

Nov. 4, 2005

To: Craig Bertolet, Undergraduate Studies Coordinator

From: Don Wehrs

Re: Minutes, Oct. 26 Meeting.

The meeting began at 2:00. Craig Bertolet, Cedrick May, Marc Silverstein, Isabelle Thompson, Chris Fortan, Julie Hinz, and Don Wehrs were present.

1. Announcements. The Coordinator announced that as of Oct. 26, seven upper-division classes for Spring 2006 were still open. Advanced Composition had three seats available. The other six courses with seats were 4000-level literature classes. No class was threatened with cancellation, and three literature courses had enrollment of over thirty students. The Coordinator further announced that the department had 185 majors registered, and with new majors added to the count, should have over 200 majors.
2. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the Oct. 12 Undergraduate Studies Committee meeting were approved.
3. Business. The main item of Business was Miriam Clark's proposal to institute a writing exam for English majors as a requirement for graduation. Miriam made a statement, pointing out that many majors in the department have low GPAs, that other universities have such a requirement (the Georgia Regents' Exam, for example), and then entertained questions. A lively discussion ensued. There were questions about the state of research on exams intended to assess writing ability. There was discussion of the merits of timed exams as opposed to portfolio assessment. There were queries about the consequences of students failing the exam who had received high grades in courses, about how to handle students with special needs, about the applicability of the exam to English Education majors, about whether the exam should be attached to one or more particular courses, about whether the exam should be an entrance exam for majors, about whether the exam should be tied to concentrations, about the logistics of administering the exam. It was resolved to continue the discussion in two weeks.

Submitted by Don Wehrs