

KFreshman English Policy Committee Meeting

March 8, 1978

Parlin 8B, 11:00-12:00

**Members present: Kinneavy, Trimble, Haney, Creel, Ruszkiewicz,
Cameron, Wainwright, Saldivar**

Agenda: (starred items deferred)

Approval of minutes

Reports of standing committees

Program evaluation

Textbook

Course evaluation

*** Reports of special committees**

Other business

Decision on FERA

Report from M&R on English placement exam

1. The minutes were approved as distributed. Wainwright's motion to suspend the regular order of business and consider the FERA proposal first was approved unanimously.

2. Kinneavy reported that Meeker had called him on Monday, giving him some further information; the inhouse test can be anything we want it to be; we will be allowed six sections only. The committee wondered if there would be six sections for each the regular program and the individualized program, or a total of six. Kinneavy said he had told Meeker of his reservations about the Dietrich test, and he briefly reviewed the Primary Traits test for the committee. He further mentioned that Sylvia Manning, the Freshman English Director at USC, had agreed to participate in the FERA study.

Haney asked if we might tentatively agree to participate, voicing out reservations and saying that if they were not dealt with properly we would hold the right to withdraw. Kinneavy said that one of his strongest reservations is our portion of the sample: three sections--75 students--per program is not a large enough number of students, nor is three sections. He said a 12-section sample would be okay. Wainwright noted that if the FERA people would be on campus only three days we will need a course off for a person to handle matters here.

Trimble said that, on the basis of what he had heard at the meeting and previously, the whole program smells bad and he opposes it. He felt we would be putting in too many hours for what we would be getting. Creel agreed. Ruszkiewicz asked why FERA didn't work out a careful design before asking us to get involved. Saldivar agreed with Trimble. Cameron said he thought we lacked enough information to make a decision, but that he did not think we should categorically refuse to enter the study. Haney said that we need written communication both ways; Meeker needs to know how we feel about the study.

Creel proposed a motion, which the committee collectively worked out, to provide guidelines for a letter to be written to Meeker and his associates:

"The committee needs to see, in writing,

- 1) a design of the experiment and a statement of rationale for that design (especially in regard to time schedule, choice of writing programs in the study, purpose of the study, audience for the study, methods of dissemination of the results);
- 2) several copies of the Engineering report;
- 3) copies of the proposal sent to EXXON;
- 4) response to the following questions:
 - a) Can we have 12 sections, 300 students, for our part of the sample? (4 sections for 306I, 4 sections for 306reg., and 4 sections for control--taught by teachers of both 306reg. and 306I.)
 - b) Can FERA match funds with the English department if we give a faculty member a course off to handle the study?
 - c) What input can we expect to have regarding the final statement of the design? Will our objections to design be heard and responded to?
 - d) Will the inhouse test be administered by FERA? Will its results be published in the final report?

When we get answers to this request, we will reconsider. In the meantime, we vote not yet to participate in the FERA project."

The motion passed without opposition.

3. The Variant Course committee distributed Terry Brogan's revised proposal and promised a motion, probably for acceptance of it, at the next meeting.

4. The Textbook committee reported informally that three books (THE PRENTICE-HALL HANDBOOK FOR WRITERS, THE HANDBOOK OF CURRENT ENGLISH, and THE HANDBOOK OF COMPOSITION) are under consideration for adoption for the freshman courses. A formal recommendation will be made next week. In the meantime, committee members were encouraged to suggest readers for adoption in E306.

5. Kinneavy handed out a chart which records scores of Freshmen taking entrance tests at the university. He pointed out that on the SAT, our 50th percentile scores on the Verbal (481) and on the Mathematical (534) are at the 65th and 67th percentiles nationally. However, our 50th percentile on the ECT (483) is at the 36th percentile nationally. Kelley says that this discrepancy exists because many students take the ECT nationally because they know they will do well on it, whereas we require our total population to take it.

Kinneavy further reported that the TSWE is not as good a predictor of student success in composition as is the ECT. He also noted that the ECT will make available in the fall a written section, a composition portion, which we can add to our requirement if we wish. Kelley suggested that one reason to require it is that it would make our future students aware that we are really interested in their writing abilities. Kelley also suggested that we make the internal decision that students who have not taken the ECT before Fall registration be required to wait until Spring to take E306.