

Minutes: Task Force 4/8/80

1. Hand-out task force packets
2. We will investigate ^{tape -} possibility of recording the proceedings; if not, then we will share responsibility for taking some notes.
3. Joe M. raised the question of the nature and function of a presiding officer; he offered to be a neutral presider but is not willing to be the committee's departmental advocate. For the time being, we decided for the neutral presider; later a committee spokesperson can be chosen.
4. Joe M. proposed that our first task should be to read the material in the packet and isolate seemingly non-controversial proposals; next meeting, we can discuss such non-controversial proposals and tentatively come to some consensus about them. The committee supported this suggestion.
5. Then what? Evan suggested that we could use a clear statement of the committee's purpose; Roger added that some specific sense of the problems we were trying to solve would help. The discussion followed these lines:

Joe M: Two major problems have initiated departmental discussion -- first, some concern that we may not be doing the best we can in terms of composition; second, as now constituted, the Freshman program is placing almost intolerable burdens on the department-- i.e. staffing, scheduling, sheer numbers.

Lance: Is our purpose then to find a solution to the numbers problem?

Joe M: The numbers game is important but need not be determining; we want ~~to~~ something pedagogically sound and still practical.

Jim G: Are we concerned only with Freshman Comp.? Or are we considering the entire English requirement?

Joe M: The pressure on Freshman Comp is most severe.

Joe K and Don G: pointed out that the pressure is now being felt at the Sophomore level too.

Jim K: Is this whole consideration motivated by a directive from the Dean? Has he set any guidelines?

Joe M: Not really. He wants us to do something and is concerned about the pool problem.

Jack F.: Agreed that the numbers issue is important but moved on to isolate three other areas of departmental concern--

- 1) staffing or recruitment-- given our needs and problems who do we hire?
- 2) personal dissatisfaction with the current way we are teaching Freshman and Sophomore English.
- 3) the University Curriculum Committee is now debating requirements and we need to make our wishes felt in that committee.

JimK: in response to Jack's reminder that there is a history to these issues, Jimm recounted how the growth of the Freshman English program and the decline of upper-division ~~enrollments~~ enrollments have combined to put new people in the comp. classroom; thus emerges the pool ~~to~~ problem and the current concern about how and what we are teaching. He also pointed out that the Univ. Requirements Committee may be moving in an unpractical direction; thus, if we come up with a practical plan, we have a good chance of getting it through.

Jack F: Since several of the team proposals involve other departments, we might begin to sound out these other departments at the same time as we work out our proposals.

Joe M: If we make our plan hinge on other departments, we run great risks; thus, we should have at least a back up proposal that concerns just the English department.

Once again, committee members wanted to know about our constraints. And Joe M. pointed out that if we can give the Dean a plan that he can approve, we have a good chance of persuading other departments to take a more active role in the teaching of writing. And so, we return to questions of procedure: at the end of the meeting, it was decided that we should proceed as follows: all of us should read through the packet and isolate non-controversial proposals. We will take these up on Thursday. Then, using the two content proposals, we should try to see whether we can co-ordinate other suggestions made by the various teams with one or another of the content proposals. In short, we will work from those two content proposals but our work will be ~~a~~holistic.

[Janice H-P]