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Fort Hays State University Faculty Senate Minutes, January 28, 1954

FHSU Faculty Senate

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Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate, Thursday, January 28, 1954,
at 3:30 p.m. in the Dean's Office.

Members present:

E. R. McCartney
S. V. Dalton
Ralph Coder
Katherine Bogart
Calvin Harbin
Katharine Nutt
Ivan Richardson
L. W. Thompson
Gerald Tomanek
Margaret van Ackeren

Members absent:

Joel Moss
Emmet Stopher

Others present:

Marion Coulson
Naomi Garner
Mabel Lacey
Alice Morrison
Andrew Rematore
Roberta Stout

The meeting was called to order by the chairman, E. R. McCartney.

G. E. D. Testing:

In a previous meeting, the Faculty Senate recommended that the G. E. D. tests should be administered to the students on this campus and this recommendation was approved by the faculty in the meeting on January 12, 1954. There are four tests in the G. E. D. testing program. From the material received regarding the tests, it would appear that the English test would be the only one for which all the sophomores would be eligible. In order to give the other tests, it would seem that the students would have to be selected--those who have been enrolled in the courses tested. It was asked whether the unclassified students would be tested and it was suggested that probably these students should not be tested. Mrs. Bogart suggested that all the tests might be given to all the sophomores as this is not a test of the teaching but rather of how sophomore students rank.

After some discussion, it was suggested that more information should be requested from those preparing the G. E. D. tests before a decision should be made. Dean McCartney will write for further information.

Report of the Basic English, English 1, English 2, and Introduction to Literature 26, by Mr. Coulson, Miss Morrison and members of the English staff:

In response to the request of the Faculty Senate asking for a report on the general education courses, the English Department reported at this meeting. The Senate asked for a report of what is being done in these courses; what proposals are suggested for strengthening the courses; and any weaknesses.

Mr. Coulson reported on the courses, Basic English, English 1, and English 2, as follows:

"We are continually changing these courses and we are not sure that we have found the perfect set-up, but we believe that we meet the needs of our freshmen students. In order to meet the needs of those who come poorly prepared, we have the course, Basic English. This course is for those who are not equipped

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to do the work in English 1. These students are below the 30th percentile in the freshman tests. Miss Lacey attempts to improve the reading in the course, Reading Comprehension 20; and in the Basic English classes, the main thing is the teaching of the mechanics of English."

"In English 1, there are two levels. There is the regular English 1 level and another level which might be called communications--this is for the better-prepared students. These students, if enrolled in the regular English 1 course, would be penalized as they are equipped to do better work than that course requires. This year there was a very unusual class of freshmen students and out of the 500, there were only two Basic English sections needed. The 50 students, who ranked the highest (above the 89th percentile) in the test, were enrolled in this communications course. In the communications course there is not much drill on fundamentals. We stress regular communication and the emphasis has been largely in oral communication--discussion, speaking, etc. At the end of the semester the students said that they thought more speaking would be even better. They felt that they were getting the type of material needed."

"In all the English 2 classes more stress is being put on the oral work than on the written work. With the limited class enrollments of 25, it is possible to do more oral work. In all sections, there are two projects: writing a research paper and introducing the student to the novel. Beyond that English 2 is practice of English usage, about equally divided between oral and written work.

After this report, the following questions were asked and answered:

1. "Why do you use the Barret-Ryan test and not the Cooperative, or some other test?"

There have been discussions about which of the two tests is better. They both have good and bad points. At the conference in Chicago which Mr. Coulson attended, it was agreed that almost any test such as the Barret-Ryan is satisfactory and it is simple to appraise.

2. "Should there be a difference in the English 1 classes? Perhaps all these classes should have the communications course?"

The students in the lower rankings need more drill on the mechanics which would not be possible.

3. "Is the cutting score always the same?"

The cutting score is not always the same. Last fall the whole freshmen group ranked higher than usual, and the cutting score was changed.

4. "Why was this a better group than usual?"

It was suggested that since the workshop held here a few years ago, it seemed that the teachers have been doing a better job of teaching English in the high schools of this area.

5. "Are all those who administer the tests well instructed about the administration of the tests before they give them?"

Those administering the tests are given complete instructions.

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6. "What about exempting students from English 1 and letting them go ahead in their study programs?"

Only in very rare instances would this be wise. Also, at present English should appear on the transcript as it is required.

7. "Is the credit allowed for Basic English about the right amount or should the course be for three credit hours?"

Two hours of credit is as much credit as should be given for this type of work. The amount of time is sufficient to give the students what is lacking in preparation but more time in class would be helpful.

Miss Morrison reported on the course, Introduction to Literature 26:

In the course, Introduction to Literature 26, Miss Morrison explained that they study five units which are: "Homer's Illiad or Odyssey, a novel, poetry, short stories, and a Shakespearean play. These are varied somewhat by the individual instructors. There is as much discussion in the class periods as possible. Students are encouraged to analyze and criticize. The final examination covers the five units.

The following questions were asked and answers given:

1. "Is there any study of the Bible?"

The Bible is referred to as literature, etc., and the application to any of the works being studied. It was suggested that the Bible might be substituted for one of the units. After some discussion, it was the concensus that this might not be wise.

2. "Is there a need for more courses in literature, such as short stories, folklore, etc.?"

Miss Lacey said that some of the teachers who were in the last summer session would have liked to have such courses available which would be more for pleasure than required. She suggested that such courses should be high numbered. Miss Stout said that there is a need for this type of course. Mrs. Bogart suggested that such a course would also be helpful in enrolling students and she also suggested that the emphasis should be on enjoyment.

The Faculty Senate commended the English staff for the fine presentation of their general education courses, and said that the discussion has been very worthwhile.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.