

**April 24th, 1998**  
**Educational Policy Committee**  
**Annual Report Addendum**

**Committee Members:** Anthony Passannante (chair)-98, Arthur Champagne-98, James Leloudis-98, Paul Fullagar-99, Judith Meece-99, Jack Sasson-99, Reid Barbour-2000, Boone Turchi-2000, Thomas Warburton-2000, David Lanier (ex-officio)

**Members leaving the committee during the year:** David Lanier (due to reassignment)

**Meeting Dates:** May 20th, 1997, September 8th, 1997, October 6th, 1997, November 3rd, 1997, December 1st, 1997, January 21st 1998, February 17th, 1998, February 27th, 1998, April 2nd, 1998

Report prepared by Anthony Passannante (chair) with participation of the committee. This addendum to our annual report covers two issues that could not be included in the March report.

Issue #6 Oral Communication Skills Program

Based on recommendations made in a review conducted by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a resolution instituting an oral communication requirement passed unanimously at an open meeting of the College of Arts and Sciences in April 1997. A description of an Oral Communication Skills Program was introduced in September 1997. Feedback was received, and a revised program was unanimously approved by the Administrative Boards of the College of Arts and Sciences on February 11th, 1998. The program revisions are intended to make the requirement flexible enough to allow all departments to successfully implement the requirement.

In considering this issue, several salient points deserve consideration:

1. The SACS recommendations were generated out of self-study information provided by our own faculty.
2. The administrative response to the SACS recommendations has been appropriate and timely. It is important for UNC to correct curriculum deficits.
3. Everyone agrees with the goal of graduating students who can communicate effectively.

The proposed program has three components. First, English 11 and English 12 have been modified to include an oral communication emphasis. Second, students who place out of English 11 and 12 will be required to take a one-credit hour course in oral communication (Comm 09). Third, an across the curriculum requirement will be developed to ensure that students continue to improve their oral communication skills as they progress through their chosen major. The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) received a significant amount of feedback regarding this issue. Some faculty felt threatened by the across the curriculum portion of the proposed program. Some faculty doubt the efficacy of a one credit course in oral communication. Some faculty feel that students need more help in reading and writing than in speaking. After

considering these and other concerns, and examining the forces that led to the need for implementation of this program, the EPC proposes two resolutions on this issue. The first will approve the Oral Communication Skills Program for academic year 1998-99. The second will make some revisions in the program and in curriculum requirements that can not be made before the 1999-2000 academic year.

Resolution #4:

Resolved,

Effective Fall 1998, all first-year students (regardless of major) entering UNC-Chapel Hill who are exempted from taking English 11 and English 12 (Composition and Rhetoric) must pass with a letter grade a one-hour course entitled Oral Communication (Comm 09). (Honors students fulfill this requirement by passing their equivalent courses for English 12). This Oral Communication course is also available to students who are enrolled in or have received credit for Composition and Rhetoric.

In addition, each academic degree-granting major will develop plans to assist students to develop oral communication skills. The goal of this portion of the requirement is to assist students to become articulate communicators in the area of study they have chosen. Each degree-granting program will be asked to provide a description of its plan for each major to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences by the end of the 1998-99 academic year. Departments are encouraged to consult with the director of the Oral Communication Program as they develop their plans.

In analyzing the proposed program, the EPC had difficulty with what we are proposing to do with students who place out of English 11 and 12, and in how we place students out of English 11 and 12. These courses have been modified to include emphasis in oral communication, and completion of these courses removes the requirement for a student to take Comm 09. However, these courses are predominantly composition and writing courses. Entering students can place out of English 11 and 12 based on verbal SAT scores. The verbal SAT examination is a terrific vocabulary and reading comprehension test, but it does not assess writing ability. Thus, we are setting up a situation where students can place out of our basic composition courses and be required to take an oral communication course. The EPC does not find this logical or desirable. At one level it says that we care more about oral communication than we do about writing.

The EPC proposes in the next resolution to eliminate the ability for a student to place out of English 12. All students, beginning Fall 1999, would be required to take English 12, which has a significant emphasis on oral communication skills. All students would then receive one semester of critical evaluation of their writing ability. With the oral communication emphasis that has been added to English 12, and the across the curriculum oral communication skills program, the need for a required Comm 09 course would disappear (it could remain as a one credit elective for interested students). It should be self-evident that the English Department would require additional resources to deal with the 300-400 additional students per year that this change would present them with.

Resolution #5:

Resolved,

Effective Fall 1999, all first-year students (regardless of major) entering UNC-Chapel Hill will be required to take English 12, which has an oral communication emphasis in it. The Faculty Council realizes that this will present the English Department with an additional teaching load, and adequate resources must be made available to the English Department to allow successful implementation of this resolution.

#### Issue # 7 Classes For Staff

In April 1997 Executive Vice Chancellor Elson Floyd requested that the Provost and Faculty Council consider recommendations that would allow increased participation by University Staff in academic courses offered on campus. The EPC met with Norman Loewenthal (outgoing Career Development chair of the Employee Forum), and Ron Strauss (Faculty Council Liaison to the UNC Employees Forum Career Development Committee). The EPC believes that the University of North Carolina should seek to build an intellectual community in which scholarship and learning are shared values. In furthering the intellectual climate on this campus, expanding the learning possibilities for all members of the campus community will be important. The campus will benefit by attracting and retaining a skilled and involved work force. One component of making the University an attractive employer is furthering learning opportunities for staff. The resolution that follows is intended as a means of showing the support of the faculty council for these principles. The EPC realizes that some of the language in the resolution restates current University policy. However, implementation of current University policy is often more difficult than it should be. For instance, current UNC regulations state that an employee must attend class outside of their established work schedule. This has, at times, been restrictively interpreted. We must encourage flexibility in accommodating staff who wish to continue their formal education.

Resolution #6:

Resolved,

That the University offer courses as a staff benefit, and that the University faculty and administration encourage the enrollment of staff in scheduled University courses. That supervisors adjust work schedules to allow staff to attend University courses. This may entail the use of flex-time options to allow staff to attend University courses while continuing to meet their normal employment obligations.