

June 21 meeting in New York was triggered by article on Texas in the Chronicle and by my editorial in the same issue.

Notes for meeting with Fonken about Ford Foundation grants:

Ford is ready to put money into undergraduate writing instruction. Action oriented--want to put it into training and supporting model programs from which spin-offs will come.

1. Initially funding a study by Dick Larson to determine what the current state of the art is and what they should be working towards. Not a long-range research proposal. Some of the research has already been done here.
2. Going to fund faculty salaries and tuition grants for a series of summer institutes around the country to bring in teachers to introduce them to the discipline of teaching writing and bring them abreast of current developments in the field.
3. Within three years they hope to strengthen graduate programs in the teaching of writing, programs that are not simply ancillary to Ph.D. programs in literature, and to establish new graduate programs. Goal is to increase significantly the number of professional teachers of writing at the college level and to strengthen the entire discipline of writing instruction.

Ford's long-range goal is to make a significant impact on the literacy problem in this country.

Amount of money committed for this biennium is \$2,000,000. Long range plans are to invest considerably more.

The information I would like to take to the meeting is what the institutional perspective on the teaching of writing is at the University of Texas.

What kind of undergraduate writing curriculum does the administration want to see at the university? What kind of curriculum best advances the interests of the university and of the community?

What problems are involved in establishing a strong writing curriculum?

Does the university view research in the writing process, in writing programs, in writing instruction, and in rhetorical theory and history as a legitimate scholarly discipline?

To date, it has seemed to do so. Scholars in this area have been tenured and promoted. Is it interested in continuing to support research in writing as a discipline and affirming its commitment?

The crux of whether we can maintain our national standing in this relatively new field is the University's recognition and endorsement of writing research and instruction as a discipline.

Right now our graduate program in rhetoric is one of the best in the country, primarily because of a productive, energetic, and nationally known faculty. But we have lost four people from that faculty: Ted Smith, Greg Myers, Steve Witte, and John Walter. We are likely to lose more. If the present anti-composition climate in the department prevails, we will soon lose our two remaining young faculty, Faigley and Ruszkiewicz, and in spite of his endowed chair, Jim Kinneavy will take one of the many positions that are constantly offered to him.

If we are to compete for Ford grants and become involved in this national effort towards improving literacy, we have to do these things.

1. Replace the rhetoric and writing faculty whom we are losing and hire more good people at both the junior and senior level. Critical that we strengthen our graduate program. (Right now, its graduates are virtually the only people who are getting tenure-track jobs.)
2. Establish and maintain a strong undergraduate writing program, beginning with a soundly conceived and intellectually demanding freshman English course. Without such a course we cannot give U.T. students the foundations for writing in college.
3. Put those whose scholarly discipline is rhetorical theory and the teaching of writing in charge of the writing program.

The present composition and rhetoric faculty sees the goals of a university writing program as these:

\*To offer sound, research-based and professionally validated instruction in writing to all segments of the university

\*To maintain and strengthen a graduate program in rhetoric, writing, and writing instruction that will be a model for the profession and produce scholars and teachers who will improve writing and the teaching of writing nationally.

\*In accordance with the goals set forth by the recent SRI International report on the future of Austin, to establish links with industry and the community "to meet the needs of Austin's information and knowledge-based economy." One part of this effort would be to establish a graduate degree in professional writing.