

WINIFRED HORNER

English

"In the 19th century, there were no writing teachers. Everyone at universities taught writing. That's going to happen again."



JOE SILVOSO

Business and Public Administration
"What the employers criticize us for is not the technical competency of our students; it is that they can't speak, and they can't write."

By Julie Wilson Barbeau

GOOD WRITING IS EVERYBODY'S

IN OUR INFORMATION-AGE society, all of us continually are bombarded with data. "It's like a mosaic of bits and pieces," says Dr. Don Ranly, professor of journalism and English task-force member. "Things are hitting us with no pattern."

But abundant facts seem only to perplex students, says Ranly. "Nothing comes together. Nobody puts it together and gives it meaning." Professors across campus agree: Student writing suffers from lack of organization and poor grammar.

To help resolve the writing problem, Milton Glick, dean of arts and science, appointed a Task Force on English Composition. More than 10 fields on Campus are represented among the 19 members, seven of whom are pictured.

The English department welcomed

the diverse perspectives of the across-the-Campus group. "We are responsible for administering the writing program," says English Chairman Tim Materer. Yet, the faculty doesn't want writing skills to be just the English department's charge. "Writing should be part of the learning in any field," he says. Students who never write papers after composition classes will not write well two or three years later. It's like tennis, the task-force member says. If you don't practice, you'll forget how to play.

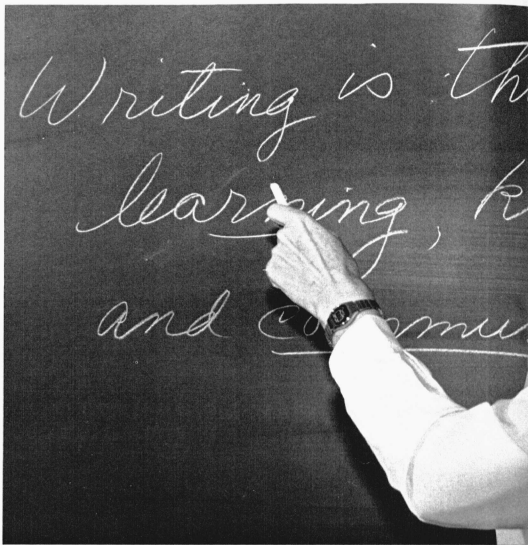
Additional writing practice is exactly what the task force has in mind. Adoption of the writing program, however, pends campuswide faculty approval, says Dr. Winifred Horner, English professor and task-force chairman.

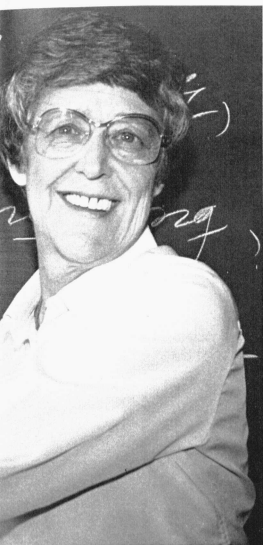
Recommendations include restructuring current composition courses and

requiring writing-intensive components that will be taken in conjunction with non-English department courses, such as economics or history. In these sophomore-level courses, students will improve both writing skills and knowledge of the elective subject.

Key to the composition program will be a writing center where students can obtain help writing papers and professors can find grading assistance. Such a center also could offer workshops to professors from all disciplines on topics like incorporating writing into courses.

Also recommended are experiments with computer-assisted writing instruction and establishing high school liaisons to let students know the writing caliber expected from UMC freshmen. □



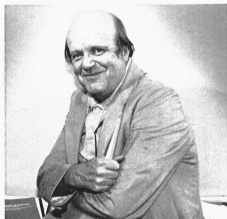


WILLIAM STRINGER
Agriculture

"We haven't disciplined our students to master tense, spelling or construction. We have to take responsibility for their inadequacies."

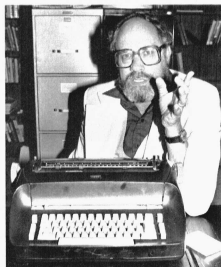
JACK LYSEN
Engineering

"Computer-transmitted electronic mail and word processing quickly are replacing oral communication."



DON RANLY
Journalism

"The purpose is to turn out people who can think, not just to turn out good writers. Clear writing is clear thinking."



BEN NELMS
Education

"The selling point is that students will also learn history or biology better if they can write about the subject in their own words."

JEAN ISPA
Home Economics

"My best writing teacher in grad school was a psychology professor. I can see that it doesn't have to be an English teacher."

BUSINESS

