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Dr. W. R. Thompson appeared before Faculty Senate Committee and spoke about the English Proficiency Tests. Proposal made to discontinue these tests because of revamping of Eng. Comp. I and II courses. Discussion to be continued at next meeting.
During summer months, Fac. Senate will continue to meet Tuesdays at 3:30 PM.

*Sent to Pres. office
6/19/67*

Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate, Tuesday, June 13, 1967, at 3:30 p. m. in the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.

Members present: Miss Cotham, Mr. S. Johnson, Mr. Schmidt, Dr. Wilkins, Mr. Crites, Mr. Dalton, Miss Gangwer, Dr. Youmans and Dr. Garwood, Chairman.

Also present: Mr. Schroder, representative for Biological Sciences Division; Mr. Richards, representative for Physical Sciences Division and Dr. W. R. Thompson.

Members absent: Dr. Coder, Mr. Tomlinson, (Off campus) and Mr. McGinnis.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Garwood, Chairman.

Dr. Garwood explained that Dr. Thompson had been asked to appear before the Faculty Senate with regard to the English Proficiency Tests as they are now administered. The meeting was then turned over to Dr. Thompson.

Dr. Thompson elaborated on the tests now in use. Dr. Thompson stated that about one-half of the staff of his Division feel they would like to do away with this test. It takes one and one-fourth of the faculty members to administer the test per semester and they do not have sufficient staff to teach and they have to employ people without master's degrees to teach freshmen. In the large 200 student sections, one regular faculty lectures twice per week and the third day of each week, they break down into small sections which are monitored by graduate assistants. In many instances graduate assistants have no better background than high school English teachers.

Dr. Thompson stated another part relates to problems caused for the English

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area. The English area is regarded by some as the villain in this instance for the English Proficiency Test. The grading of the English Proficiency Tests has been challenged. Dr. Thompson feels each Division should be responsible for its own people and it should not be the entire responsibility of the English area.

Dr. Thompson wrote to six colleges of comparable status to Fort Hays -- Emporia, Pittsburg, and to colleges in Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma, and asked what they were doing in the way of proficiency tests. One replied, "We have discussed the possibilities of an English Proficiency Test. The Administration has urged us to prepare one. When I asked for additional staff, they presented it to those majors in English only." Another replied, "It would be an impossible idea to have such an English Proficiency Test. Write when you have worked out a solution." Emporia replied: "We had wanted a proficiency test. You should be able to take care of this in your own departments."

It was noted that if a student gets a "D" in course 51, that "D" is recorded on his transcript. If an adviser feels that a "D" student lacks proficiency, he may suggest further work.

A summary of a poll of 67 institutions had been distributed to the Faculty Senate members previously.

Reference was made to Paragraph 2, Page 3, of the Summary of Questionnaire on Junior English Proficiency Test. We quote below:

"As with almost every attempted improvement, this enterprise had

some benefits. In the long run, however, the very department (English Department) that advanced the idea argued successfully for its abolishment. The basic flaw in the project was that it proved too easy for both students and staff to look upon a single device as relieving them of any further concern with good writing."

The test given in English Composition I for final exam--"Essay"--is similar as the proficiency test two years later. One can make "C" as final and if you do not keep at it, one can lose the technique. He stated he hoped students will take an interest in composition courses because that is what they need. With English 51, they have eliminated the need for the proficiency test. Under the program now in effect, if a student achieves a "C" in English 51, he is regarded as proficient in English.

Dr. Thompson quoted Paragraph 3, Page 3, of the Summary:

"The logical corollary of a Junior English Proficiency Test, it seems to me, is that the college must offer upper class remedial training for those who fail. We strenuously resist using our staff for remedial training. As an alternative, we have maintained a departmental list of upper class English majors who have minimum qualifications for tutoring; and we supervise the tutoring program. The plan is really inadequate."

Dr. Thompson repeated that the plan is inadequate and tutoring is out because the English area can't handle it.

He then quoted Paragraph 5, Page 3, of the Summary:

"I feel that all departments have a responsibility to see that students in their departments use effective English. I readily agree that different departments will take this responsibility with different degrees of seriousness. However, we had an English proficiency requirement for a number of years and I felt that this approach had weaknesses too. Too often the student regarded it as a hurdle to be passed rather than a challenge to improve his writing in all courses."

Paragraph 6, Page 3, of the Summary was quoted:

"If this purpose is not served in the Freshman English course, the student ought to have to repeat that course. The test comes too late to be of service in the writing he must do in other classes if not administered until the junior year. It seems to me an indictment of the English Department if it is assumed that a student can pass freshman-required English but not be competent enough for graduation."

Dr. Thompson went on to quote Paragraph 1, Page 4, of the Summary:

"The College Entrance Examination Board has had serious reservations about the use of the writing sample for admission purposes and has repeatedly advocated the dropping of this test due to the inability to standardize the grading of the sample. I would

have the same reservations about single themes or essays as graduation requirements. "

Dr. Thompson stated that no two English instructors grade the papers the same way. He indicated there was no way we can standardize our methods.

Dr. Thompson referred to Paragraph 3, Page 1, of the Summary:

"Nineteen of the 67 institutions require a Junior English Proficiency Test, and three are considering the adoption of such a requirement. Four of the 45 institutions who do not have the requirement have discontinued such a requirement within the past two years. Some of the other institutions have dropped the requirement at an earlier date. The writing of a theme or an essay was required by 14 of the 19 institutions having the requirement, but other means of establishing English proficiency were used by the other five institutions. Four of the institutions reported that the test could be satisfied by a standardized test. The following specific criteria were mentioned: a score of 292 on the STEP test, a score of 52 on the Co-operative English Test, a score of 113 on the Purdue English Test, and ranking at the 25th percentile or above on the national norms on the CCT (CLEX) Test. "

Dr. Thompson felt such tests should be administered by Dr. Dechant's

department--those who administer the ACT Test.

Dr. Garwood stated he was not sure when the English Proficiency Test was adopted at Fort Hays but that we had it initially because we had a number of students enrolled at Fort Hays with a poor English background; some never learned; some learned very little and the school wanted to apprehend these people before they left college. Dr. Garwood stated that we have strengthened English Composition I course over what it was several years ago and English Composition II has been strengthened by offering English 51 as a junior course. It is offered as an Upper Division course and by the time students are juniors, a lot of them have been weeded out along the way. Juniors can progress faster than second semester freshmen. In English 51, there is going to be a lot more work and better quality work than in English Comp. II taken by second semester freshmen. Dr. Thompson promised a course that would be tough and challenging.

It was stated if someone wants to take English 51, he can take this by advanced standing examination. If someone thinks he can pass, he can take the test without taking the course. The grade goes on the transcript.

Dr. Thompson spoke about subject matter, composition and grammar. ~~He stated we don't know any more about writing of course work as graduates and undergraduates.~~ From personal experience, we had to do a lot of writing and learned by practice. Many go into English because they can write. There will be some people who get out of this institution and their English will be atrocious.

This is also true of Math, Chemistry, and Biology, etc. Graduates may not know as much as they should in these fields. For persons with "D" grades-- we don't know what this student did; we don't know if this person should fail or give him a "pacify" grade.

How can "D" students in English pass an English Proficiency Test? It was noted that if students take English Comp. as juniors they do much better than as freshmen. If someone gets a "D" in English Comp. 51--if the individual adviser wants him to retake it, that is the adviser's option to advise him to do so. If the student receives a "D" grade in English 51, should this be regarded as being any more significant than a D in Biology 1 or Sociology 40 or Psychology 1?

It was noted that some instructors have the idea it is up to the English instructors to teach English alone. It is the responsibility of every instructor to do what he can with the student's English.

Should each Division determine if a student is proficient in English? This would place a large responsibility on each division and they probably do not want to accept it.

A Division Chairman handling majors might say to a "D" student that he recommends that he retake English Comp. 51 and not let the student get through unless he gets a better grade.

Dr. Thompson's suggestion is we require no English Proficiency Test. With the English Proficiency Test we are assuming if the student passes the test, then

he is proficient in English but this is an erroneous assumption. Some have taken the English Proficiency Test 6 or 8 times.

Dr. Thompson raised the question: "Why this problem with English?" Almost anyone can make himself understood no matter how mangled it is. He indicated the German language has to be learned to be understood. Ours is at the most inflected language. Why master it when you don't have to study it--if you can make yourself understood anyway? It is due partly to laziness; for others there are psychological blocks. There may be just a few out of 500 with good motivation.

Dr. Thompson said if we keep English Proficiency Test, 200 freshmen are condemned to training under teachers with less than master's degrees.

Dr. Garwood said no one has gone through the course as we visualize it after they take English Comp. II as juniors. He hopes after 51, they will be much better students of English. If the students are abominably bad, they should be singled out. Division Chairmen do not want to look over graduating lists and say this student is proficient; this one is not.

One member noted that establishing "D" in English Proficiency or "C" should be determined by the College and not by a certain Division. They don't have time to teach English but would like to establish a level of proficiency.

Dr. Garwood asked if those present would check with their Division people to see how they feel about this. More colleges are not using English Proficiency Tests.

The proposal being made is that we discontinue English Proficiency Test.

The rationale for this is that:

(1) We have strengthened our English Composition offerings through the revamping of English Composition I and English Composition II.

(a) English Composition II is given in the junior year when the student is better able to see the need for it. In addition, many of the poorer students have dropped out by ~~the end of the~~ then so the "pace" of the class can be more rapid.

(2) The Survey in the hands of the Senate indicates that most colleges do not administer English Proficiency Tests.

(3) It will free English staff members for more productive assignments.

Dr. Garwood also asked if Tuesday at 3:30 were the best meeting time for Faculty Senate Meetings. The time was agreeable for the members. Dr. Garwood stated the next meeting would be Tuesday, June 20.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 P. M.

John D. Garwood, Chairman

Lucille Drees, Recorder