

CONSTITUTION OF THE FRESHMAN ENGLISH POLICY COMMITTEE
(as adopted on March 24, 1976)

I. NAME AND HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

- A. The name of this committee is the Freshman English Policy Committee.
- B. Although there has long been a course committee for the freshman English program, the present Committee structure dates from the "Rights and Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants" document, as adopted by the English Department on May 15, 1970.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE COMMITTEE

- A. The Freshman English Policy Committee is responsible to the Department as a whole, and it shall forward its minutes, or a summary of its minutes, to the Coordination of Information Committee. Its policy decisions are subject to review by the Department as a whole. The Freshman English Policy Committee shall report to the Department annually on the status of the Freshman English Program.
- B. The Freshman English Policy Committee is responsible to the Teaching Assistants Committee and the Executive Committee for recommendations in matters of personnel assignment and performance.

III. GENERAL PURPOSE OF THE FRESHMAN ENGLISH POLICY COMMITTEE

- A. The purpose of the Freshman English Policy Committee is to formulate policies consistent with University and Departmental policy to govern the operation of the Freshman English Program and to insure the implementation of these policies by its officers and its sub-committees.
- B. The major areas of concern for these policies will be admissions and placement, programs, personnel, counseling and teacher training, and evaluation.
- C. The Freshman English Program Handbook shall include a list of current policies and shall be submitted to each teacher of freshman English at the beginning of each fall semester. An updated version of the policies shall be given to each teacher of freshman English at the beginning of each spring semester.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

To achieve the purposes outlined in the preceding section, the major responsibilities of the Freshman English Policy Committee shall be the following:

- A. Admissions and Placement
- B. Programs
 - 1. Course proposals
 - 2. Syllabuses
 - 3. Textbooks
 - 4. Administrative procedures (e.g., final exams, grade appeals, discipline, plagiarism, storing of themes, etc.)

C. Personnel

1. Make recommendations to the Department's Executive Committee for the various administrative positions in the Freshman English Program.
2. Approve teaching assignments in the light of recommendations from the following:
 - a. The Director of Freshman English, for regular assignments.
 - b. The Course Proposal Sub-committee, for new courses.
 - c. The Personnel Sub-committee, for variant courses.
3. Approve recommendations from the Personnel Sub-committee for counselors and instructors for teacher training.

D. Counseling and Teacher Training

1. Establish policies for counseling and teacher training.

E. Evaluation

1. Establish policies for the evaluation of the Freshman English Program.
2. Act on evaluation recommendations from appropriate sub-committees.

V. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FRESHMAN ENGLISH POLICY COMMITTEE

- A. Membership of the Freshman English Policy Committee is governed by the terms of the "Rights and Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants."
- B. The number of regular staff members (not including the Chairman of the Committee) shall be equal to the number of Teaching Assistant members. (The term "TA" shall be understood to include Assistant Instructors throughout this document.)
- C. Regular staff members are appointed by the Chairman of the Department for a term of one year. They must be teaching a freshman English course during their tenure in office or must have taught one within the previous academic year.
- D. Teaching Assistant members shall be elected by the eligible Teaching Assistants for a term of one year. (A Teaching Assistant is eligible to vote in such elections after one year's service in the Department.) Teaching Assistant members must have completed at least one year of service in the Department and must teach a freshman English course during their tenure in office, or must have taught it within the previous academic year.

F. Ex-officio Members

1. The Chairman of the English Department shall be a non-voting member of the Freshman English Policy Committee.
2. The Director of Freshman English shall serve as the Chairman of the Freshman English Policy Committee, and shall vote only in case of ties.

3. The Associate Director (Co-ordinator of Counseling) and the Assistant-Director will be ex-officio members with vote.
4. Any other ex-officio members will be non-voting.

VI. OFFICERS OF THE FRESHMAN ENGLISH POLICY COMMITTEE

- A. 1. The Chairman of the Freshman English Policy Committee shall be the Director of Freshman English, who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the English Department in consultation with the Freshman English Policy Committee.
2. The functions of the Chairman shall be to:
 - a. Call meetings of the Freshman English Policy Committee.
 - b. Chair meetings of the Freshman English Policy Committee.
 - c. Keep members informed of policy problems.
 - d. Make regular reports to the Committee on the implementation of its policies.
 - e. Vote in case of tie.
 - f. Make recommendations to the Chairman of the English Department for the staffing of non-experimental freshman English courses.
 - g. Appoint members of the Freshman English Policy Committee as representatives to appropriate departmental committees (such as the Coordination of Information Committee, Committee on Extension and Correspondence Study, Sophomore English Policy Committee, and the Committee on Co-ordination of Composition).
- B. 1. The Associate Director of Freshman English shall be a regular faculty member who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the English Department in consultation with the Freshman English Policy Committee.
2. The functions of the Associate Director of Freshman English shall be to:
 - a. Serve as Co-ordinator of Counseling Program (including peer counseling and the English 398T program for freshman English courses).
 - 1) Chair Freshman 398T Sub-committee.
 - 2) Chair Personnel Sub-committee.
 - 3) Serve as Freshman English Policy Committee liaison with Teaching Assistants Committee.
 - b. Call meetings of the Freshman English Policy Committee.
 - c. Chair meetings of the Freshman English Policy Committee in absence of the Chairman.
- C. 1. The Assistant Director of Freshman English should be a Teaching Assistant appointed by the Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Freshman English Policy Committee, to serve for only one year.

2. The functions of the Assistant Director of Freshman English shall be to:
 - a. Call meetings of the Freshman English Policy Committee.
 - b. Chair meetings of the Freshman English Policy Committee in the absence of the Chairman and the Associate Director.
 - c. Take and distribute the minutes. Maintain a collection of the minutes to be permanently filed in the Freshman English Office.
 - d. Compile and distribute an agenda several days before each meeting.
 - e. Compile a summary of actions taken at each meeting of the Freshman English Policy Committee for forwarding to the Coordination of Information Committee and all teachers of freshman English.
 - f. Keep a file of current policies, to be updated and distributed to all teachers of freshman English each fall.
 - g. Assist Director in making recommendations for staffing positions to the Chairman of the English Department.
 - h. Assist Director and Associate Director with the summer orientation program for new Teaching Assistants.

VII. OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. The final authority on questions of procedure shall be Roberts' Rules of Order.
- B. Two-thirds of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- C. Voting.
 1. On all motions except selection of personnel, voice votes shall be taken. Motions will require a majority of those actually voting to pass. The Assistant Director will record vote tallies in the minutes.
 2. On selection of personnel, voting members will rank candidates according to their preference, on written ballots. The candidate receiving the lowest total will be ranked first, next lowest second, and so on.
 3. When personnel or textbook selections (with the exception of requests for texts to be used in an individual course) involve members of the Committee, said members shall absent themselves from the discussion and voting.
 4. At the discretion of the Assistant Director, minor emergency matters can be handled by mail balloting, but one protest will invalidate the mail ballot and necessitate Committee discussion to settle the matter.
- D. Any third of the membership of the Committee shall be able to call meetings.

VIII. SUB-COMMITTEES

- A. There shall be six standing sub-committees of the Freshman English Policy Committee: Admissions and Placement, Freshman 398T, New and Variant Course Proposals, Personnel, Program Evaluation, and Textbook.
1. Committee appointments shall be made by the Chairman. Every member of the Freshman English Policy Committee will ordinarily be a member of at least one sub-committee. The chairman of each sub-committee shall be a member of the Freshman English Policy Committee.
 2. Standing sub-committees shall be responsible for formulating recommendations and submitting them to the entire Freshman English Policy Committee.
 3. Standing sub-committees shall keep Freshman English Policy Committee members informed of matters under their consideration, both by formal reports at appropriate times and by distributing copies of questionnaires, textbook request, etc.
- B. The Chairman may appoint ad hoc sub-committees as needed.

IX. PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF AND AMMENDMENT TO THIS CONSTITUTION

- A. Amendments to this document shall require approval of two-thirds of the voting members of the Freshman English Policy Committee.

CURRENT POLICIES OF THE FRESHMAN ENGLISH POLICY COMMITTEE

Advanced Placement Exam

The advanced placement examination shall be a variant of the second-semester freshman English program.

Credit will be given for English 308 to all who pass the exam.

The texts will be chosen by the freshman English program administrators and will include a rhetoric text, some essays, and some longer prose work or works (e.g., a book or a couple of short stories).

The examination shall consist of an objective test over the rhetoric text and two essay questions, one on the assigned essays and one on the longer work or works.

Graders for the examination shall be selected by the freshman English program administration.

Constitution of the Freshman English Policy Committee

A copy of the Constitution of the Freshman English Policy Committee shall be included in the Departmental Teaching Assistants' Handbook, along with the "Rights and Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants."

Counseling

A counselor must have taught the courses for which he provides counsel within the two preceding years or teach them while he is a counselor.

The Freshman English Policy Committee's Personnel Sub-committee plus the Director of Freshman English will be responsible for evaluating applicants and nominating candidates to fill counseling positions. The Sub-committee will establish its own procedures in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Develop appropriate application forms.
2. Publish and distribute job descriptions and procedures for applying at least one month in advance.
3. Assemble available performance records of candidates (Teaching Assistants Committee file, counseling evaluation, student evaluations).
4. Determine eligibility of candidates.
5. Interview candidates.
6. Observe at least one class of each candidate who is currently teaching.
7. Rank candidates according to their aptitude for carrying out the duties of the position.
8. Present documentary materials, rankings, and recommendations to the Freshman English Policy Committee at least one week before the vote is to be taken.

Evaluation

The Freshman English Program must continually evaluate both its basic and experimental courses. Through evaluation, the Program can assess changing interests, needs, and abilities of faculty and students as well as keep up with advancing knowledge in rhetoric and linguistics. Such information is essential if the Program is to remain healthy and meet its goals.

Because of the mixed abilities of the students and the varying emphases of given courses, the goals of courses offered by the Freshman English Program may differ. These differences must be taken into account in any evaluation. Nevertheless, all of the courses should strive to attain the following common goals. It is by these goals that courses will be evaluated. The courses should enable the student:

1. To write logical, effective sentences, using a variety of sentence patterns while committing a minimum number of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.
2. To write coherent and effective paragraphs; in turn, to write organized and developed expository essays which reflect responsibility to audience, subject, argument, effective language, and writer.
3. To demonstrate an analytical awareness of argumentative and persuasive evidence, processes, and strategies in his own writing.
4. To analyze and to evaluate the writing of others, expository or literary, with an understanding of the meaning, purposes, structure, and style.

Experimental courses will be evaluated the second year they are taught. In order to find out if the courses are attaining the goals listed above, the Freshman English Program should evaluate instructors, students, and course syllabuses in the following ways:

1. The Instructor: Each instructor should evaluate his course in light of the goals set by the syllabus, the Program, and by himself. In addition, every instructor should be periodically evaluated by his students and by fellow members of the faculty.
2. The Student: Each student should evaluate the course and his own performance in it. Keeping in mind the dialectical problems of minority students, we should also assess a student's ability to structure sentences and to employ standard grammar, punctuation, and usage. Finally, we should assess the student's essays for development, transitions, and rhetorical stance.
3. The Syllabus: Our own faculty and also experts in rhetoric and freshman composition from outside our faculty should evaluate existing and any new syllabuses.

Final Exams

In accordance with general University policy, final examinations will be optional in all freshman English classes.

A rationale for the use of final examinations shall be included in all future syllabuses to help teachers make the decision whether or not to give an exam on sound pedagogical grounds.

Teachers of English 398T may require that Teaching Assistants under counseling give final exams.

Directors of programs such as extension and individualized instruction may require that teachers of such courses give final exams.

New and Variant Course Proposals

The Freshman English Policy Committee encourages the faculty (Teaching Assistants must have two years of teaching experience, at least one of which must be at The University of Texas) to submit proposals for new or variant courses of freshman English. These proposals, we have found, help to keep the program healthy. They often reflect changing student and faculty needs and often draw upon the latest findings in linguistics and rhetoric.

A variant course, while meeting the description of freshman English as given in the University Catalogue, is one which is sufficiently different in content or structure to make it distinct from present offerings. A new course is one which redefines the description of freshman English and perhaps offers new goals as well as new ways of achieving these goals.

If you have a new or variant course in mind, submit to the Freshman English Policy Committee a summary, a page or so, of your projected syllabus. We also request that you submit at least a two to four week segment of your syllabus. This segment should demonstrate the relationship between specific reading and writing assignments. It should also include a brief statement telling us how these assignments contribute to the goals of your course. Early submission of proposals is essential; the more complete the proposal and the earlier the submission the better. We are required to work nearly a year in advance. Proposals for spring, 1977 semester will be accepted after this date.

Your proposal should meet the following criteria:

1. It shares the following goals of the Freshman English Program (a new course may redefine these goals).
 - a. To write logical, effective sentences, using a variety of sentence patterns while committing a minimum number of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage.
 - b. To write coherent and effective paragraphs; in turn, to write organized and developed expository essays which reflect responsibility to audience, subject, argument, effective language, and writer.
 - c. To demonstrate an analytical awareness of argumentative and persuasive evidence, processes, and strategies in his own writing.
 - d. To analyze and to evaluate the writing of others, expository or literary, with an understanding of the meaning, purposes, structure, and style.
2. It can be taught by different instructors (under certain circumstances this requirement may be waived).
3. It is intellectually suitable for freshmen.
4. It can be evaluated by the Freshman English Policy Committee.
5. It promises to be intellectually exciting to students and instructors.
6. It should be taught for two years, so that it can be evaluated the second year. Under normal circumstances, you should not have to re-submit the proposal the second year, although you will need to notify the Freshman English Policy Committee of your intention to teach the course again by the deadline for publication of the Course Schedule.

The Freshman English Policy Committee will endorse experiments in freshman English classes only when the experiment has been submitted and approved in accordance with the Freshman English Policy Committee guidelines in effect prior to the semester in which the course is to be taught.

Procedures

Turning in Policy Statements--Each teacher of freshman English must turn in a copy of his policy statement to the Freshman English Office no later than the end of the first week of classes. If a teacher doesn't comply, three notices will be sent reminding him of the requirement; if he still does not comply, a notice of his failure to do so will be put into his personnel file.

~~Bundling Themes~~--~~Each teacher of freshman English must bundle his themes from each of his classes and turn them in to the Freshman English Office to be stored at the end of each semester. If a teacher doesn't comply, three notices will be sent reminding him of the requirement; if he still does not comply, a notice of his failure to do so will be put into his personnel file.~~

Turning in Copies of Final Exams--Each teacher of freshman English must turn in a copy of his final exam (if he gives one) at the end of each semester. If a teacher doesn't comply, three notices will be sent reminding him of the requirement; if he still does not comply, a notice of his failure to do so will be put into his personnel file.

Sending Absence Warning Letters--The Freshman English Office will not send out a letter warning a student of excessive absences unless the teacher provides the secretary with the specific dates of the student's absences.

Requiring Typed Papers--Teachers of freshman English may not require any papers to be typed, although they may encourage their students to type papers either in general or for specific assignments, such as the research paper.

Publication of Actions Taken by the Freshman English Policy Committee

The Freshman English Policy Committee shall send the approved summary of actions taken at each meeting to the Coordination and Information Committee.

The Freshman English Policy Committee shall send the approved summary of actions taken at each meeting to all teachers of freshman English.

Syllabus

A rationale for the use of final exams shall be included in all syllabuses to help teachers make the decision whether or not to give an exam on sound pedagogical grounds.

Textbooks

Experienced teachers may use texts that have been used successfully in the past, but not re-adopted for one reason or another (such as Corbett, Weaver, Decker, etc.). (This policy is informally termed the "grandfather clause.")

Textbooks for all freshman English courses must be approved by the Freshman English Policy Committee, including those used in unique sections, such as freshman English for engineering honor students.

No novels may be required in English 306 classes.

A handbook (such as the Harbrace English Handbook) shall be required in all freshman English classes.

All textbooks will be annually evaluated, those for English 306 at the end of the fall semester, those for English 307 and English 308 at the end of the spring semester.

No textbook will be introduced generally until it has been tried and evaluated by selected experienced teachers.

All new Teaching Assistants will be required to use the same textbooks.

Special book requests must be submitted to the Freshman English Policy Committee in writing by October 1 for use in the succeeding spring semester and by April 1 for use in the next fall semester.

Special book requests must be accompanied by a short statement of purpose or other rationale for adopting the particular book(s) requested.

