

# The Senate of Michigan Technological University

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## PROPOSAL 6-82

### FRESHMAN ENGLISH

#### BACKGROUND:

- A. **History.** In the fall of 1975, the Senate Curricular Policy Committee was given the mission of assessing the University policy on general curriculum guidelines. To date, the Committee has developed Senate Policy 7-76, Policy on Humanistic Social Courses, which became the University's policy on HU/SS requirements on July 19, 1976 and has conducted a study on free electives which indicated that no new policy was needed in this area. In 1980, the Committee agreed to study the goals and objectives of Freshman English (HU101-103) to determine whether there was a need for a Senate recommendation in that area. In the spring of 1981, the Committee conducted a survey of the academic faculty at MTU to obtain information and views on student writing. One hundred and eighty nine responses were received and summarized in Senate Minutes pp. 1948-1955. The Committee has reviewed the syllabi of HU101-103 courses for the past several years and has found a wide variety in content and emphasis.
- B. **College Board Recommendation.** In September of 1981, the College Entrance Examination Board best known as the sponsor of the Scholastic Aptitude Test and the College Scholarship Service, released a description of the various writing abilities an entering student needs to do college work:
1. The ability to conceive ideas about a topic for the purpose of writing.
  2. The ability to organize, select, and relate ideas and to outline and develop them in coherent paragraphs.
  3. The ability to write Standard English sentences with correct sentence structure; verb forms; punctuation, capitalization, possessives, plural forms, and other matters of mechanics; word choice and spelling.
  4. The ability to vary writing style, including vocabulary and sentence structure, for different readers and purposes.
  5. The ability to improve writing by restructuring, correcting errors, and rewriting.
  6. The ability to gather information from primary and secondary sources; to write a report using this research; to quote, paraphrase, and summarize accurately; and to cite sources properly.

Certainly, the Freshman English program should insure that students attending the University possess at least these six abilities.

- C. **Committee Findings.** Through the survey of faculty, the Committee found that a number of the faculty are less than satisfied with the quality of writing displayed by their students. While the survey findings are not definitive, it is safe to say that the faculty recognizes the need to enhance the quality of writing among students.

Upon examination of the current catalog course descriptions for HU101, 102, and 103, many Committee members expressed concern as to whether students were receiving sufficient instruction in English composition. After discussions with past and present coordinators of Freshman English courses and reviewing syllabi, the Committee is aware of the considerable variation in course requirements and grading despite explicit

guidelines for teaching these courses. In addition, the Committee understands that the faculty in the Department of Humanities is **not** of a single mind as to what constitutes the best pedagogical approach to improving student writing.

The Committee makes no attempt to discern whether the variety of teaching methods and course requirements, in themselves, adversely affects the quality of student writing. In fact, we recognize that such variety is often necessary due to the diversity of writing skills among students. It is not the intent of this Committee to interfere with the individual teaching approaches of colleagues in another department; however, the final results of such required courses are of great concern to all on the faculty. Accordingly, many Committee members feel that there is a need for a more consistent set of classroom teaching expectations and requirements than those which are currently employed. Such requirements are believed to be essential to the implementation of a successful writing program at MTU.

## **PROPOSAL:**

The Senate of Michigan Technological University recommends that the Faculty of the Department of Humanities re-examine the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Freshman English Program (HU101-103) in the light of the Curricular Policy Committee findings. As a minimum, the six writing abilities identified by the College Board should be emphasized. Closer control should be exercised over the various sections of the course to insure achievement of these abilities. This proposal is not to be interpreted as a recommendation to eliminate the study of literature or oral communication from these courses.

### **HU101 Freshman English I (0-3-0) f,w Sections A**

An introduction to the conceptual and stylistic demands of writing at the college level. Initial emphasis on the writing of personal narratives, with increasing attention to more public forms of writing such as informative essays or reports. Instruction in composing process often accompanied by work in small writing groups and conferences with instructor.

### **HU101 Freshman English I (0-3-0) f, w Sections H**

A course in composing and introduction to the humanities for students who qualify for exemption from the regular first year Freshman English sequence. Course will include introduction to library research and use of research in formal essays. Frequent student projects, group discussions, and conferences with instructor.

### **HU102 Freshman English II (0-3-0) w, s Section A**

Continued instruction in composing process with emphasis on expository and argumentative essays. Course includes introduction to library research and use of research in formal writing assignments. Continued work in small groups and conferences with instructor.

### **HU102 Freshman English II (0-3-0) w Sections H**

A course in exposition, argumentation, and the research process for students whose performance in HU101A qualifies them for exemption from remainder of normal Freshman

English sequence. Continued writing of formal essays. Instruction in composing process often accompanied by work in small writing groups and conferences with instructor.

**HU103 Freshman English III (0-3-0) f, s  
Sections A**

Literature, composition, and human values; continued study of composing process and of literature as an expression of human values. Additional practice in written and oral communication. Frequent essays, student projects, discussions with fellow students, and conferences with instructor.

**HU103 Freshman English III (0-3-0) s  
Sections B**

Emphasizes types of written and oral reports which technicians are called upon to develop. Continues instruction in composing process. Frequent student projects, discussions with fellow students, and conferences with instructor. Open to School of Technology students only.

**Defeated by Senate: 5 May 1982**