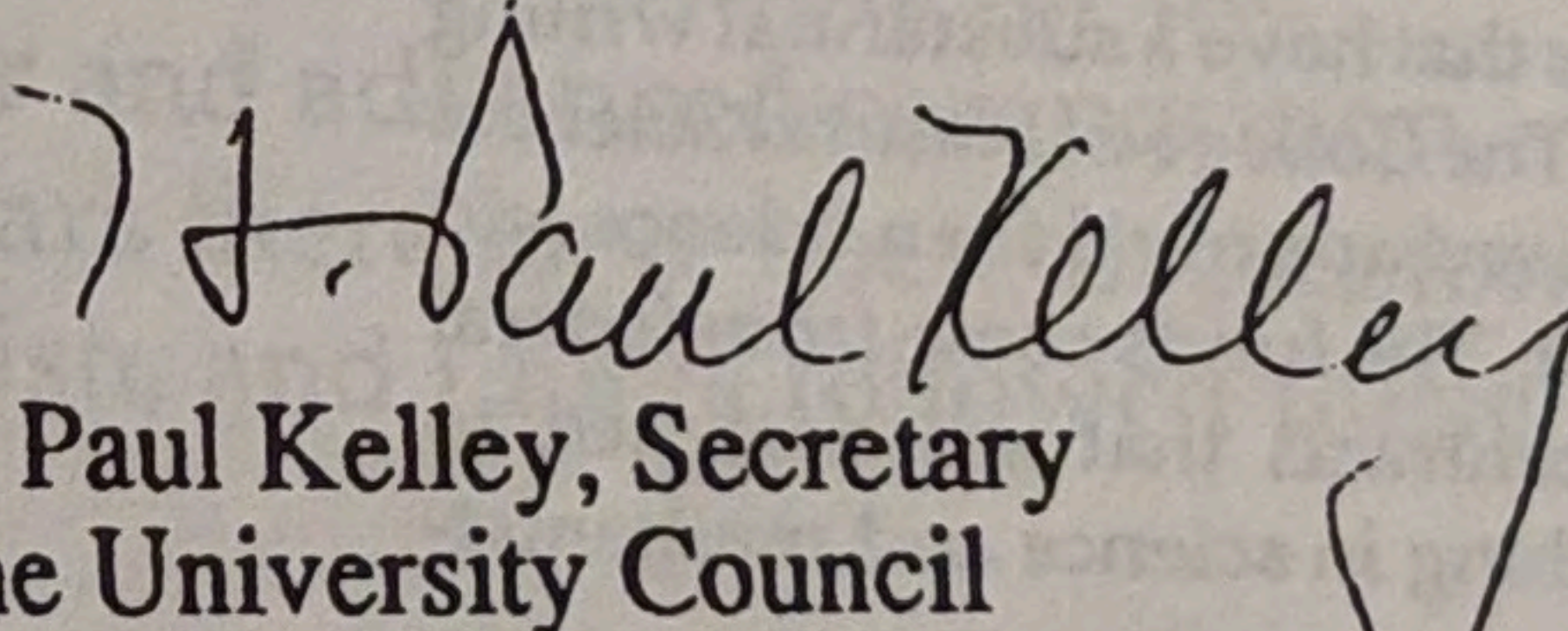


DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

BACKGROUND MATERIAL CONCERNING THE COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A DIVISION OF
RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

At the University Council meeting on September 24, 1992, a number of questions to the President concerned the proposal for the establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition in the College of Liberal Arts. In the absence of Acting President William S. Livingston, Executive Vice President and Provost Gerhard J. Fonken spoke to the questions, and then the questions were carried over to the next meeting of the Council for further discussion.

As background for the discussion at the October 19, 1992, meeting of the University Council, Executive Vice President and Provost Fonken has provided the attached material for use by members of the Council.


H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The University Council

Distributed to members of the University Council on October 13, 1992.

MAY 11, 1992

ON Campus

Cunningham endorses recommendation on writing instruction, advising, de

- Continued from Page 3

the conducting of research projects. Therefore, a University Teaching Institute would not be as workable as the University Research Institute. In addition, the deans have academic development funds which are to be used for instructional development, and they have devised a number of ways to support course development. For example, Dean Jon Whitmore of the College of Fine Arts is using funds to develop an interdisciplinary course. Dean Robert Boyer of the College of Natural Sciences has been using these funds to pay a full-time person to work with teaching assistants and faculty to improve teaching of courses that have a substantial writing component. The College of Natural Sciences recently received approval for a science and math institute. The funds come from federal grants and contracts that are designed to improve teaching in science and mathematics.

is working with Interim Dean of Liberal Arts Robert D. King to explore the feasibility of establishing the Division of Rhetoric and Composition.

18. Recommendation: The University should take the following actions in order to improve instruction in writing:

- that all departments require on a regular basis written work, including homework, papers, and essay examinations;
- that all colleges give greater emphasis to writing in all courses;
- that all colleges be required to offer a sufficient number of Substantial Writing Component courses to ensure that their majors can fulfill this requirement within their colleges in classes with an enrollment of 25 or fewer students;
- that one-hour writing adjunct sections for students in various courses be established;
- that advisers in all colleges encourage students to seek more writing experience beyond the minimum required;
- that a Division of Rhetoric and Composition be established in the College of Liberal Arts that would be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses.

These recommendations are accepted and have been referred to the deans of the colleges and schools. The deans have been asked to provide data from the departments and colleges regarding the success of the earlier writing requirements. Provost Fonken

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Office of the Dean • West Mall Office Building 201 • Austin, Texas 78712-1105 • (512) 471-4141

President William H. Cunningham
MAI 400

Dear Bill:

August 18, 1992
AUG 19 1992

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
U. T. AUSTIN
REC'D
AUG 18 1992
REFER TO HANDLE COMMENT & RETURN FILE OR DISCARD

I am transmitting to you with my strong endorsement a proposal for the establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition.

The Committee on the Undergraduate Experience dealt at length with the critical problem of improving the writing skills of our undergraduate students at The University of Texas at Austin for, to quote the Committee's report: "Writing well is a skill, arguably more than any other, that enables students to succeed in their university educations and in the world beyond." One of the Committee's recommendations was "that a Division of Rhetoric and Composition be established in the College of Liberal Arts that would be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses." This is of course not a new idea: for years there have been discussions of such proposals within the Department of English, and I have followed these discussions very carefully.

You asked me earlier this year to determine the feasibility of such a Division. I have discussed this matter with Executive Vice President and Provost G. J. Fonken, with deans of the other schools and colleges of The University, and with various faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and in other units of The University, and with officials of peer institutions.

I have concluded that a new division is not only feasible but essential to the successful accomplishment of the mission of this University in regard to the teaching of writing, and I recommend that the Division of Rhetoric and Composition be established and scheduled to begin its operations on June 1, 1993.

Yours sincerely,
Robert D. King
Dean ad interim

Enclosure
xc: G. J. Fonken
W. S. Livingston

A Proposal for a Division of Rhetoric and Composition

- I. Function
- II. Structure
- III. Logistics
- IV. Faculty
- V. Rationale

I. Function

The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be responsible for administering, staffing, and supervising writing and rhetoric courses and the undergraduate writing program within the College of Liberal Arts.

a. **Administering.** The Division will supervise Plan I lower-division writing courses currently listed as E 306, E 306Q, E 309K, E 309L, and E 309M and any future lower division writing courses. The Division will establish the content of these courses, develop and approve appropriate syllabi, pilot test new courses, authorize course variants, and choose textbooks, subject to established review by the College Course and Curriculum Committee. The Division will also be responsible for all 398T courses related to undergraduate writing classes.

The Division will be similarly responsible for developing and supporting upper-division undergraduate writing and rhetoric courses currently listed as E 325M, E 360M, E 368E, and E 379C.

The Division will administer the summer provisional E 306 program and any special writing courses, lab courses, or writing programs (such as SSP E 306 course).

The Division will provide advice and professional assistance to teachers of substantial writing component courses within the College of Liberal Arts and to the University community at large.

The Division will schedule all writing courses. It will handle all queries, complaints, and other matters related to the operation of a

Proposal, Division of Rhetoric and Composition

writing program. It will provide the typical support services (duplicating, typing, audio and video equipment) needed in writing courses.

The Division will supervise the computer writing lab and will also administer any other writing labs or centers developed within the College of Liberal Arts.

b. **Staffing.** The Division will be responsible for staffing undergraduate writing courses and any related 398T courses. The Director of the Division of Rhetoric and Composition will appoint all TAs and AIs within the Division, subject to the approval of the Dean.

Faculty appointments in the Division will be made by the Director, subject to approval of the Dean. In cases of tenure and tenure-track appointments the Director shall consult with the chair of the faculty member's department and the Dean prior to making an appointment.

The Division will select, appoint, and supervise its secretarial and support staff.

c. **Supervising.** The Division will supervise all teaching within the writing division. It will develop an orientation program for TAs, AIs and new lecturers, regularly observe and supervise AIs in their teaching, evaluate all instruction, and supervise grading.

The Division will develop and publish grading policies and standards for its multisection writing courses.

II. Structure

a. The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be an administrative and budgeted unit of the College of Liberal Arts and will make recommendations for hiring, promotion, and salary directly to the Dean of Liberal Arts.

b. The division will have these officers.

Director. A faculty member appointed by the Dean of Liberal Arts. The Director will administer the Division's budget and will

be responsible for policy, curriculum, AI hiring, staff hiring, teacher supervision, and teacher training within the Division. He or she will appoint committees and subcommittees within the Division to handle course policy, syllabus development, textbook selection and evaluation, and so on.

Associate Director. A faculty member appointed by the Director of the Division of Writing in consultation with the Dean of Liberal Arts. The Associate Director will be primarily responsible for scheduling and staffing of courses, supervising course testing and placement, coordinating course evaluations and grading, and handling other matters determined by the Division Director.

Coordinator of Writing Lab(s). Appointed by the Director to staff and administer any computer and lab facilities.

III. Logistics

a. **Courses.** The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be responsible for the courses listed in the table below. Figures for course offerings are from the 1992 spring, summer and fall catalogs. Estimates for number of students in lower-division writing classes are based on the nominal assumption that E 306/309 classes will register 20 students on average, although the actual limit on such sections is higher.

E 306	Rhetoric and Composition (includes computer-assisted)
E 306Q	Rhetoric and Composition for Non-native Speakers of English
E 309K	Topics in Writing
E 309L	The Writing Process
E 309M	Thinking and Writing
E 325M	Advanced Expository Writing
E 360M	Rhetoric and Comp for High School Teachers of English
E 368E	Topics in Editing
E 379C	Topics in Composition

Course	Spr,92	Smr,92	Fall,92	Total # Number of Sections	# of Students (estimated)
E 306	50	21	48	119	2380
E 306Q	6	0	6	12	300
E 309K	22	0	17	39	780
E 309L	0	0	0	0	0
E 309M	6	0	8	14	280
E 325M	5	0	2	7	105
E 360M	2	0	2	4	80
E 368E	0	0	0	0	0
E 379C	2	0	2	4	60
Totals	93	21	85	199	3985

b. **Writing Labs.** The computer writing lab will be administered by the Division of Rhetoric and Composition. Its major role is to support specific sections of E 306, E309M, E 325M, and E 360M. The lab will remain available for use in undergraduate literature and graduate courses within the English Department.

IV. Faculty

Instruction in the expository writing courses offered by the Division will be by tenured and tenure-track faculty, senior lecturers, lecturers, and assistant instructors.

a. **Upper-division staffing.** Faculty in rhetoric and composition currently in the English department will teach in the Division and staff most of its upper-division offerings, especially E 325M, E 360M, and E 379C. These faculty will also teach lower-division courses routinely. Additional faculty appointments will be made by the Division to assure

Proposal, Division of Rhetoric and Composition

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that tenured and tenure-track faculty are available for E 306 and E 309 as well as for the graduate program in rhetoric.

b. **Lower-division staffing.** The Division will be responsible for staffing approximately 85-90 lower-division courses a long semester. Most of these courses will be handled by lecturers and assistant instructors, though tenured and tenure-track faculty will teach them regularly.

V. Rationale

An autonomous Division of Rhetoric and Composition will provide the University of Texas with a focused, efficient, and respected program in writing. For over two decades, the English Department has argued publicly about its writing courses. A Division of Rhetoric and Composition will remove the source of these disagreements by firmly establishing the independence of the Division and its faculty.

Since the mid-1980s, writing courses have been administered chiefly by faculty in literature or critical theory. As a result, the national reputations of both the writing program and the graduate program in rhetoric have declined substantially. Yet, given the size and interests of the current English Department, it can be predicted that insufficient attention will be paid to expository writing courses.

The current administrative structure confuses responsibilities for writing and literature courses. The Lower Division office attempts to supervise both the freshman writing courses (E 306 and E 309) and the sophomore literature courses (E 316K, E 314L, E 316F). Both suffer as a result of this split mission. Teacher training is sometimes confused and supervision of AIs is uneven or absent.

Because no office or individual is directly responsible for writing instruction, even the most elementary kinds of course coordination are not in evidence. For example, though E 306 and E 309 are administered by the same committee, the two courses do not at present constitute a sequence. E 309 is taught in three unrelated versions (with few guidelines and no syllabi yet for instructors) and these courses themselves are offered without any specific reference to E 306. A student moving from E 306 to E 309 cannot be assured that the E 309 class will build upon previous instruction.

Proposal, Division of Rhetoric and Composition

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Neither is there any significant connection between the lower division writing courses and upper-division offerings, most notably E 325M, E 379C or E 360K. Each of these classes exists apart from all the others. The courses, however, have the potential to form a powerful sequence.

A Division of Rhetoric and Composition would improve the quality of writing instruction at UT-Austin.

- A division whose chief responsibility is to teach writing can coordinate its courses to serve that specific goal, employing and training teachers comfortable with their mission. It would quickly establish itself as one of the most respected writing programs in the country by assembling resources now scattered within the English department and College of Liberal Arts.
- A division would be better able to target its instruction to serve more students, from the most advanced expository writers to students who need special assistance to insure their success in college programs.
- The administrators of such a division would be more directly accountable for seeing that students graduate from the University of Texas with an appropriately high level of writing skills.

The proposed Division would be no larger than the freshman English program in 1984 when both E 306 and E307/308 were required courses. At that time, the entire office was run by a Director, an Associate Director, an Assistant Director, and two office staff. However, that earlier writing program had no significant responsibilities for budget, hiring, recruitment, course scheduling, course assignment, etc.

The Division of Rhetoric and Composition will retain close ties with the English Department for four reasons.

- First, writing courses will be able to keep their identification as English courses, maintaining a traditional relationship in American universities between literature and writing courses and lessening logistical problems such as credit transfers.
- Second, the Division of Rhetoric and Composition will maintain close ties with the successful graduate rhetoric program in the English department and benefit from the research done there. Moreover, faculty members staffing the

Proposal, Division of Rhetoric and Composition

Division of Rhetoric and Composition will also routinely teach in the graduate rhetoric program.

- Third, faculty in the English Department will be able to teach a fuller range of courses if the Division is not completely separated from the department: some literature faculty may occasionally want to teach composition classes; some rhetoric faculty will want to teach literature.

- Fourth, the majority of AIs working in the Division of Rhetoric and Composition will come from the English department and will need the opportunity to teach writing to compete on the job market.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P.O. Box T • Austin, Texas 78713-7389

(512)471-1232 • FAX (512)471-8102

August 28, 1992

Interim Dean Robert D. King
College of Liberal Arts
WMB 201 (52600)

Dear Bob:

I am very pleased to approve the proposal to establish a Division of Rhetoric and Composition as an instructional unit of the College of Liberal Arts that is to be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses. I ask that you proceed to develop a detailed operating plan for the Division. Subject to fiscal review and approval of the operating plan by the Provost, it is understood that the Division will become operational on June 1, 1993, or as soon thereafter as may be feasible.

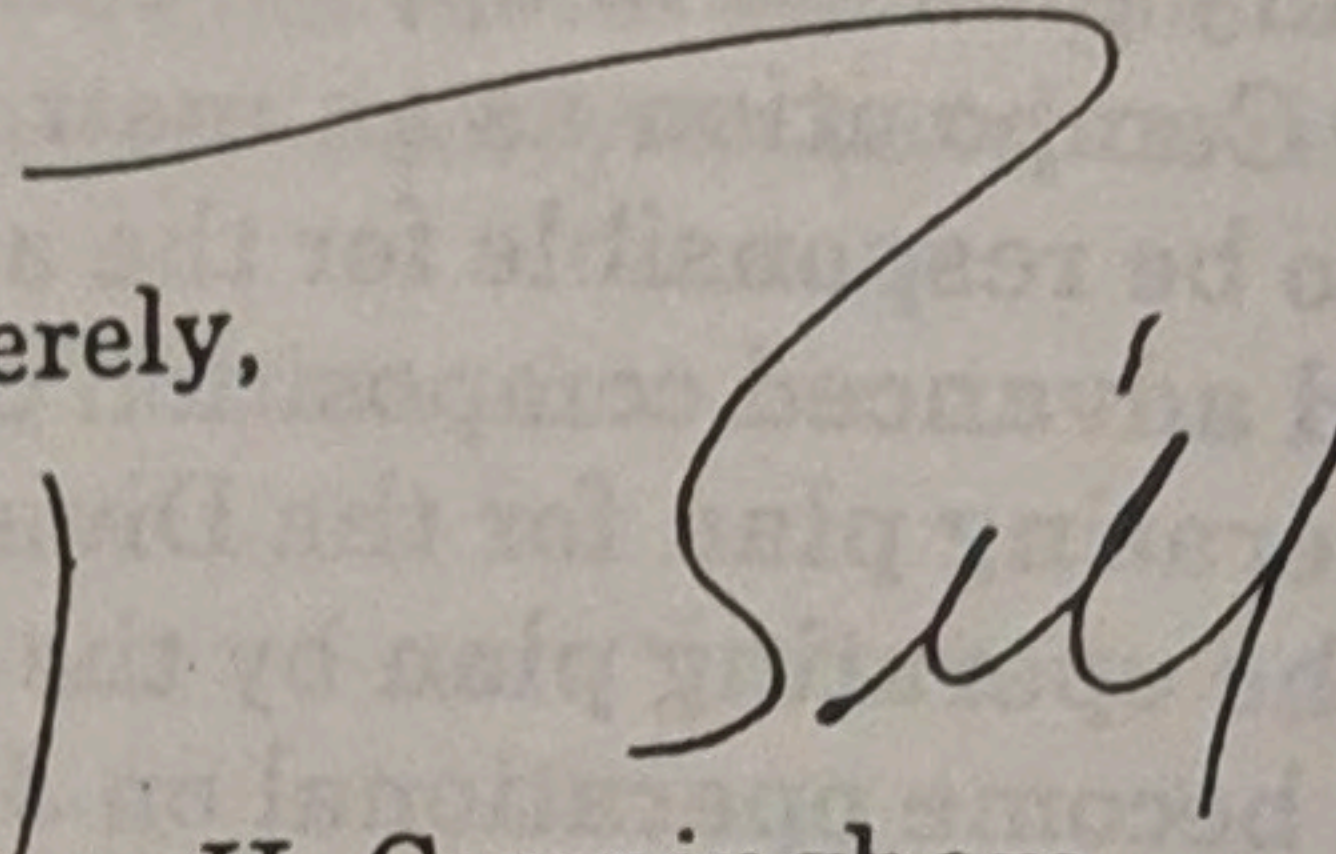
The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition that would be responsible for the administration, staffing, and teaching of first-year and advanced composition courses was strongly recommended by the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience. As the Committee noted, The University has made in the past decade a number of significant efforts to provide opportunities for students to improve their writing skills. The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition as recommended by the Committee represents a bold new initiative and reemphasizes The University's commitment to the central importance of writing skills in higher education.

The report of the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience and my responses to the recommendations contained in that report received wide distribution through the December 9, 1991 and May 11, 1992 issues of *On Campus*. The University community responded very favorably to the Committee's recommendation to establish a Division of Rhetoric and Composition. I also asked the deans of The University's colleges and schools to review this recommendation from the perspective of the needs of their students and their curricula. They gave it their enthusiastic endorsement and expressed the view that the establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition would bring about a new and valuable focus to the improvement of writing skills that are critically needed by students in all undergraduate program areas.

Interim Dean Robert D. King
August 28, 1992
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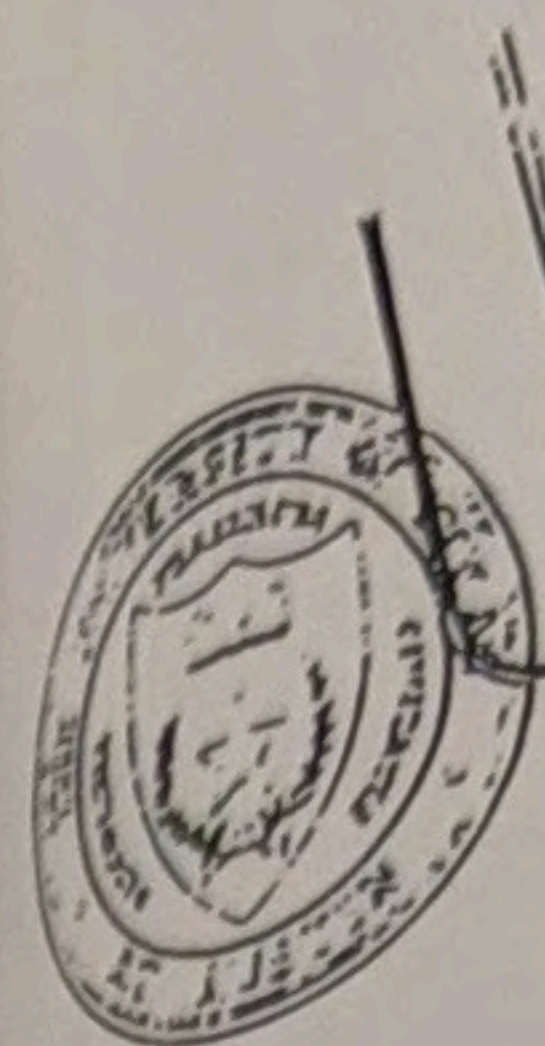
The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be a great step forward in the continuing improvement of the undergraduate educational experience. It is one of the most exciting undertakings that I have been privileged to participate in during my years as President of The University.

Sincerely,


William H. Cunningham
President

WHC/sts

xc: Academic Deans
Vice President William S. Livingston
Vice President Gerhard J. Fonken



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Office of the Dean • West Mall Office Building 201 • Austin, Texas 78712-1105 • (512) 471-4141

September 9, 1992

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE U. T. AUSTIN	
REC'D	SEP 11 1992
REFER TO	
HANDLE	
COMMENT	

Professor Joseph Kruppa
Chair
Department of English

Dear Joe:

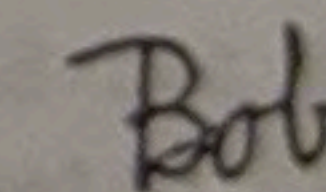
I am writing in regard to the implementation of the Division of Rhetoric and Composition.

First, I wish to proceed to appoint a Director of the Division. To this end I seek input from all faculty in the Department of English who wish to express an opinion on who that person should be. We will not be going outside The University to find a Director, and I would prefer to select someone from among the faculty in the Department of English who identify themselves as in some sense members of the "Rhetoric and Composition faculty."

Second, I would like to appoint a committee, composed in part of faculty from the Department of English, to advise me on the questions of detail that arise as the Division of Rhetoric and Composition is being created. To this end it would be helpful if you could suggest to me a number of names of faculty who would be useful on such a committee. I would then like to meet with you no later than September 16 to discuss these names and to discuss who the representatives of the Department of English on such an advisory committee might be. There will be members of this committee from other units in Liberal Arts and The University.

Finally, I know there are lots of fears and lots of questions going round on this entire issue. I urge you to come see me as often as you want to so that we can dissipate as many concerns as possible as they arise.

Sincerely yours,



Robert D. King
Dean ad interim

RDK/bg

xc: Dr. William S. Livingston
Dr. Gerhard J. Fonken