

Committee probes English program

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The committee studying the fate of a controversial English course that was suspended last spring has broadened its scope to examine the University's entire writing program.

English 346K — which all students under the current catalog were required to take — has been suspended for next year.

The committee will recommend in August whether to reinstate the course. The committee's recommendations must be approved by the University Council and the UT president.

The E 346K evaluation committee will examine "everything" — E 346K, English writing courses and the role other colleges should play in teaching writing, said Joe Kruppa, chairman of the committee and associate chairman of the Department of English.

"You can't investigate one part of it (a writing program) without looking at all of it," Kruppa said. The committee decided in June it will not recommend hiring lecturers to teach the course if it is reinstated. "Lecturers make a department unworkable after a while," Kruppa said.

Lecturers — temporary instructors who are not on a tenure track — staffed E 346K last year.

Alan Gribben, committee member and associate professor of English, said the committee's proposal may give students more choice. "It won't prescribe so narrowly what students can take," he said. "I think in discussing it we're reflecting widespread opinion in wishing for more flexibility in the requirement."

Minutes from a meeting last week state the committee discussed the place E 346K would have in any sequence of writing courses. The meeting was closed to the public.

Minutes from previous meetings state that committee members have consulted with the College of Communication to discuss a "Technical Communications Program" and with the College of Business to discuss the role of business communi-

cation courses.

Kruppa said the committee is asking other colleges and departments to discuss what they see as their role in teaching writing. "Is it strictly the province of the English department to teach English, or should everyone shoulder the responsibility?" he said. "There are ways of cooperating across colleges and getting them to work with us."

Charles Rossman, committee member and associate professor of English, said some colleges and departments already are offering writing-proficiency courses.

The committee also discussed lowering the current nine-hour English requirement to six hours. Kruppa said some major universities require only six hours of English.

In addition to E 346K, students must take E 316K, a literature course, and E 306, a freshman writing course. The committee will study E 316K, but is scrutinizing the E 306 and E 346K courses more closely.

"We are a literature department, and we decided one literature course is a cornerstone of a university education," Kruppa said.

The E 306 course poses a special problem because it is required of freshmen provisional students during the summer. Rossman said the committee will examine the provisional program.

"The provisional program is a method by which students can enter the University, even if they're dopes," Rossman said. Many students, after taking the E 306 classes, never make it into the University, he said.

Kruppa said approximately 40 percent of UT students place out of E 306. A similar placement test has not been offered for E 346K.

No one has invented a method to test writing proficiency, Kruppa said. "Writing proficiency is very easy to talk about, but hard to measure," he said.

The committee plans to hear next from James Kinneavy, a professor of English who strongly supports E 346K.