing, and supervising writing and rhetoric courses and the undergraduate writing program within the College of Liberal Arts.

a. Administering. The Division will supervise Plan I lower-division writing courses currently listed as E 306, E 306Q, E 309K, E 309L, and E 309M and any future lower division writing courses. The Division will establish the content of these courses, develop and approve appropriate syllabi, pilot test new courses, authorize course variants, and choose textbooks, subject to established review by the College Course and Curriculum Committee. The Division will also be responsible for all 398T courses related to undergraduate writing classes.

The Division will be similarly responsible for developing and supporting upper-division undergraduate writing and rhetoric courses currently listed as E 325M, E 360M, E 368E, and E 379C.

The Division will administer the summer provisional E 306 program and any special writing courses, lab courses, or writing programs (such as SSP E 306 course).

The Division will provide advice and professional assistance to teachers of substantial writing component courses within the College of Liberal Arts and to the University community at large.

The Division will schedule all writing courses. It will handle all queries, complaints, and other matters related to the operation of a

writing program. It will provide the typical support services (duplicating, typing, audio and video equipment) needed in writing courses.

The Division will supervise the computer writing lab and will also administer any other writing labs or centers developed within the College of Liberal Arts.

b. **Staffing.** The Division will be responsible for staffing undergraduate writing courses and any related 398T courses. The Director of the Division of Rhetoric and Composition will appoint all TAs and AIs within the Division, subject to the approval of the Dean.

Faculty appointments in the Division will be made by the Director, subject to approval of the Dean. In cases of tenure and tenure-track appointments the Director shall consult with the chair of the faculty member's department and the Dean prior to making an appointment.

The Division will select, appoint, and supervise its secretarial and support staff.

c. **Supervising.** The Division will supervise all teaching within the writing division. It will develop an orientation program for TAs, AIs and new lecturers, regularly observe and supervise AIs in their teaching, evaluate all instruction, and supervise grading.

The Division will develop and publish grading policies and standards for its multisection writing courses.

II. Structure

a. The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be an administrative and budgeted unit of the College of Liberal Arts and will make recommendations for hiring, promotion, and salary directly to the Dean of Liberal Arts.

b. The division will have these officers.

Director. A faculty member appointed by the Dean of Liberal Arts. The Director will administer the Division's budget and will

be responsible for policy, curriculum, AI hiring, staff hiring, teacher supervision, and teacher training within the Division. He or she will appoint committees and subcommittees within the Division to handle course policy, syllabus development, textbook selection and evaluation, and so on.

Associate Director. A faculty member appointed by the Director of the Division of Writing in consultation with the Dean of Liberal Arts. The Associate Director will be primarily responsible for scheduling and staffing of courses, supervising course testing and placement, coordinating course evaluations and grading, and handling other matters determined by the Division Director.

Coordinator of Writing Lab(s). Appointed by the Director to staff and administer any computer and lab facilities.

III. Logistics

a. Courses. The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be responsible for the courses listed in the table below. Figures for course offerings are from the 1992 spring, summer and fall catalogs. Estimates for number of students in lower-division writing classes are based on the nominal assumption that E 306/309 classes will register 20 students on average, although the actual limit on such sections is higher.

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| E 306 | Rhetoric and Composition (includes computer-assisted) |
| E 306Q | Rhetoric and Composition for Non-native Speakers of English |
| E 309K | Topics in Writing |
| E 309L | The Writing Process |
| E 309M | Thinking and Writing |
| E 325M | Advanced Expository Writing |
| E 360M | Rhetoric and Comp for High School Teachers of English |
| E 368E | Topics in Editing |
| E 379C | Topics in Composition |

Course Spr,92 Smr,92 Fall,92 Total # # of Students (estimated)
 Number of Sections

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| E 306 | 50 | 21 | 48 | 119 | 2380 |
| E 306Q | 6 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 300 |
| E 309K | 22 | 0 | 17 | 39 | 780 |
| E 309L | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E 309M | 6 | 0 | 8 | 14 | 280 |
| E 325M | 5 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 105 |
| E 360M | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 80 |
| E 368E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E 379C | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 60 |
| Totals | 93 | 21 | 85 | 199 | 3985 |

b. Writing Labs. The computer writing lab will be administered by the Division of Rhetoric and Composition. Its major role is to support specific sections of E 306, E309M, E 325M, and E 360M. The lab will remain available for use in undergraduate literature and graduate courses within the English Department.

IV. Faculty

Instruction in the expository writing courses offered by the Division will be by tenured and tenure-track faculty, senior lecturers, lecturers, and assistant instructors.

a. Upper-division staffing. Faculty in rhetoric and composition currently in the English department will teach in the Division and staff most of its upper-division offerings, especially E 325M, E 360M, and E 379C. These faculty will also teach lower-division courses routinely. Additional faculty appointments will be made by the Division to assure

that tenured and tenure-track faculty are available for E 306 and E 309 as well as for the graduate program in rhetoric.

b. Lower-division staffing. The Division will be responsible for staffing approximately 85-90 lower-division courses a long semester. Most of these courses will be handled by lecturers and assistant instructors, though tenured and tenure-track faculty will teach them regularly.

V. Rationale

An autonomous Division of Rhetoric and Composition will provide the University of Texas with a focused, efficient, and respected program in writing. For over two decades, the English Department has argued publicly about its writing courses. A Division of Rhetoric and Composition will remove the source of these disagreements by firmly establishing the independence of the Division and its faculty.

Since the mid-1980s, writing courses have been administered chiefly by faculty in literature or critical theory. As a result, the national reputations of both the writing program and the graduate program in rhetoric have declined substantially. Yet, given the size and interests of the current English Department, it can be predicted that insufficient attention will be paid to expository writing courses.

The current administrative structure confuses responsibilities for writing and literature courses. The Lower Division office attempts to supervise both the freshman writing courses (E 306 and E 309) and the sophomore literature courses (E 316K, E 314L, E 316F). Both suffer as a result of this split mission. Teacher training is sometimes confused and supervision of AIs is uneven or absent.

Because no office or individual is directly responsible for writing instruction, even the most elementary kinds of course coordination are not in evidence. For example, though E 306 and E 309 are administered by the same committee, the two courses do not at present constitute a sequence. E 309 is taught in three unrelated versions (with few guidelines and no syllabi yet for instructors) and these courses themselves are offered without any specific reference to E 306. A student moving from E 306 to E 309 cannot be assured that the E 309 class will build upon previous instruction.

Neither is there any significant connection between the lower division writing courses and upper-division offerings, most notably E 325M, E 379C or E 360K. Each of these classes exists apart from all the others. The courses, however, have the potential to form a powerful sequence.

A Division of Rhetoric and Composition would improve the quality of writing instruction at UT-Austin.

- A division whose chief responsibility is to teach writing can coordinate its courses to serve that specific goal, employing and training teachers comfortable with their mission. It would quickly establish itself as one of the most respected writing programs in the country by assembling resources now scattered within the English department and College of Liberal Arts.
- A division would be better able to target its instruction to serve more students, from the most advanced expository writers to students who need special assistance to insure their success in college programs.
- The administrators of such a division would be more directly accountable for seeing that students graduate from the University of Texas with an appropriately high level of writing skills.

The proposed Division would be no larger than the freshman English program in 1984 when both E 306 and E307/308 were required courses. At that time, the entire office was run by a Director, an Associate Director, an Assistant Director, and two office staff. However, that earlier writing program had no significant responsibilities for budget, hiring, recruitment, course scheduling, course assignment, etc.

The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will retain close ties with the English Department for four reasons.

- First, writing courses will be able to keep their identification as English courses, maintaining a traditional relationship in American universities between literature and writing courses and lessening logistical problems such as credit transfers.
- Second, the Division of Rhetoric and Composition will maintain close ties with the successful graduate rhetoric program in the English department and benefit from the research done there. Moreover, faculty members staffing the

Division of Rhetoric and Composition will also routinely teach in the graduate rhetoric program.

- Third, faculty in the English Department will be able to teach a fuller range of courses if the Division is not completely separated from the department: some literature faculty may occasionally want to teach composition classes; some rhetoric faculty will want to teach literature.
- Fourth, the majority of AIs working in the Division of Rhetoric and Composition will come from the English department and will need the opportunity to teach writing to compete on the job market.