

# ON Campus

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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## University establishes new division for teaching writing, composition

By Nancy Neff

The University will establish a new Division of Rhetoric and Composition responsible for teaching first-year writing and other composition courses in an effort to improve the writing skills of students.

The new instructional unit of the College of Liberal Arts will be responsible for administering, staffing and supervising undergraduate writing and rhetoric courses formerly taught by the Department of English. The division will become operational June 1, 1993.

"The new division is a dramatic, new

initiative in the teaching of writing at the University," said Dr. Robert D. King, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts. "The program will quickly establish itself as one of the most respected writing programs in the country by assembling resources now scattered within the English department and liberal arts."

Establishment of the Division of Rhetoric and Composition was one of the proposals recommended by the Special Committee on the Undergraduate Experience and endorsed earlier by President William H. Cunningham. The committee, chaired by Dr. Frank Bean of sociology,

was charged with undertaking a comprehensive and thorough examination of undergraduate education and life at UT Austin.

"The University has made in the past decade a number of significant efforts to provide opportunities for students to improve their writing skills," Cunningham said. "The new division represents a bold new initiative and reemphasizes the University's commitment to the central importance of writing skills in higher education."

Cunningham said he had asked the University's deans to review the recom-

mendation of the new unit 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 programs," Cunningham said.

"The establishment of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition will be a great step forward in the continuing improve-

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# New College of Liberal Arts division established to improve students' writing skills

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ment of the undergraduate educational experience," Cunningham said. "It is one of the most exciting undertakings that I have been privileged to participate in during my years as president of the University." Cunningham on Sept. 1 became chancellor of the UT System.

The division will be responsible for such courses as Rhetoric and Composition, Rhetoric and Composition for Non-native Speakers of English, Topics in Writing, the Writing Process, Thinking and Writing,

Advanced Expository Writing, Rhetoric and Composition for High School Teachers of English, Topics in Editing and Topics in Composition.

Courses will be taught by faculty in rhetoric and composition currently in the English department. The computer writing lab also will be administered by the division.

King said the new division would improve the quality of writing instruction at UT Austin in several ways, including:

- A division whose chief responsibility is to teach writing will be able to coordi-

nate its courses to serve that specific goal, employing and training teachers comfortable with their mission.

- 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 ensure their success in college programs.

- The administrator 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.