

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

PROPOSAL BY THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENT IN ENGLISH

The following proposal by the College of Liberal Arts for an undergraduate university requirement in English has been forwarded to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. This proposal is being sent to the members of the Faculty Senate for information and possible discussion at its next meeting on February 2, 1981.

Phyllis Richards, Secretary  
The Faculty Senate

Rationale for the Proposal

Distributed to members of the Faculty Senate on January 29, 1981

PROPOSAL BY THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS FOR AN  
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The College of Liberal Arts recommends that all undergraduate degree programs at the University of Texas at Austin involve a sequence of three English courses: (1) English 306, Rhetoric and Composition, in the freshman year; (2) English 316 K, Masterworks of Literature, in the sophomore year; (3) English 346K, Writing in Different Disciplines, (or an equivalent course offered in any department and approved by the Department of English), in the junior or senior year.

English 306, Rhetoric and Composition, is the composition course currently required in all undergraduate degree programs in the University. No basic change is envisaged for this course. It will continue to emphasize much expository and analytical writing, paying attention to mechanics, rhetorical strategies, and organization.

English 316K, Masterworks of Literature, is a new course involving readings in one of three alternative subject areas--World Masterworks, English Masterworks, and American Masterworks. Although the emphasis in this course is on literature, there will be significant amounts of writing in the form of critical papers and essay examinations.

English 346K, Writing in Different Disciplines, is a new course which will be offered in four topics: Writing in the Arts and Humanities, Writing in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, Writing in the Natural Sciences, and Writing in Business. The writing exercises will prepare students for the kinds of writing in these various areas and some of them will relate to readings in the respective areas. The Department of English is authorized to approve equivalent courses in writing, offered by individual departments as a substitute for E346K.

These requirements do not apply to Plan II; and Humanities 306 remains as a substitute for E 306 in all regular programs. For foreign students there will be E 306Q, E316KQ, and E 346KQ, similar to the current alternatives. Finally, for the weakest students in the university we are proposing English 206 and English 106, courses to accompany E 306 and mandating two hours or one hour per week in the language laboratory. These will be credit courses, but the credit will not count towards graduation.

This legislation supersedes the legislation of the General Faculty (Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty, 10728-10729), approved by the circularization process February 20, 1973.

#### RATIONALE AND ANCILLARY SUGGESTIONS

##### Rationale for the Proposal

Considerable study by the Department of English has motivated this proposal. The legislation of 1973 on the English requirement for Plan I degree programs (degrees in Arts and Sciences) had asked for a review of the effectiveness of the program proposed at that time. The Department of English has attempted to comply with the spirit of that recommendation. Between 1974 and the present time there have been empirical research studies on many aspects of the current programs: mechanics (2 studies), use of the library (2), use of the laboratory, use of anthologized readings (2), teaching of supportive evidence, teaching of techniques of persuasion (2), use of tutors, use of free self-expression, use of exploratory heuristics, use of the computer (3), use of the part-to-whole (sentence-paragraph-theme) versus whole-involving-part (theme with functional paragraph and sentence and diction considerations), university faculty reaction to program effectiveness, general effectiveness of the program (3), the relation of the program to the types of writing in different departments, the effectiveness of the use of graduate students as teachers in many sections

of the program, and the problem of writing anxiety. Five of these studies have been doctoral dissertations by students in English Education, 2 have been follow-up studies of dissertations, 3 have been undertaken by the office of Measurement and Evaluation, 2 have been in-house studies by the Freshman English Policy Committee, the writing anxiety studies have been made by John Daly in the Department of Speech Communication, and one large study was initially funded by the office of the Vice-President.

A good number of the conclusions of these studies were used by the Department of English last year, when, at the request of Dean King of the College of Liberal Arts, an intensive study of the English requirement was undertaken. The Chairman of the Department appointed 6 study committees which worked independently and then under the umbrella of a large task force to examine the content, the sequencing, the admission requirements, placement options, and the staffing problems of the program. After more than a half year of intensive, often weekly meetings by these committees, the department met in plenary sessions and approved the present proposal by a 76% majority approval--a singularly rare achievement for an English department.

The Upperdivision Composition Course. The heart of the change in the proposal is the transfer of the second required composition course from the second semester of the freshman year to the junior or senior year and to require that the subjects of the themes be relevant to the particular discipline of the student.

Certainly the most compelling reason for the suggestion is the desire of the UT faculty itself. In the Hereford-Sledd report, one of the studies mentioned above, conducted by the Measurement and Evaluation Center in 1976, over 76% of the respondents favored such an upper division course. There were approximately 1400 respondents (faculty, teaching assistants, and students) who participated in this particular survey. Such a response is itself a mandate.

But there are several educational principles motivating this change in addition to this change. Two research studies at Harvard seem to have initiated the concern over what has come to be called the deterioration of inactive writing skills. In reporting the second study to the faculty at Harvard, President Derek Bok pointed out that while graduating seniors in liberal arts disciplines wrote better than freshmen who had completed a course in composition, on the contrary seniors in the physical sciences wrote worse than their freshman counterparts--largely because of lack of exercise of these skills in the intervening years. Indeed this report was one of the major stimulants for the undergraduate core curriculum study which Bok then asked Dean Rosnovsky to undertake.

A goodly number of large and small institutions have attempted to face this issue. Large institutions like Michigan, Maryland, SUNY-Courtlandt, Bradley, Brigham Young, California State College (both San Bernardino and Long Beach), Carnegie-Mellon, and small liberal arts colleges like Beaver College in Philadelphia, Canisius College, Spelman College in Atlanta, etc., and others have adopted the junior level format, nearly always coupled with the writing in a particular discipline. The faculty involved in such programs almost universally praise the greater maturity of the themes, the better organization of the material, and the more noticeable motivation of the students. Research studies carried on at some of these institutions, particularly at Bradley and Michigan document the accuracy of these faculty reactions. Our own experience here at Texas with the courses in technical writing and advanced expository prose agrees with these findings.

Consequently, our proposal posits a writing experience in three of the four years of the student's undergraduate career. The sophomore year combines this writing experience with the literary experience. And the Department of English, in conjunction with the Vick

committee on the core curriculum, believes strongly that one of the components of a college education should be some exposure to the great masterpieces of the Western tradition of literature.

Changes for the Various Colleges. The present proposal does not change the number of hours required for graduation in any of the degree programs except that of the College of Fine Arts. All of the other colleges or schools already require 9 or more hours of English.

The major disturbance of this present proposal will be in the sequencing. This issue was discussed in December with an informal meeting with the subdeans of the various colleges and schools. This problem does not seem insoluble.

There will be other logistical concerns which will have to be faced. The English department will phase out certain courses presently offered, will have to establish different prerequisites to upperdivision courses, will continually reexamine placement instruments, will work more thoroughly than ever with the registrar's office to attempt to predict enrollments, and will also continue to examine the criteria for exemptions from different courses. Nothing radically different from present procedures is envisaged in these areas, however.

#### Ancillary Suggestions.

The Department of English and the College of Liberal Arts hopes that the concern for literacy spreads to all departments of the university. We encourage all of the faculty and staff to take an interest in writing and possibly to cooperate with the Department of English in its Writing Across the Disciplines courses. And we encourage members of departments professionally interested in literature to cooperate with the Masterworks course.

The College of Liberal Arts likewise hopes that the current interest in limiting enrollment and growth in order to focus on quality is extended to the issues of a literate student body. Should an institution of the first class, so defined by the state constitution, include in its entering freshman class about 600 students who are in the lowest quarter of all college and junior college students in the SAT-Verbal scores? This constitutes about 10% of the class. It is this group that is the clientele for the remedial laboratory work entailed in the E 106 and E 206.

Our pilot experiment with the laboratory handling this lowest 10% of the entering freshmen has been, by all reports from both faculty and students this year, a remarkable success. As long as these students are on campus, we intend to assist them. In any case, if the university ever succeeds in attracting more minority students than it presently has, such a facility will be useful in a different dimension.

In addition to considering limiting enrollments, the Department of English would like the university to consider earlier enrollment deadlines. Large Midwestern universities like Michigan, with more numbers than we have, close admissions in early spring. It is therefore easier to predict class sections and the number of teachers needed for the fall courses. We have talked to the registrar's office about this issue and hope that eventually a deadline of May 1 can be established for admissions.

Finally, the Department of English and the College of Liberal Arts hope that the university community, the regents, the coordinating board, and the legislature will view the teaching of composition at any level as a function which carries as much dignity and importance as any other teaching function on the university. Instead of delegating this job mainly to poorly paid assistant instructors and temporary faculty not considered good enough to be given tenure status, we hope that the teaching of composition will be endowed with the respect which it deserves.

This means that the salary, the academic status, and the teaching load of faculty engaged in composition teaching be commensurate with the rest of the faculty. Indeed the regents and the coordinating board might come to recognize that the individual nature of much of the conferencing in composition classes approaches the tutorial solicitude of art and music teaching and might be formula funded on a basis different from the other liberal arts, as well as given different teaching load credits.

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

FEBRUARY 2, 1981

The sixth meeting of the Faculty Senate for the academic year 1980-81 was held in Room 212 of the Main Building at 2:15 P.M. on February 2, 1981.

Chair William Glade (Economics) presided at the meeting.

ATTENDANCE

I.

Present: Abram Amsel, Martin Baughman, Robert Brody, John Brokaw, Mary Crockett, Mitzi Dreher, John Durbin, David Edwards, G. Karl Galinsky, LaVerne Gallman, David Gavenda, William Glade, Donald Grantham, Terence Grieder, Glynn Harmon, Roderick Hart, Forest Hill, Ira Iscoe, Gaylord Jentz, James O. Jirsa, H. Paul Kelley, Charles Lamb, Clarence Lasby, Judith Langlois, Gerlinde Leiding, William Lesso, Ernest Lundelius, Neill Megaw, James McGinity, S. Chad Oliver, Thomas Philpott, Phyllis Richards, William Shive, Guy Shuttlesworth, Ray Sommerfeld, Lawrence Speck, James F. M. Stephens, James Vick, Warwick Wadlington, Robert Williamson, Eugene Wissler.

Absent: James Browne, Francis Bostick (excused), Parker Fielder (excused), Bonnie Freeman, Alan Friedman (excused), Eleanor Greenhill, Dagmar Hamilton, C. Robert Kline (excused), Thomas Marquardt, Mary Ann Rankin, Michael Sharlot, Waneen Spirduso.

Total members present: 41

Total members absent: 12

II.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of the meeting of January 12, 1981 (D&P 1501-1506) were APPROVED as circulated.

III.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

A. Report of Chair

Mr. Glade (Economics) announced that because of Mr. Fielder's protracted convalescence that Mr. Lundelius will serve as chair of the Committee on Budget Councils and Executive Committees, probably for the remainder of the semester. He reported the formation of two new committees: The Committee on University Policy and Faculty Organizations - Mr. Amsel, Mr. Stephens and Mr. Gavenda, Chair; The Committee on Pedagogical Implications of Enrollment Growth - Mr. Edwards, Mr. Harmon, Mr. Lesso, Mr. Shive, Mr. Wadlington and Mr. Iscoe, Chair. Mr. James Stice, Center for Teaching Effectiveness, also will serve on this committee.

An updated report of the status of University legislation was distributed.

B. Report of Vice Chair

No report.

C. Report of Secretary

No report.

## IV. Reports of Committees

## A. General Curriculum Revision Committee - James Vick

Mr. Vick (Mathematics), Chairman of the General Curriculum Revision Committee, initiated discussion of the committee's report (University Council D&P 8148-8166) by raising two questions. First, what characteristics, if any, should be common to the study programs of all students? Second, if it can be concluded that there is a compelling need for some common characteristics, what measures should be taken to ensure that they are in fact embodied in the education of university students, for example, admission requirements, curriculum requirements, or some combination of both?

Mr. Philpott (History) rose to restate the first question as referring to an obligation of the University to pass on to its students the cultural fund of our civilization, that they might add to the fund as well as nurture it and pass it on. He saw this as a more accurate statement than trying to train students to have a given set of characteristics.

Mr. Grantham (Music) said that the faculty in the College of Fine Arts share some of the concerns articulated by the Vick Committee, but are also distressed by the price that has to be paid for the recommendations proposed by the committee. He mentioned some fundamental difficulties that are not fully addressed in the Vick Committee's report or in the response from the Committee on Educational Policy and Curriculum, College of Fine Arts (see University Council D&P 8188-8203). Only a small percentage of students are able to complete the course of study in fine arts in four years. Most students require five years since they enter the University having spent a good number of years studying in the general areas of education, but with little or no experience in the academic disciplines in fine arts that they are expected to master in order to achieve professional competency. If the Vick Committee's recommendations are enacted, he contended that the department will be forced to either reduce what is already thought to be a minimum exposure to crucial academic music subjects, or to extend the years of study to an unreasonable and unacceptable length. He voiced his fear that most students will elect to attend other institutions whose goals are more in keeping with their own professional aims, and thus have a devastating effect on what is now one of the strongest music departments in the Southwest.

Mr. Griender (Art) compared the Vick Report to the Graham Report pointing out that the proposed general education requirements seem to favor Mathematics (appearing in two different sections and giving the option of 6 hours of mathematics) and to eliminate or reduce anything that refers to history (other than the legislative requirement of American History), classical civilization and the fine arts. He mentioned that his proposal (D&P 8170-8171) of core courses in History and Philosophy of the Sciences, and History and Philosophy of the Arts might be a viable way to achieve general education.

Mr. Brokaw (Drama) suggested alternative ways other than curriculum changes to achieve general education objectives, such as raised admission requirements or undergraduate comprehensive examinations to test exit-level skills in core curriculum areas.

Mr. Megaw (English) found advantages in both the Vick Report and in the response to this report by the Fine Arts Faculty. He then proposed a shift in emphasis toward mandated independent study for all students, including "C" students, and more interdisciplinary study for students (proposal circulated to the University Council D&P 8204-8207).

Mr. Speck (Architecture) noted that the proposal may "water down" the curriculum in the School of Architecture by giving students credit for placing out of foreign language and using that credit for electives in their program of work rather than taking, for their electives, upper division courses in related areas.

Mr. Hill (Economics) voiced his concern that by using existing courses we may be disappointed in the final product. He encouraged pursuit of more innovative approaches including some of the suggestions made by earlier speakers e.g., independent study and interdisciplinary courses.

Mr. Vick acknowledged and clarified some of the points made by previous speakers. He noted that all of the issues had been discussed by the committee before the report was finalized, and the committee felt that the most practical and most effective way to accomplish the established goals was to utilize courses already in existence.

## V. OLD BUSINESS

None

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

## A. A proposal by the College of Liberal Arts for an Undergraduate University Requirement in English (D&amp;P 1512-1516) - James Kinneavy

Mr. Kinneavy (English) presented a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts for a revised undergraduate university requirement in English as follows:

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(See D&P 1513-1516 for Rationale and Ancillary Suggestions)

Mr. Kinneavy said the proposal is compatible with the Vick Committee's recommended general curriculum revision. The major change in the almost universal nine hour English requirement is to move some composition work from the freshman year to an upper-division level and to a discipline-oriented format (e.g., writing in Business, writing in the Arts and Humanities, etc). He presented several studies supporting such a move.

Mr. Brokaw (Drama), Mr. Jentz (General Business), and Mr. Gavenda (Physics) raised questions centered on other departments teaching the proposed junior level courses, who would be empowered to approve courses offered in departments other than English, availability and interest of faculty in other departments to teach such a course and the effect on student's programs of shifting a lower-division course requirement to an upper-division course requirement.

Mr. Kinneavy said that the Department of English is seeking input from students taking E307 and E308 and from the Council of Sub-Deans to help answer the question regarding the shift to an upper-division course, and is talking with the various departments which might offer an upper-division course about the syllabus for such a course. He remarked that faculty in certain departments might be interested in teaching the junior level course, but that he expects that the department of English will continue to teach most of the courses in English. The Department of English is authorized in the proposal, to approve equivalent courses in writing offered by individual departments.

Mr. Hill spoke in favor of the proposal, but wondered if a University Committee to be responsible for the upper-division writing course would be a better administrative arrangement. Mr. Kinneavy, speaking for himself only, agreed.

Mr. Roeckle (Music) asked if E306 is essentially a pre-college level course, and about accepting transfer credit for E307 in fulfillment of the upper-division level writing course requirement.

Mr. Kinneavy presented data to support his contention that E306 is not a remedial course. He said that E307 will be accepted as a transfer course from a Community College or another four year college to count for the third course (junior level) in the English requirement. He gave expediency as the reason, citing the unfortunate experience of another university when they proposed not to accept freshman level English courses for credit from Community Colleges.

In response to a question from Mr. Wissler (Chemical Engineering) about procedures for making a catalogue change for 1982-1984 in the English requirement, Mr. Kinneavy said each college at the present time has the right to determine its own courses and the regular procedure for catalogue change should be followed. He added that it is possible to seek blanket substitution of an upper-division writing course for the second semester freshman course.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the final item on the agenda was postponed until the next meeting.

There being no further business, the Senate adjourned at 3:30 P.M. to convene next on March 2, 1981 at 2:15 P.M. in Room 212 of the Main Building.

Phyllis Richards, Secretary  
The Faculty Senate

Distributed to members of the Faculty Senate and to members of the General Faculty who want Minutes on February 26, 1981