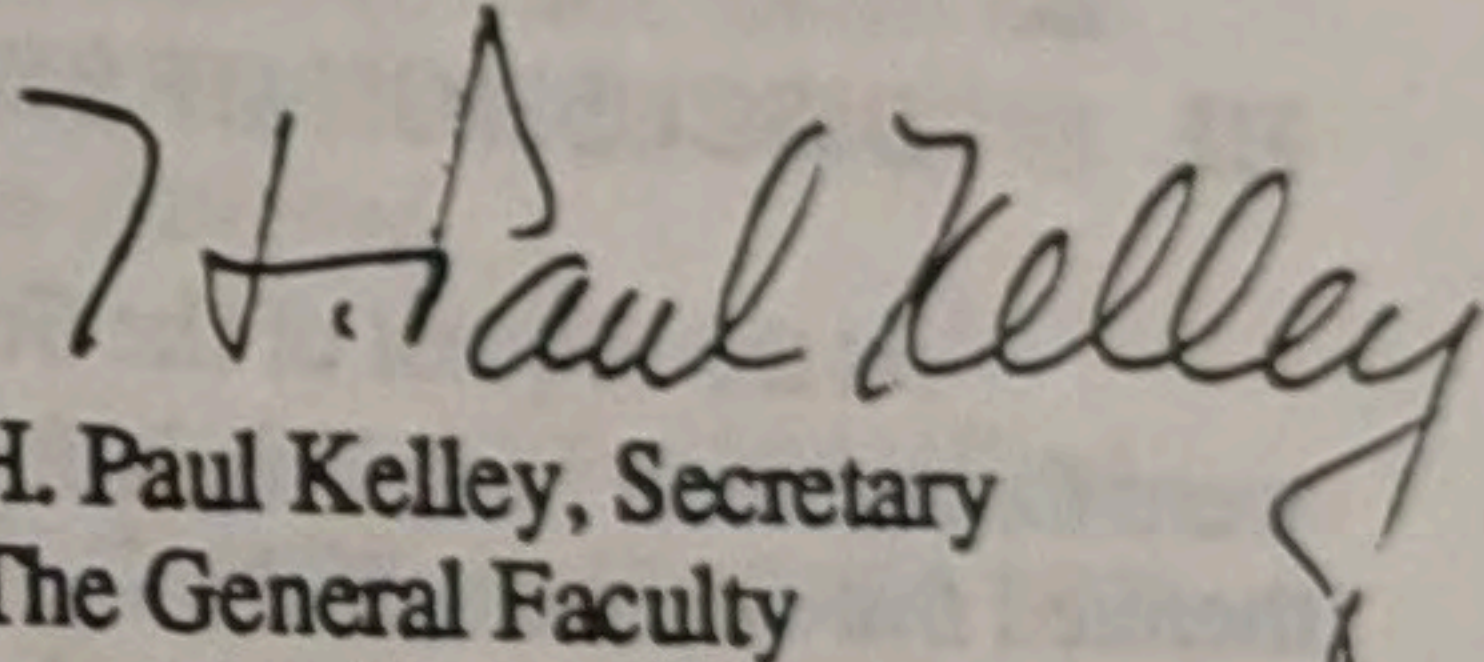


DOCUMENTS AND MINUTES OF THE GENERAL FACULTY
AND
DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Minutes of the University Council meeting of February 21, 1994, published below, have been prepared for the immediate use of the members of the University Council and are included in its Documents and Proceedings. They are also included in the Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty for the information of the members.


H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

**MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 21, 1994**

The sixth regular meeting of the University Council for the academic year 1993-1994 was held in Room 212 of the Main Building on Monday, February 21, 1994, at 2:15 p.m. President Robert M. Berdahl presided.

ATTENDANCE.

Present: Patricia A. Alvey, Robert M. Berdahl, Shirley F. Binder, Robert H. Bishop, Robert E. Boyer, Oscar G. Brockett, Ned H. Burns, Mia E. Carter, Alan K. Cline, John R. Cogdell, William L. Cook, Eli P. Cox III, Donald G. Davis, Jr., Randy L. Diehl, Kenneth R. Diller, John D. Dollard, Sheldon Ekland-Olson, Helen L. Erickson, Gerhard J. Fonken, Alan W. Friedman, G. Karl Galinsky, Mark P. Gergen, Cynthia B. Goldberger, Paul D. Gottlieb, Martha F. Hilley, Joseph M. Horn, Judith A. Jellison, Sharon H. Justice, Manuel J. Justiz, H. Paul Kelley, Karrol A. Kitt, John D. Martin, M. Ray Mercer, Deborah K. Morrison, Alba A. Ortiz, Loren Pogir, Brenda I. Preyer, Karen L. Rascati, John J. Ruszkiewicz, Dolores Sands, Edwin R. Sharpe, Jr., Brooke E. Sheldon, Max R. Sherman, Joel F. Sherzer, Tara A. Smith, Waneen W. Spirduso, William O.S. Sutherland, Michael P. Thomas, Jr., James W. Vick, Ellen A. Wartella, Jon S. Whitmore, Richard A. Willis, Patricia A. Wilson, Herbert H. Woodson, Julie G. Zelman.

Absent: Harold W. Billings, Daniel A. Bonevac, Eric R. Bradley, Patrick L. Brockett, Susan W. Clagett (excused), James T. Doluisio (excused), John R. Durbin (excused), Michael D. Engelhardt, Elizabeth W. Fernea, G. Charles Franklin, Stephen T. Gerald (excused), Barbara J. Harlow, Thomas M. Hatfield, George K. Herbert (excused), Irene Kacandes (excused), Joseph E. Kruppa, J. Parker Lamb (excused), William S. Livingston, Guy J. Manaster (excused), Susan E. Marshall, Robert G. May, Karen Netzer, Patrick L. Parker, Ann M. Reynolds (excused), Peter J. Riley (excused), Gretchen Ritter (excused), Gayle E. Rosenstein (excused), Lawrence W. Speck (excused), William G. Spelman, Sharon L. Strover (excused), Delbert D. Thiessen, Barbara W. White, Robert E. Witt (excused), Kristin L. Wood, Mark G. Yudof.

Total members present: 55

Total members absent: 35

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

A. Minutes of the Meeting of January 31, 1994 (D&M 20552-20556/D&P 14911-14915). (APPROVED)

The minutes of the meeting of January 31, 1994, (D&M 20552-20556/D&P 14911-14915) were APPROVED as distributed.

II. SECRETARY'S REPORT (D&P 14916-14925).

The Secretary's written report (D&P 14916-14925) had been distributed in advance.

III. DISCUSSION OF SECRETARY'S REPORT.

At the request of the Secretary, H. Paul Kelley (Educational Psychology), privileges of the floor were extended to Mrs. Frieda J. Speck (Administrative Associate, Office of the General Faculty), who thanked the members of the Council "for your thoughtful expression of sympathy in the resolution you passed [at the January 31 meeting] and for all of your kindness and concern at this time."

IV. QUESTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT.

A. Question Concerning a Possible Student Fee to Support Women's Intercollegiate Athletics.

Alan K. Cline (Computer Sciences) asked if serious consideration was being given to having a student fee to pay for women's intercollegiate athletics.

President Berdahl replied that in order to bring men's and women's intercollegiate athletics into compliance with federal law, we have to add two women's sports — soccer and softball, and we have to add athletic scholarships for women. He noted that football is the only revenue-generating sport, that the men's intercollegiate athletics program already contributes substantially to the women's program, and that the men's program will be asked to contribute even more. He added that another source of additional funds being considered is a modest fee that would be dedicated to support women's athletics; there will also be additional fundraising, and expenditures will be reduced by combining many of the men's and women's program activities.

In summary, President Berdahl said that a combination of actions will be required — increase the subsidy from men's athletics, reduce costs, and find other sources of revenue, such as more private gifts and possibly a student fee. He added: "[The fee] is not an option that any of us would like to see, necessarily, but there are very few schools in the country that do not have some kind of support from fees for the athletic program...."

B. Question About Ethnic Minority Students at UT Austin.

Donald G. Davis, Jr. (Library and Information Science) asked the President to comment briefly on the newspaper story that appeared in The Austin American-Statesman a couple of weeks ago that indicated UT Austin is less able to deal with ethnic minority students than is Texas A&M University.

President Berdahl said he appreciated the question and the concern. Someone who looked at the headlines and only hurriedly looked at the article "might have had the impression that A&M does everything right and we do everything wrong. I do not think that is the case, and I do not think ultimately that the story bore out that kind of conclusion. But it certainly was, I think, a passing impression that one could have gained."

Noting that the story was occasioned by two reports that we had requested on perceptions of UT Austin by the African-American community and by the Hispanic community, President Berdahl said:

"Those reports were undertaken at our request because we needed to establish a dialogue, we needed to hear what was being said and how we were being perceived, what some of the issues are. We learned a good deal.... Tomorrow evening I am meeting with some ... leaders from the African-American community to talk about things we can do to improve that relationship. I think we are working very, very hard and doing a good job, basically, in terms of reaching out and trying to establish a positive relationship with the minority communities."

President Berdahl also commented: "The other thing ... that came through from the [newspaper] story that we need to be concerned with is the issue of the campus climate.... We need to be sensitive to how ... faculty, staff, and students ... relate to the Hispanic and the African-American communities." He added that we must deal with the issue through the process of education. He believes that it is inimical to the nature of a free university to impose codes of behavior that interfere with free expression. However, we must become more sensitive to the obstacles that minority students encounter here, we must realize that minority students have more obstacles to overcome, and we must assist minority students by removing obstacles and by helping minority students deal with obstacles that cannot be removed.

Finally, President Berdahl reported that people in the minority communities that he had talked with saw the reports as a very positive step on the part of the University. He said that those people were upset that the story appeared to give a negative response to the reports.

V. SPECIAL ORDERS — None.

VI. PETITIONS — None.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS — None.

VIII. REPORTS.

A. Report of the University Council Committee to Examine the Undergraduate Writing Program (D&P 14877-14888). (INTRODUCED; CARRIED OVER TO NEXT MEETING FOR ACTION)

Wallace T. Fowler (Aerospace Engineering), chair of the University Council Committee to Examine the Undergraduate Writing Program, presented the Committee's report (D&P 14877-14888). He said: "This committee was appointed about a year ago as a result of the action of the Council. We worked ... all spring, summer, [and] fall.... The committee consisted of Professors Floyd Brandt, Richard Cherwitz, Melissa Collie, Donald Davis, Lester Faigley, Miguel Gonzalez-Gerth, Deborah Morrison, Michael Starbird, and myself.

"In doing the report, ... we [sent out] a survey of the faculty and ... another survey of the deans and department chairs.... The majority of the faculty felt that despite what we are doing students cannot write very well and that our current writing program is weak; the reasons are many and varied, and they are found in the report....

"The committee had a ... unique experience. As a result of our very first meetings, and we met together probably every two weeks throughout the spring, many of us found that we were modifying what we were doing in our own classrooms just as a result of looking at the problem of writing; ... we started modifying and increasing the amount of writing we [required] in our own classes.... We became very sensitized to the importance of writing in all disciplines.

"Our report [begins] with an Executive Summary.... [Following the Introduction, Section 1 discusses the status of and problems with our current] substantial writing component [SWC] courses.... [Section 2 discusses] writing in [non-SWC] courses.... [Section 3 presents] a list of recommendations....

"Much of the material [in] the section on the substantial writing component courses goes back ... to the Vick Committee and ... the Committee to Examine the Basic Educational Requirements in 1987; we repeat some of those recommendations [because] they still apply. The major findings were [that] there is variable quality across campus in substantial writing component courses [and] many of these courses are too little, too late. We found that at schools where a substantial writing component does work ... well, there is a substantial commitment of resources by the university to those courses, and that is not true here. Also, we found ... that faculty attitudes are such that many faculty use the [existence of] substantial writing component ... courses as an excuse not to teach writing in their own classes...."

"In the non-SWC courses ... we found that writing was natural in almost every class in this university, even mathematics courses.... We [developed] strategies to put more writing into our [own] courses without substantially increasing our grading load, and ... we have listed some of these strategies in the report."

The report presents twelve basic recommendations that could be implemented in the near term and one long term recommendation; briefly stated, they are:

1. Strongly encourage more writing in all courses taught at UT Austin.
2. Fully implement the Undergraduate Writing Center as rapidly as is consistent with available resources and good academic program design.
3. Train faculty to use writing to increase student learning.
4. Train graduate students to assist faculty in evaluating writing.
5. Appoint a UT Austin Writing Committee to oversee campus-wide efforts to improve students' writing abilities.
6. As a corollary to Recommendation 5, ask each college and school to establish a Writing Committee to define writing standards and monitor the quality of writing instruction within that college/school.
7. Develop a process to identify and recognize faculty who are especially effective in teaching writing.
8. Develop a process to identify and recognize adjunct faculty and graduate students who are especially effective in teaching writing.
9. Modify the course evaluations so that they address the writing instruction within specific courses.
10. Encourage programs within colleges/schools which focus on the teaching of writing within specific disciplines.
11. Develop and maintain a library of materials concerning the teaching of writing at the university level.
12. Offer writing courses (with Rhetoric and Composition course numbers) taught by AIs from various disciplines.
13. Long term recommendation: UT Austin should consider sweeping modification and strengthening of the writing requirement.

Mr. Fowler said that the first recommendation, to strongly encourage more writing in every course here at UT Austin, is probably the most important short-term recommendation. "There [may be] exceptions, but ... we strongly think there are opportunities to put more writing in every course, or almost every course, here at UT Austin...."

"The last recommendation is a long-term recommendation [that may] create ... controversy.... The committee basically [said that the] substantial writing component courses are not working the way they should be working. We need to ... keep their best features, get rid of their worst features, and increase the amount of writing done across the entire University...."

Dean Dolores Sands (Nursing) commented: "In all of the recommendations ... the element of writing that is missing is teaching [students] how to think, because writing reflects their thinking. When I work with dissertation students I spend a great deal of time teaching them to think logically so they can reflect their thinking in their writing. They may have the mechanics of writing, but something is missing...."

Mr. Fowler said he thought the committee would agree wholeheartedly.

Privileges of the floor were extended to Vice Provost Ricardo Romo (History), who commended the committee for its fine report. "I served on the committee ... some six years ago [that] looked at writing, and I am struck by the ... improvement in ... the questions [raised by the committee]. I also want to say I currently teach a writing course, and I am surprised that there are some departments that are not offering writing component courses, because that is [the problem] we identified six years ago...."

"I am also aware of the fact that a lot of students are wandering the halls ... looking for writing component courses; many of them are seniors.... I would recommend that we find some mechanism by which we start to tell these students early on that they are going to need a writing component course. I get a lot of them. I had a wait list of 75 students this semester that said, 'If anybody drops, ... I am ready to get into this writing component class.' That is not uncommon in History and other departments.... I hope we can continue to begin to alleviate some of these problems."

Cynthia B. Goldberger (Cabinet of College Councils) pointed out "that oftentimes what happens with writing component [courses] is that students end up taking a class that they are not necessarily interested in [just] because it [fills the] writing component requirement; unfortunately, that [puts uninterested] students [in the class], and it brings the level of the class down. I think that happens [many] times because there are not enough classes that offer writing components." Ms. Goldberger then asked if, under the recommendations, courses that already contain substantial writing components will be reviewed by a committee so that the requirements across the campus will be equal. "I have taken plenty of art history classes where we do substantial writing, and we do not get any kind of writing component credit for it." She also asked if the review by a committee would be on an ongoing rather than a one-time-only basis.

Mr. Fowler replied: "I think this depends a lot on how the committees are set up. We did not recommend one committee, we recommended a University-wide committee and committees from the various colleges because we think it is important enough that the colleges themselves, working within the constraints that they have to live within, have [committees] that focuses on writing within the colleges. I know that College of Engineering has had one of these committees off and on for the past, maybe, 15 years. But [I do not worry much about] having students writing when they do not get 'writing credit' for it, because I think you ought to write in many, many places because writing is a tool that we all will use the rest of our lives. We tell our [engineering] students, 'You are going to be writing more than you are going to be doing anything else.' They do not believe [it until after] their first two months on their jobs.... I think the focus has to be on the training of the faculty, some accounting in terms of getting the students credit for what they have done, and in making enough courses available...."

Ms. Goldberger responded: "I definitely agree with you as far as training the faculty, because unfortunately I have taken writing component courses where with 100 people in a writing component course you [do not get enough] feedback on your paper [to know] what it is that you need to change ... or what is lacking ..., what the difference is between an A paper and a B paper."

Mr. Fowler said: "I think you just hit the nail on the head as far as resources [are] concerned; a hundred people in a substantial writing component course is not an effective way to meet that requirement."

Alan K. Cline, (Computer Sciences) asked Mr. Fowler to comment on technological aids for teaching writing. Mr. Fowler replied: "Historically this university has used ... computerized grammar checkers ..., and currently ... the new writing center [is] set up [so that] you can use electronic mail to send a paragraph or a paper to a consultant, and let the consultant look at your paper [and] send it back to you; ... that [would be done after] you would have already spell-checked it, ... already would have done a grammar check on it, ... and would be looking mainly for style and for some recommendations on how to focus the paper...."

Judith A. Jellison (Music) also commended the committee for its report and recommendations. She asked whether the committee had access to data that would reflect trends across time and institutions regarding percentages of courses that offer writing components.

Mr. Fowler said: "We did not track those items; we felt it was more important to take a snapshot of what was going on right now...."

Ms. Jellison followed up by saying: "I think it might be important ... at least to talk to the professors that have [taught their SWC courses a number of times] ... to see what has changed, the ups and downs in this whole process.... [Also] I would be curious to see ... projections for how many more courses we might need to accommodate our enrollment."

Mr. Fowler noted that six or seven years ago there were courses that were not SWC courses but very easily could have been. "There were faculty members who were changing the courses just enough to make them not qualify as substantial writing component courses because they did not want 150 people in their courses; they wanted to teach writing [just to their own] majors.... I am sure that that still goes on."

There was no further discussion, and the Committee's recommendations will be presented for action at the next regular meeting of the Council.

IX. NEW BUSINESS — None.

X. REMAINING QUESTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT — None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the University Council is scheduled for Main Building, Room 212, on March 21, 1994, at 2:15 p.m.