

MINUTES
Meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
November 5, 1985

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Schiavelli at 3:35 p.m. in Rogers 100. Ninety-six members were present.

The minutes of the last faculty meeting of October 1, 1985 were approved as submitted.

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS:

Provost Healy indicated that three searches are or soon will be in progress. One committee, chaired by Mr. Schiavelli, has been conducting a search for a Vice-president of Administration and Finance; the application deadline for this position occurred last week. The committee will submit two unranked names to the President by the end of November, and final ratification should occur at the December meeting of the Board. Another committee, chaired by Terry Meyers (who is also chair of the Library Policy Advisory Committee), will be seeking a replacement for Clifford Currie as Librarian of Swem. Lastly, an announcement concerning the search for a new Provost will soon appear.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Finn mentioned an upcoming series, Seminars in Criticism and Aesthetics, intended to bring together faculty from various parts of the College who share an interest in aesthetics and the methodology of criticism of the arts. Selective student participation is also encouraged. Three seminars have been scheduled for the Fall semester: Phil Auslander on deconstruction and theater, on Tuesday, November 12; Lily Knezevich, on Nelson Goodman's concept of exemplification in Languages of Art, on Tuesday, November 26; and Fred Maus, on Eduard Hanslick's attempt to state a formalist theory of musical aesthetics, on Wednesday, December 4. Each seminar will be held in Tucker 307 at 4:30 p.m. Further information will appear. Anyone wishing to speak during the Spring should contact Fred Maus, Music Department.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

Nominations and Elections: John Oakley (for Anne Netick, Chair)

Due to the resignation of Morton Eckhause from the Educational Policy Committee a two-year vacancy on that committee has appeared. A ballot containing the names of two replacement nominees for the EPC position, Gerald Johnson and David Thompson, was distributed (Appendix I). No nominations were received from the floor. Later in the meeting the election of Mr. Johnson was announced.

Faculty Affairs: Vinson Sutlive, Chair

A number of topics have come under consideration by the committee, in some cases prompted by faculty input from the recent survey. Concerning

faculty evaluation procedures, the committee has obtained information from various agencies concerned with this. Hopefully some new perspectives will be gained on this important matter. Revision of the Faculty Handbook is being studied. Comments from faculty who believe that they can identify problematic passages will be welcome. The committee is also studying the policy on faculty leave in relation to retirement, as concern has been expressed regarding possible loss of accumulated service years. The Board of Visitors is presently examining its investment policies with respect to companies operating in South Africa. The committee will also be studying the report of the Long Range Planning Committee, and will later meet to discuss this with President Verkuil and Mr. Schiavelli. The Chair was a recent observer at a meeting of the Faculty Senate of Virginia. The experience inclines him to believe that we should maintain our present relationship with this body (that is, shouldn't join).

Mr. Shaver asked if there were any further plans with respect to the South African question. Mr. Sutlive responded that the committee would wait to hear more from the Board on this, and that the subject might be considered at the December meeting of the Board.

Educational Policy: Richard Palmer, Chair

Reference was made to the position paper on two proposed study centers, one for honors and interdisciplinary studies and the other for the writing program, previously distributed by the Dean's office (Appendix II). The Chair moved the adoption of the resolution appearing on page 1 of the position paper, for the administrative reorganization of the Honors Program and Interdisciplinary Studies according to actions A, B, and C of the resolution. The motion was seconded. Mr. Palmer noted that the proposals had been widely circulated in early draft form, and that although certain details might appear somewhat vague the resolution could be interpreted as essentially "enabling legislation" which would, among other things, strengthen a proposal for establishing such centers to the Funds for Excellence program. Mr. Finn was identified as the person who could best respond concerning details.

A very lengthy discussion of the motion ensued, in which Mr. Finn was kept busy. Mr. Altshuler observed that many interdisciplinary programs had been initiated in the past, and that many had failed. There had been a general failure to analyze for and ensure that essential requirements for the success of such programs were present. For example, cross-cutting structures like a house system were lacking. An authoritarian administrative structure would not be conducive to such programs. Even the absence of apparently trivial amenities such as teas could be significant. Therefore one should not be enthusiastic over the present proposal. Perhaps stimulated by the (deliberate) humor of many of these observations, Mr. Schiavelli called attention to an erroneous usage, "Methodist Manse", appearing on page 2, paragraph 2 of the position paper, to which one individual (who would remain anonymous) had taken learned and hilarious exception. Having read aloud this illuminating letter, Mr. Schiavelli disavowed use of the term "Methodist Manse". [For the record, Methodists have parsonages, not manses.]

Several faculty voiced skepticism concerning the proposed center or, at any rate, the position paper. Mr. Abdalla asked why, if a center was intended, was this not made explicit in the resolution? Mr. Axtell thought it odd to be asked to approve the setting aside of space for something that did not yet exist. Was a center needed in order to obtain funding, or was funding first essential in order to have a center? Would comparative literature and international studies both be subsumed in the new center? Mr. Kernodle asked where responsibility for oversight of departmental honors would reside. Mr. Finn replied that a committee would first be established to study and presumably recommend a center; that comparative literature would retain its present identity, and probably international studies also; and that responsibilities for departmental honors would remain in his office. Mr. Schiavelli said that one should consider that one had a center when it was up and running. One speaker opined that there would be neither center nor funding, irrespective of which came first, without faculty support. Messrs. Palmer, Schiavelli, and Finn each observed that administrative action alone would suffice for the project, but that faculty approval was desired and would strengthen a Funds for Excellence proposal (with respect to which a later question and answer revealed that a February 10 deadline existed). Mr. Schwartz wondered whether the constitutional structure of existing committees was being violated. Moreover, the proposal was too vague, and it was not clear that significant losses would not occur elsewhere. Was there any precedent for such a broad-brush interdisciplinary concept? Would a new beauracracy be created, and what would be assumed to come under its province in the future? The EPC should reconsider the proposal and flesh it out better. At Mr. Finn's invitation Peter Wiggins, Chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee, confirmed that his committee approved the concept of the center, even if not in agreement on every detail. The center might, for example, recommend new interdisciplinary courses, and generate other initiatives. Mr. Finn observed that the proposal was not as vague as some maintained, and hoped that the case for a new administrative focus for the programs in question had been made. Faculty oversight of the center, and of the melding of the Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies Committees, was assured. Mr. Palmer noted that establishing a center would be too drawn out if every component was subjected to rigorous scrutiny at this stage. Final recommendations on the nature and extent of the proposed reorganization would be brought back to the faculty for approval. Points B and C were contained in the resolution as well as A.

Mr. Funigiello asked whether it could be inferred from the proposal that the present interdisciplinary structures were not working well. Mr. Finn answered that existing administrative structures were not ideal, that the center would provide the programs in question with a proper home, and that it might be more difficult to apply to the Funds for Excellence program in support of such a center in the future. Mr. Rapoport said he remained unclear on many points in the proposal, and introduced a motion to substitute, with the eventual intent of referring the proposal back to the EPC.

Discussion of this motion began, Mr. Tiefel saying that he believed such a new institutional structure was necessary to properly support the

interdisciplinary programs, as the administrative burdens were too great for existing structures to handle. Nor was there anything sinister about applying for money. Perhaps a degree of purity was lacking in the concept, but this was not serious. The faculty would remain in control of the center and its programs. Several others made brief statements in support of the center and opposing the motion to substitute, Mr. Kreps saying that he would be opposed to the center if it were only an administrative convenience, but that he believed it to be more than that. Mr. Schwartz reiterated his skepticism. Mr. Thompson noted that interdisciplinary studies compensated to some extent for our small size and our inability to offer majors in every field. The Deans had been effective as teachers and department chairs and should be trusted. They would be evaluated in the future (laughter), so give them a chance now.

The motion to substitute was defeated handily. No further discussion developing on the original motion, it was put to a vote and passed easily.

Mr. Palmer read the text of the second resolution, appearing on page 3 of the position paper, concerning an administrative reorganization of Writing 101 and the Auxiliary Writing Program, and moved its adoption. The motion was seconded.

As almost equally lengthy discussion of this second motion ensued, proving it to be (as the Chair had speculated) no less inciteful than the first. Mr. Ware asked and Mr. Schiavelli answered that the proposed Director of Writing would be tenure-eligible only as a faculty member, not in that specific capacity. In response to another question Mr. Schiavelli said that the new position would perhaps reside in the English department. Mr. Orwoll, a member of the "original" writing committee, said he saw no need for a full-time Director of Writing. The Auxiliary Writing Program had been intended as an inexpensive means of achieving its objective, had been set up to support the eventual concentration writing requirement, and should be allowed more time to prove its effectiveness. Mr. Funigiello asked if any evaluation of the present writing program had been made. Mr. Finn said that one had to distinguish between the concentration writing requirement for which responsibility was in the departments, and Writing 101 which was in his jurisdiction and for which the English department supplied most of the faculty. A recent evaluation had concluded that while these components functioned effectively, a new organization was very desirable. The Auxiliary Writing Program on the other hand, which is administered wholly in the Dean's office, and which had been allowed a two-year test period, has been evaluated as very ineffective. Its coordinator believes that it can not function with so disparate a clientele. Mr. Finn also took issue with Mr. Orwoll's observation that the AWP was intended to support the concentration writing requirement. To this Mr. Coursen, also a member of the "original" writing committee, said that he did not find the evidence for ineffectiveness compelling, and that the AWP had been intended as a resource for the concentration writing requirement, not as an alternative for those having difficulty with Writing 101. He added that he was concerned about the extra resources that would have to be expended in the proposed reorganization. Mr. Finn confirmed that a salary for the new Director of Writing could not be obtained from Funds for Excellence; he went on to read

from the document establishing the AWP indicating that this program was conceived as serving a broad range of students. Mr. Schiavelli noted that the disestablishment of the AWP was not being recommended.

Mr. Fehrenbach, chair of the "original" writing committee, rose at this point and, at least partially directing his remarks to Mr. Finn, observed that while the latter's quotation from the AWP document was accurate some of the associated history was being overlooked. An amendment to the original proposal had been added, and approved by the faculty, which prevented students from passing Writing 101 with an R. Therefore the principal function of the Auxiliary Writing Program was indeed to assist students in satisfying the Concentration Writing Requirement. Moreover, concern had been expressed at its inception that the AWP not evolve into an empire. For this reason a two-year sunset clause for the AWP had been included. Yet now, with the Concentration Writing Requirement just going into effect, and with the effectiveness of the AWP in support of this requirement as yet untested, a monumental new writing center was being proposed. If a problem existed anywhere it was in the effectiveness of Writing 101, not in the AWP.

Mr. Livingston, another member of the "original" writing committee, noted that one major objective had been to induce faculty to take a greater interest in the writing skills of students. There might be some merit in the new proposal, but it might also signal - if for example the Director of Writing were also to become a member of the English department - a partial abandonment of this original intention. If, on the other hand, the Director were not in the English department, then obviously other problems could arise. Mr. Willis, Chair of the English Department, entered the debate to say that while there were different opinions in his department there was also general support for the new center. "The English Department welcomes the return of the writing program to the Department. It welcomes the responsibility of directing the writing program, recommending the appointment of a Director from within the Department as a new position, and developing such programs as the Writing Center. The Department reaffirms its support of a College-wide writing program which entails writing-across-the-curriculum and which encourages participation from other departments."

In an effort to focus the debate Mr. Schiavelli asked, does the faculty wish to enhance the writing programs and would the proposed reorganization do so? Mr. Axtell asked, would the Director of Writing appoint the instructors and might not this lead to clashes with the Chair of English? Mr. Schiavelli answered that, of course, the two would have to reach agreement. Mr. Jensen said he too wondered how responsibilities would be divided up. Mr. Finn said that he believed the program needed someone who was skilled in teaching the art and science of writing, not simply in its practice. Mr. Fehrenbach rose again to read a prepared statement. He had warned former Dean Bowen that there was a danger that the writing requirement and its supporting programs could become a ward of the administrative machinery. The new proposal would involve considerable expense and physical plant. The existing programs were too new to be expanded so soon. It seemed likely that the goals - a Director of Writing and a Funds for Excellence grant - had informed the arguments. Faculty were

being asked today to act without being given all the documents that provide the rationale for the action. At its inception he had assured departments that the writing program would remain modest in size. In view of what might be coming he felt that he should apologize for his part in the original proposal.

Mr. Altshuler suggested that the new proposal had created ambivalence and ambiguity. There were nagging questions because there was so little substance. Surely other priorities rated higher than a Director of Writing. Would the administrators never cease multiplying? Mr. Willis rose again to reiterate his department's general support of the writing center concept. Various major universities had such centers. The quality of student writing was deteriorating here, and a new focus was needed. Administrative details could be haggled over later. Mr. McConachie said he had been teaching in the AWP and believed it would soon collapse unless a remedy was found. Mr. Davidson, Chair of the Writing 101 committee which had first recommended creation of a writing center, said he believed the teaching of writing did require special abilities. A properly selected Director of Writing would bring the necessary expertise for this and would know how to set up a writing center. The center was needed to ensure the success of the Concentration Writing Requirement.

At long last, and probably to the relief of all, the question was put to a vote. The motion passed easily.

Mr. Schiavelli concluded by asking those who had written to him complaining of recent short and contentless meetings to henceforth cease and desist.

The meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Gary C. DeFotis
Secretary to the Faculty

Appendix I: Ballot, from the Committee on Nominations and Elections

Appendix II: Two Study Centers: A Position Paper for the Faculty Meeting
from the Dean's Office