

Meeting of Literature Faculty

Dec. 1, 1948

Present: Mr Belitt, Mr Golffing, Mrs Foster, Mr Kunitz, Mr Jackson, Mr Lewis, Mr Nemerov

Absent: The Misses Hasenclever, Mr Burke

First Mr Belitt reported on the discussion of the place of language instruction in the college, at the last E.P.C. meeting. Objection was raised again at this meeting (as it had been at the two previous meetings, including the one with the President the preceding day) to splitting the language-teaching faculty off from the literature faculty. It struck the meeting as artificial. Even when conceived of as a functional distinction between two teaching methods, it still leaves unsolved the various problems involved in the educational relations between the study of foreign literature and its background and English and American literatures and their backgrounds. Some of the most crucial problems are those connected with the requirements for advanced study in so-called "comparative literature."

The second question discussed was that of a possible teaching program for Mr Golffing, if Mr Fowlie came here to teach French. It was recollected that in the correspondence with Mr Golffing before he came here mention was made of other courses he might teach, aside from the Advanced French Literature and Advanced French Composition courses which were mentioned in his letter of appointment. For example, courses in modern European philosophy, criticism, and poetry were mentioned. There was also suggestion of such courses as one on the Age of Enlightenment, one on Renaissance drama, &c. poetry, a course on the European novel, and considerable discussion of the course suggested at the last two meetings in the theory and techniques of translation, which all thought excellent. Considerable thought was given to the probable student demand and the most educational ways to meet that demand. It was stated that the general aim for such courses could be training in philosophical and literary interpretation.

Then the question was raised whether a joint program could be worked out with the teaching faculty and organization now in effect. Theoretically, the answer is yes; but there are certain factors which would probably operate as barriers. One of these is the often-repeated position of the language teachers that first-year students are not capable of studying literature because of lack of training. The difficulty here is that students entering an advanced French literature course would lack the necessary training in the disciplines of exploring a literary text. (It is obvious that the methods necessary for developing spoken fluency and for slow, careful exploration of a text and its meanings are basically antagonistic.) It was mentioned again that the text used in the French Review course does not give sufficient training in idioms to provide adequate training for advanced study of literature, though it was stated that it would be easy enough to adopt an idiom book, and to inaugurate writing exercises and compositions to take care of this deficiency. Then the problem was discussed about the small numbers of students prepared or interested in taking separate courses in advanced literatures in French, German, etc. The feeling was that courses with a spread into several lits. was the best solution.

The question still remained whether Mr Golffing would take over all the French next year, or move into the teaching of basic courses and "comparative lit." Then the question of a full teaching load for the German teacher was discussed. It was agreed that if Mr Golffing could handle all the French, a good program could be worked out. This led to the question of Mr Belitt's absence next

year, and it was recalled that the President had stated that there could be no replacement for him. Then there was discussion about the difference between an addition to the staff and a replacement. It was stated that if Mr Fowlie came he would be an addition (and presumably Mr Golffing would replace Mr Belitt); and that if Mr Golffing took over the entire teaching of French, there would be neither an addition nor a replacement. This all became rather hysterical when Mr Nemerov said he shouldn't be counted on for next year and Mr Kunitz mentioned the fact that Mrs Foster's sabbatical leave was due the second term. Then there was further discussion of Mr Buchanan.

The meeting closed with a summary of points covered.

1. About the split: we ~~are~~ are against it. Though perhaps "administratively" feasible, it does not seem to us educationally sound.
2. About whether there should be one or two French teachers:
 - a. If one, it could be Mr Golffing.
Then we'd need a replacement for Mr Belitt, not for French teacher.
 - b. If Mr Fowlie came, Mr Golffing could be the replacement.
 - c. If Mr Fowlie did not come, Mr Golffing would be needed as French teacher, but he ^{might} also be needed as replacement.
 - d. If Mr Golffing were to become the replacement, he could teach a course in criticism, comparative novel, poetry or drama, or a mixture of genres in a certain period, could teach a section of Language and Literature and could offer his translation course (perhaps in two or three languages.)
 - e. No effort was made to solve the problem of full load for the German teacher.

Respectfully submitted,

C. D. Foster

Secretary pro tem.

*Junior Div. Com. Minutes of 9-22-48
for Language Policy returned
to Mrs. Foster 12-17-48
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