

Mr. Sutherland must not be allowed to shift the blame for the incredible fiasco of the new English requirements.

(a) The Department did not approve the new requirements in 1978, as Mr. Sutherland says, but in 1980. Abandonment follows inauguration immediately.

(b) The legislation passed by the University Council did not call for every student to take 346K. On the contrary, the Council acted after it had been assured, by Mr. Kinneavy as the English Department's spokesman, that "transfer credit for a composition course beyond E. 306 satisfies this requirement." Transfer credit would therefore have exempted a substantial number of juniors and seniors from 346K if Mr. Kinneavy's explicit assurance had been true. Under repeated questioning after the Council had acted, President Flawn explained that somebody had invoked a "long-established policy" that "a lower-division transfer course is not equivalent to an upper-division course" and that assurances to the contrary were of no effect. In determining equivalencies for transfer of credit, Mr. Flawn said, the Director of Admissions "seeks advice regarding specific courses from the department" [emphasis added]; and it was Mr. Kinneavy, the Department's spokesman, who tried to tell the Council why, despite his assurance, a second freshman course would transfer, not as the equivalent of 346K, but as a course with a "substantial writing component."

e/ (c) The University Council cannot be made a scapegoat for approving the requirement of both 346K and the "substantial writing" courses, as Mr. Sutherland suggests. The entire bureaucracy, including the chairman of the English Department, the dean, and Mr. Kinneavy as the Department's spokesman, pushed hard for the new requirements and ridiculed my strong objections. The Department gave Mr. Kinneavy a vote of thanks when the legislation passed. When difficulties arose as soon as the new requirements were put into effect, Mr. Sutherland himself appeared in University Council and joined Mr. Flawn and others in the effort to dismiss my questions without real answers.

(d) Thus two years of discussion and debate, and (according to Mr. Kinneavy) more years of previous planning, went into the establishment of the new requirements; the Department's bureaucrats were at all times fully informed; they did not raise the objections which Mr. Sutherland now raises; but instead they did everything possible to persuade the University Council to accept their proposals, which Mr. Kinneavy falsely claimed were mandated by a study that I had made some years before. I opposed the new requirements; the student members of the University Council unanimously opposed them; but all to no avail.

(e) Mr. Sutherland's recent attack on E.106 and E.206 is well known, though Mr. Kinneavy in University Council had praised the work of the Writing Lab as a "marvelous success." President Flawn denied Mr. Sutherland's claim that the decision not to offer these courses had been approved by a dean and a vice-president. Now Mr. Sutherland announces a decision to waive the 346 requirement, thus destroying the vaunted new program (described, in the debate concerning it, as "the best composition plan in the country"), and destroying it in a shorter time than was used in planning and debating it. The English Department is left with a rhetoric program for graduate students--but with just one required course in rhetoric. Meanwhile there is nation-wide complaint of a "literacy crisis," and University-wide complaint that our undergraduates can't write. When I became director of freshman English in 1969, my first action had to be to prevent the further lowering of the already low exemption score for that first freshman course. The more it changes, the more it stays the same.

(f) Mr. Sutherland has succeeded, however, in providing new evidence for my sustained objection that from the beginning, the new requirements were primarily a logistic device to reduce enrollment and consequently staff in the courses in English composition.

But Mr. Sutherland is not the only bureaucrat who is trying to shift the blame for the bureaucracy's blunder. The Times for February 18 quotes Vice-President Gerhard Fontana: "The English Department was unable to provide the number of courses and instructors required." That means, really, that the administration helped to push through a plan for which it refused to provide the necessary money; Fontana was enraged when I opposed the plan which the administration was pushing.

Thus the bureaucrats and their spokesman have guaranteed another year or more of great agitation in the Department, more mental anguish for the "part-timers." Students who can't write won't get the help they need. But after years of effort, the literati have finally succeeded in reducing the Department's composition requirement to a single course. The teaching of that course will provide support,

of a kind, for enough AIs to fill the professors' graduate courses, and maybe some lecturers will survive the likely purge. The literati, meanwhile, will continue to expound verbal subtleties to verbal cripples. Presumably nobody cares that legislation passed by the Department, the College, and the University Council and approved by the President and the Board of Regents can be "waived" by the unilateral action of Vice-President Fomken. Certainly nobody worried because the timing of the waiver will disrupt the eighty-two sections of 340K which are now being taught.



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