

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH MINUTES

March 28, 1980

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m., Mr. Moldenhauer presiding.

The department met to discuss the reports of the freshman composition panels not presented at last week's meeting. A motion by Mr. Wadlington to allow five-to-ten minute presentations by all of the panels before opening the floor to general discussion was approved by voice vote. In these minutes, the discussions are placed immediately after each report.

FORMAT II

Mr. Ruskiewicz presented the report for the Format II team. It had been distributed in written form prior to the meeting.

Proposal #1: The subcommittee recommends that the department consider establishing a referral lab for its E306-307/308 students. That lab could be set up by the department or by the Reading and Study Skills Laboratory (RASSL).

Mr. Ruskiewicz said that the lab in English might be more economical than originally thought. David Murray had told the committee that only 12-15 TAs would be needed to adequately staff the lab; previously, the committee had projected the need for 15-20 TAs. Mr. Ruskiewicz added that RASSL was willing and prepared to set up its own writing labs.

Proposal #2: The subcommittee recommends that the department consider setting up several experimental large-section classes.

No discussion.

Proposal #3: The subcommittee gave no support to proposals to raise the class size in E306-307/308 above the current 25, even with a concomitant reduction in required assignments. The subcommittee was so firm on this point that it refused even to calculate the effect on the program of various increases in course size.

No discussion.

Proposal #4: The subcommittee suggests that the current imbalance of fall/spring sections of Freshman English might be alleviated by closer coordination between the sophomore, freshman and associate chair's offices. Teachers scheduled to teach

freshman English in the spring, for example, might be used in sophomore classes if sophomore enrollments exceed estimates. (Many sophomore sections are currently enrolled above the usual limit of 35.) The mechanics of registration coordination would be most efficiently handled by the offices involved.

No discussion.

Proposal #5: Because either proposal of the subcommittee would deplete the current pool of departmental TAs, the subcommittee recommends that the department explore the possibility of using TAs from other departments in the College of Liberal Arts to staff the lab and/or large section courses.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz said that an informal survey of other departments within the College revealed that few, if any, TAs would be available from outside the department.

CONTENT

Mr. Graham reported for the Content team. He distributed the team's proposals, which consisted of two alternative plans, or sequences. Mr. Graham said that the committee represented a microcosm of the department as a whole; every viewpoint was discussed. The committee members had critically analyzed all of the proposals submitted to them; they tried to see whether some agreement existed within the committee. The final two proposals presented to the department represent compromises between the original plans: accommodations necessary to prevent potential rifts within the department. Mr. Graham stressed that, although both proposals assume a nine-hour English requirement, twelve-hour programs can be developed. The committee views these two proposals as the best, but it could not agree on its favorite. Plan 1 provides the largest departure from the current program whereas Plan 2 relates well to the current program.

Proposal #1: A nine-hour University requirement of a composition course in the freshman year, a literature with composition in the sophomore year, and a writing in the specific discipline in the junior year.

Sequence: E 306 Rhetoric and Composition [Readings in the humanities, rhetorical strategies, linguistic elements for mechanics]. Exempt upper 30%; panel-grading; remedial 406 and 506 for lowest 10% (in a Writing Center, on a drop-in basis, with permanent staff and faculty in English required; to accommodate 600 students); assign 6-7 major themes in persuasion, induction, deduction, definition, library, etc. with major emphasis on analytical, some experiential themes.

E 316 Literature and Composition [The best course in introduction to literature the department can devise. If literary readings work out in E306, could be a sequence to 306 from literary content]. Class size 40; literature courses in other departments allowed to substitute if on more than a translation level (some analysis required in the compositions); a history, genre, theme unity be required in each course; experimentation encouraged.

E 326 Writing in Different Disciplines [Four different contents (science, social science, humanities, business). Intelligible prose for the general reader; unifies the university in a common tongue; readings in classical and contemporary]. Exempt top 15% and transfers with two composition courses; panel grading; certain courses can be substituted (E 325M, for example); assign 6 themes; experimentation encouraged.

Mr. Bertelsen asked if the English faculty would be teaching E326 "Writing in Different Disciplines"; if so, would the faculty member be responsible for mastering the technical subjects? The committee envisioned the cooperation of other departments with English, Mr. Graham explained. Hopefully, if a faculty member in that discipline was interested and willing, he could teach the course. This would eliminate some staffing problems for English. If no such faculty member existed, then English faculty would be used. Mr. Graham cited the Technical Writing program as an example of English faculty teaching technical material without in-depth knowledge of the material. Mr. Kinneavy observed that a writer in any discipline must write intelligently to the general reader; he must eliminate jargon as best he can so that the reader may understand and criticize it intelligently. Scientists can help the teacher, but Mr. Kinneavy expected that it would not be necessary for the faculty to master technical subjects. The committee hoped for a situation where the English Department is the center of writing instruction for the entire university, although some schools (for example, Communications) may want to handle their own writing courses.

Mr. Hilfer wondered how the logistics of E316 would be worked out; it seemed to him difficult to assign many themes with a class size of 40. Mr. Graham said he personally would prefer the large class size; in E316 literature, not composition, would be emphasized. Mr. Moldenhauer had surveyed 314K classes in Spring of 1979; the majority of teachers who reported were assigning four-to-six themes, and these were sections of 35 students.

Mr. R. Cook objected to the literature emphasis; in his experience the students need a second semester of composition. Ms. Haney-Peritz agreed that English should teach writing, but it should also teach reading and analysis. Literature gives rules, laws and codes to students; analytical assignments on such materials improve their writing, she said. Mr. Cook believed that composition courses already deal with analysis and both creative and interpretative writing, but literature is not the only way to teach writing. Mr. Rebhorn was bothered that the proposal gives students a writing course their first semester and then leaves them without further composition instruction until the junior year; don't other

departments depend upon English to teach adequate composition skills before these students enroll in, say, history or government? Mr. Kinneavy explained that one problem in both plans is the experimentation with subject matter; he would be willing to try the literary format as long as it doesn't side-track the teaching of writing. Mr. Kinneavy noted that a recent study of 160 public universities revealed that 94 had changed their composition courses within the past five years; 50 of these de-emphasized literature in favor of writing and 44 had placed a higher emphasis on literature. Mr. Carton didn't believe the issue was literature vs. non-literature; the expectation in the course is that a body of knowledge is a necessary component although the nature of this body of knowledge is not important. Mr. Graham said the issue had been raised in committee discussions; no consensus on a reading list could be reached, and therefore, the committee did not propose a specific list of readings.

Proposal #2: The present 3-course structure (2 freshman/1 sophomore). First course, composition; second course, composition and literature; third course, literature. Institution of writing lab. Fourth course (upper-division) recommended for colleges not now requiring 4 lower-division courses.

Sequence: E 306 Composition [Writing course that trains students in rhetorical, linguistic, and analytical skills]. Exempt 28%; Writing Lab for lower 10%; experimental sections to seek best reading; humanities readings as substantial as 90% of the students can handle, including some selections that exhibit the development and persistence of classical models (e.g., from Portable Greek Reader).

E 307 Rhetoric and Literature [Advances writing skills and introduces students to skills of analytical reading, analysis and interpretation; equal emphasis on all three]. Current exemption policy; sections of this course may be offered by other humanities departments; maintains present class size; minimum of six themes (literary and non-literary topics); this course in effect conflates 307 and 314K as now offered; suggested texts include composition texts and the Norton World Masterpieces, i-vol. edition.

E 314K Masterworks of English and American Literature [Survey emphasizing the understanding of major literary works in biographical, historical, and generic contexts]. Lecture course with large sections; exemption only by rigorous examination; some experimental sections that retain general spirit of the course; choice of anthologies and/or selected texts; writing assignments at the option of instructor, but students must be rigorously examined on the material they are being asked to learn.

E 326 Writing in Different Disciplines [Elective writing course at upper-division level for students, including humanities students, who want additional training in writing that is discipline-specific]. Could be used to satisfy potential university requirement of 12 hours of English; minimum of six themes.

Mr. Rebhorn observed that large sections of 314K might present logistical problems in terms of staffing with TAs and AIs; currently, only about 60 TAs per year are available and only 45 new graduate students are admitted each year. The English Department should be aware of its own limitations.

There was discussion about what might happen to present sophomore courses. Mr. Farrell thought that the two British survey courses, for example, might become upper-division courses. Mr. Graham said that 317 would be replaced by 326, 310 would evaporate or be replaced by courses like 325, and 318M (which he didn't think should exist as an option in the first place) would disappear.

Mr. Farrell discussed the content of the two proposals; Plan 1 increases the specialty of writing at different levels while Plan 2 provides a combination of analytical and writing skills that increases the stress on literature. Mr. Lesser believed the department should debate the actual content of the writing courses: what should be the principal objective? what body of knowledge facilitates this objective? Mr. Lesser thought that Plan 2 stressed reading; certain kinds of reading encourage attendant writing, he said. Mr. Wadlington would like to see the focus shift to the technique of expression. This could be done through strengthening the student's comprehension and gradually assigning more complex assignments. He doubted that many students could write without being able to read. In his view, the department gives too little weight to fundamental reading skills. Mr. Wimsatt said that "teaching writing through reading" is not for everyone; the teacher must choose the format for himself. In response to a suggestion from Mr. Farrell that teachers inevitably must teach both writing and reading, Mr. Wimsatt said that writing would be his choice of emphasis, given the current limitations.

If the department has to teach reading, Ms. Hairston claimed, then she would have to be taught how to teach it; special reading problems need special attention. Ms. Haney-Peritz agreed with Mr. Farrell that reading comprehension is essential to writing. She believed that the reason departments are moving away from literature is because composition is erroneously viewed as a "technological escape" (a technique that can be taught and practiced without reference to content).

Ms. Haney-Peritz asked what the difference was between 306 in Plan 1 and Plan 2. Mr. Farrell said that the 306 course is essentially the same in both, although the syllabus may be a little different. English 307 under Plan 2 is basically 314K dropped into that slot.

STAFFING

Mr. Kruppa reported for the Staffing team. A memorandum about its proposals was distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Kruppa said that the committee addressed itself to matters of principle in preparing its recommendations; although some of the proposals might not be feasible under present conditions, the committee stated them for purposes of discussion. When making the recommendations, the committee assumed that the present number of faculty and AIs would remain the same and that some reliance on temporary faculty would continue.

Proposal #1: The committee believes that there should be required Supervision/Coordination of all lower-division courses taught by AIs. This policy would again demonstrate our commitment to lower-division teaching, it would provide help and encouragement to over-burdened AIs, and it would provide a source for TLC points which we have not been using adequately.

Mr. Kruppa explained that such courses provide valid generation of TLC points. Other departments are presently using supervision of multisection courses without shame, and the department should not hesitate to do so also. Mr. Moldenhauer wondered if the suggestion wouldn't undercut the objective of extensive regular-faculty teaching of lower-division composition. Mr. Kruppa said that coordination of sections would be another legitimate and beneficial way the faculty could be involved in composition teaching.

Proposal #2: The committee recommends that the AI teaching load be reduced to 3 sections per long session, and that the load for pool members be reduced to 3 sections per semester.

Mr. Walter asked how the department would implement such a plan; the Dean has control over this policy. Mr. Kruppa hoped that the task force would discuss this proposal and, if the department agrees with it, then a strong argument would be developed to present to the Dean. Mr. Kinneavy suggested that the present workload policy was devised by Lorene Rogers and that perhaps President Flawn thinks differently on the matter. Mr. Carton said that in any event pool members should not be asked to teach more than the TLC regulations require of regular faculty (3-3).

Proposal #3: The committee also discussed the nature of pool appointments. It felt that some attempt should be made to give pool members a sense of continuity, that some commitment should be made to them which promised continued service up to three years, assuming, of course, that their teaching performance proved satisfactory.

Mr. Kruppa believed that this proposal would alleviate some of the morale problems that exist among the temporary faculty. Ms. Hairston wondered if the committee had discussed the possibility of pool members applying for tenure-track positions; the department should be reluctant to adopt a

"San Marcos" format, where a three-year program has resulted in a two-tiered faculty: tenured and temporary. Mr. Kruppa suggested that such a system may be operating now. Mr. Moldenhauer assured the group that neither the EC nor the recruitment committees had imposed any impediments to pool members applying for tenure-track positions in competition with outside applicants. All other things being equal, the former might even enjoy a selective advantage because of the recruiters' prior knowledge of the applicants' scholarship and teaching abilities.

Proposal #4: The committee would like to see the department argue for increased TLC point credit for genuine composition courses. It felt that 4.5 TLC points should be given for composition courses.

No discussion.

Proposal #5: The committee reaffirmed the principle that each regular faculty member should teach at least one lower-division, preferably freshman, composition course per year, and that pool members should teach a maximum of two composition courses per semester, unless the individual pool member requested three sections of the same course.

No discussion.

Proposal #6: The committee hoped that the format and content committees would explore the possibility of writing labs in connection with freshman composition courses, and that some way be found to get TLC points for those faculty involved in supervising these labs.

No discussion.

Proposal #7: The committee also urges the department to establish more flexible conference course arrangements between faculty and graduate students, and to consider establishing courses of less than three hours credit which could benefit both faculty and students.

Mr. Carton felt that conference courses would be beneficial to both faculty and students because they would increase TLCs and qualitative contact. He believed that work toward a publishable article might provide the content and goal of such conferences.

Mr. Reborn maintained that if many of these proposals are implemented (reduce class size to 17, reduce teaching load for AIs and pool members, etc.) the department might have to increase its budget by 50%. The administration, he contended, is not going to hand out that kind of money, not as long as it remains reluctant to squeeze out extra pennies. Shouldn't the department attempt to show the Dean that English courses are labor-intensive and require direct contact? Aren't we being naive? Mr. Kruppa agreed that these proposals may not work, but they should be discussed even if their

implementation requires more money or massive reorganization. Mr. Rebhorn insisted that the basic issue had been avoided: if extra money is not forthcoming, how does the department staff composition courses? Does it continue with the present pool, each member teaching 4-4? Does it hire more AIs and, thus, expand the graduate English program? Does the department establish a permanent pool, perhaps by requiring that such faculty earn the Ph.D. but not publish? If it does, how does it justify the inequality? Instead of talking about a 3-3 load, shouldn't the department talk about the massive numbers of unemployed Ph.Ds? Perhaps they would welcome a position in a permanent pool. The problem, Mr. Rebhorn concluded, will not go away; in terms of staffing, it must be dealt with sooner or later. Mr. Simon noted that the Dean has already begun pressuring the Philosophy Department to institute a "pool."

ADMINISTRATIVE REARRANGEMENT

Mr. Renwick reported for the Administrative Rearrangement team. A memorandum about its proposals was distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Renwick explained that the team saw its task as that of constructing alternative models; it did not develop concrete conclusions.

Proposal #1: Create a Department of Rhetoric of the IIC type. [The curriculum would include elementary writing skills, applied writing skills, and broadly developed conceptual skills. This would be a true departmental system as conventionally defined, in all likelihood offering graduate courses and degrees in addition to undergraduate.] The Department will hire enough specialist faculty to serve its upper-division and graduate course needs. For lower-division and some upper-division courses, the Department could draw upon English Department faculty on a systematic basis, thus allowing English faculty to meet their teaching load obligations. Staff remaining freshman composition sections with Assistant Instructors and Teaching Assistants drawn from a pool of both Rhetoric and English Department graduate students. If the number of graduate students in English Department remains constant and Rhetoric Department attracts a goodly number of new graduate students to its specialist program, eventually the need for a floating "pool" of temporary Instructors (a reliance on whom, some think, is a serious problem with our existing system) may be eliminated.

No discussion.

Proposal #2: Keep the existing system as is, with all instruction in writing and rhetoric in the English Department's charge, but make a systematic effort to involve English faculty more deeply in the teaching of writing/rhetoric. For instance, increase substantially the size of the Freshman English Policy Committee; be less selective in appointing members to that committee; encourage team taught courses which integrate literary criticism and applied writing; institute seminars for non-writing specialists in order to sharpen their skills as instructors; make writing/rhetoric expertise a major criterion when hiring new English Department faculty.

No discussion.

Proposal #3: Leave the existing system as is and allow it to follow its evidently current path of natural evolution, adaptation, selection. As more new faculty are hired who have significant training in writing/rhetoric, and as existing faculty willy-nilly teach more writing courses, we will all come to see that teaching writing is worthwhile, challenging, and professionally satisfying and all become more effective instructors of writing. Continue in our quest to make the higher administration more aware of the relatively unique nature of writing instruction so that they may adjust accordingly their criteria for evaluating faculty achievement, workload, worth, and so forth.

No discussion.

Mr. Moldenhauer announced that the next step will be the formation of a task force to coordinate proposals from the eight teams; this task force will probably report to the department within three or four weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.