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GRIND GENERAL MEETING



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GRIND GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12
ROOM 618 SUB 1 2 : 3 0

WCT flunkies: don't panic

by Bill Doskoch

The "amazing rumors" circulating about the Writing Competency Exam (WCT) are a source of both amusement and concern for one university administrator.

"My daughter said she heard if you mis-spelled five words, you wouldn't be able to get into university," chuckled Associate VP Academic Amy Zelmer, the person responsible for administering the WCT.

Some of the topics of concern to Zelmer included the actual number of people facing withdrawal in December, the costs and purpose of the remedial program and the relationship between English courses and writing competence.

"Very few people have actually failed the WCT three times," she said. The "vast majority of the 400

people in trouble simply haven't followed procedure." On that basis, she couldn't predict the actual number of people who might face withdrawal.

The compulsory \$60 remedial course, a sore point with many students, was described by Zelmer in this way: "There are advantages in bulk buying. It also allows us to plan ahead and reduce costs, which were \$100,000 above the fees charged to students."

Although she felt the course was not "the magic answer, it does seem to work for the two-thirds of people who take it (and then pass the WCT)."

English courses were not considered to be the equivalent of the remedial course or the WCT itself for several reasons.

"Much of the mark in English

courses is based on take-home assignments, many of which are done with outside editorial help; so for many students, their grade is no indication of how well they can work without that help.

"Another problem is that English courses don't teach writing, they teach the analysis of literature."

The reason there wasn't a credit writing skills course offered was, "We expect students entering university to be able to write competently. If they can't do that, a deficiency exists, and we should not be offering credit courses to correct deficiencies."

Zelmer had no concrete thoughts on where the responsibility lay for problems with the test.

"The hard-line approach is the individual, but it is something that should have been covered in the primary and secondary schools."

A lot of people had problems with the test because "they probably didn't take it seriously," she speculated.

Her parting advice to those under the gun? "Don't panic."

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Photo Journalism!

with
Steve Makris
of the
Edmonton Journal
rm 282 SUB
Thurs, Nov. 7
at 4:30 p.m.

Please note that there will be a special
Academic Affairs Board Meeting
To discuss the following policy statement on
the **Writing Competence Test:**

- 1) We demand that all decisions be communicated to the student and the Registrar's Office before December 31st. and that no registrations be cancelled until the appeals are decided.
- 2) In all cases, Appeal Committees should be taking into account students' past written performance in university courses, especially English courses, as well as relevant extenuating circumstances.
- 3) In all cases, a copy of a student's exam should be provided upon request of the student and should be considered that student's property.
- 4) We call on the Administration to provide a course, open to all students, equivalent to English 214, in which a pass in this course will be considered equivalent of a pass on the W.C.T.
- 5) We demand that the remedial course now offered NOT be considered a requirement for rewriting the exam.
- 6) We command the University for working towards changes in the English 30 Departmental exam in order to make it an alternative to the W.C.T. but ask that much more work be done quickly towards this end.
- 7) We call on the Testing and Remediation Centre to provide the Students' Union and all G.F.C. members with a detailed budget for the costs of running the W.C.T.
- 8) We are committed to helping students whose academic careers might be adversely affected by the W.C.T. and therefore are committed to the establishment of a free clinic service in order to better prepare students to write the exam.

The meeting is at 6 pm on Thursday November 7th in SUB 270A. Any interested students are welcome.