

## An Informal History of Communication at Purdue

Professor W. Charles Redding  
(1914 – 1994)

About the author:

Professor W. Charles Redding came to Purdue from the University of Southern California in 1955. In his tenure at Purdue, he authored three books, ten book chapters, and scores of articles. In 1963 he served as president of the National Society for the Study of Communication (now the International Communication Association). He also received numerous professional awards.

Professor Redding directed approximately forty Ph.D. dissertations and an undetermined number of master's theses. He retired in 1979, and in 1983 authored *An Informal History of Communication at Purdue* as a two-part series for the department newsletter. He remained active in the graduate program until his passing in 1994.

### **Part I: Beginnings**

Communication at Purdue has a distinctive tradition of excellence. This history offers answers to questions such as:

- What are the origins of communication (originally "speech") at Purdue?
- How far back can we trace the roots of our massive-enrollment course, COM 114 (Fundamentals of Speech Communication)?
- When did speech gain "independence" from its parent English?
- How far back were the first graduate-level offerings? The first advanced degrees, especially the Ph.D.?
- When and how were courses in journalism and the other mass media incorporated into the department?
- How and when were the programs in theater and speech correction (now Audiology and Speech Sciences) separated from the old Speech department?

And so on.

The Fall of 1907 is the earliest official reference, in the Purdue Annual Catalogue, to a regular, for-credit course which could be classified nowadays as related to "speech" or "speech communication." (For more details, see below.) And 1947 (Fall Semester) marks the first time that the title Department of Speech actually appeared in print--in the Purdue Bulletin, Catalogue for the academic year 1947-1948. Prior to that time, all "speech" work had been listed as a part of the English Department--with a confusing variety of labels (more about all this later).

Although I located occasional mentions of the word "elocution" (God protect us!) in Purdue catalogues of a century ago--in the early 1880s--no official record has emerged that training in elocution was ever offered as a regular college course, bearing hours of credit toward a degree. What, then, happened in 1907? (Besides the brief but severe Depression of 1907!) The following course, with the exact description included, appeared in the Catalogue (for 1907-1908):

English 7a. Argumentation. First semester. (Three recitation or lecture hours per week. Must be preceded by English 1 or 2. Elective for sophomores in the Schools of Engineering as a substitute for English 7 [English Poetry]. May be taken by a limited number of Juniors or Seniors as a special elective without credit.)

The instructor for the course was listed as Assistant Professor Cooper (the faculty directory revealing that this personage had attained to the A. M. degree and that his formal title was Assistant Professor of English Literature). The fact that, for certain students, argumentation could be substituted for a study of poetry must tell us something or other, but I'm not sure exactly what!

The second speech course to be offered at Purdue was the ancestor of our current COM 114. It was labeled English 14--Public Speaking. Carrying three credit hours and available in both fall and spring semesters, it first appeared in the curriculum during the fall of 1915. The description, in its most salient points, remained unchanged for more than a decade. In its original version (1914-1915 Catalogue) it read:

"The purpose of this course is to develop efficiency in public speaking. A textbook is used, the best speeches of the day are studied, and constant practice in extempore speaking is given through the semester."

The instructor was Clarence Howe Thurber, a new faculty member whose highest degree was the A. B. Significantly, his title was "Instructor in Public Speaking"--not English. Mr. Thurber was listed as sole teacher both for English 14 (Public Speaking) and English 7a (Argumentation).

It's worth noting that, even at this early date when speech was but a tiny sliver of the college curriculum anywhere in the United States and when the primary professional society, now the Speech Communication Association (SCA), had barely been founded in 1914 and had held its first convention in December of 1915, a young instructor from Purdue was made a national officer. The National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking quickly became the National Association of Teachers of Speech (NATS); and C. H. Thurber of Purdue was Treasurer for the years 1918 and 1919. Not until Alan H. Monroe became First Vice President in 1938 (later, in 1940, President) did any faculty member from Purdue occupy a national office in NATS. (Nor has anyone from Purdue occupied the presidency since 1940!)

### **Speech and Journalism at Purdue after the close of World War I**

From the early days of the century, the Department of English was located in the School of Science (later, the School of Science, Education & Humanities, now HSSE). This school was a sort of catch-all, embracing just about everything taught at Purdue outside the boundaries of agriculture, engineering, and pharmacy. What little work we would call liberal arts or humanities today, that was available at all on the Purdue campus up to the Second World War found its home in the School of Science.

In the academic year during which fighting in World War I ceased, 1918-1919, the School of Science was described, in part, as follows:

"The School of Science provides introductory and advanced courses of instruction in the sciences--Biology, Chemistry, Physics -- and in those other subjects that are essential to a broad scientific education -- Drawing, Economics, English, French, Human Physiology, German, History, Mathematics--and in Home Economics and Art." (Emphasis supplied)

The wording of this description changed in only superficial respects in all annual catalogues up to the brink of World War II, even though English and other liberal arts curricula (such as those in history and the social sciences) underwent enormous change during the 1920s and 1930s.

As of the spring of 1919, Purdue offered "instruction" in the following schools or divisions: Agriculture, Applied Science, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, and Pharmacy. The phrase "applied science" (note carefully and qualifier "applied"--Indiana University was supposedly assigned the teaching of "pure" science!) was defined explicitly to include majors in the following subjects, and no more: biology, chemistry, physics, art, sanitary science, forestry, and home economics. English courses, then, including those in argumentation and public speaking, existed in an academic climate of technology in its most applied forms. Even science--as we would use that word today--was a minor voice in the Purdue chorus. And this was true until at least the middle 1930s.

### **Steps leading to a major in communication-related studies**

The first year in which a Purdue student could have worked toward a Bachelor of Science degree (at that time Purdue did not grant the Bachelor of Arts degree), with a major in English appears to have been 1929-1930--coincident with the Great Stock Market Crash and the start of the Great Depression. No causal connection need be inferred! Two years later--the Fall of 1931--a "speech major" was announced, even though the speech curriculum was still contained within the English Department. More about this later.

Meanwhile, at the close of the First World War, the word journalism had appeared in the Catalogue for 1918-1919. This was in the description for a new course, English 15--Advanced Composition, where one of the objectives was declared to be "special training in technical or journalistic writing." In this same academic year a follow-up course in public speaking (English 16) was announced, as a companion to the existing English 14. Moreover, for the first time, a course called Technical Writing (English 21-22) made its appearance. In 1920-1921, the title of English 15 was changed from Advanced Composition to Journalistic Writing--the earliest mention of a course whose title included explicit mention of journalism. Also in 1920-1921, Business Writing (English 21) was introduced; and the second course in public speaking (English 16) was not labeled Advanced Public Speaking (but with no course description to tell us anything about course content).

Readers with an interest or with experience--either pleasant or painful--in statistical methods might be intrigued to know that the earliest course offerings in statistics were in Psychology, but up until World War II all psychology courses were included in the Department of Education (later an autonomous Division of Education and Applied Psychology). The first mention I could locate of "statistical methods" was in a new course, Mental and Educational Measurements, which appeared in the 1919-1920 Catalogue.

The course called Applied Psychology (one of only three psychology courses offered in the curriculum in 1918-1919) may be regarded as the seed from which Purdue's nationally-recognized programs in industrial/organizational psychology later developed. The course description included the words, "specific applications to industrial conditions are considered" along with attention "to the different plans of rating and testing men." This course is mentioned here since--as will be described in Part II of this account--the work in "business and industrial" (now "organizational") communication traces its origins to active encouragement by faculty members in "industrial psychology," and to the close collaboration in the 1930s and 1940s between speech and psychology professors (primarily Alan H. Monroe and P. E. Lull in Speech, and Joseph Tiffin--who had taken his Ph.D. degree in speech pathology under the direction of Lee E. Travis at Iowa--in Psychology). In fact, Tiffin was originally listed as a member of the speech faculty and was one of the first Sustaining Members in what is now SCA. Tiffin, Emeritus Professor, still lives in West Lafayette.

While the speech curriculum developed steadily in the 1920s and spectacularly in the 1930s, the work in journalism remained as a distinctly minor area within the English Department. (The fact that Indiana University had "got there first with the mostest" in journalism, earning a reputation for one of the best journalism programs in the country, without a doubt was an important factor contributing to the feeble and delayed growth of journalism at Purdue. This despite the fact that many land-grant institutions have been among the foremost in developing journalism and other mass media curricula.)

Some landmark events may be briefly identified:

1923-1924: For the first time, courses carrying graduate credit were specifically identified under a separate heading ("For Undergraduate and Graduate Students"). Under this heading were listed Public Speaking (now carrying the number English 114), Advanced Public Speaking (English 116) and Journalistic Writing (English 115).

1924-1925: Alan H. Monroe (B.S., Northwestern, 1924) was hired and listed as "Instructor in English." English 14 (formerly Public Speaking) now became Principles of Speech, moving one more, small step toward current COM 114. The description of the course is interesting: "Training in orderly thinking and effective oral expression." Two new courses appeared: English 107 -- Debating and English 140--The Occasional Speech. Thus began what later developed into a complete curriculum in public address and argumentation/group discussion, at the undergraduate level.

1925-1926: For the first time courses within the English Department were listed in the catalogue under three main headings, each representing at least an informal section or division in the Department: Composition (which included the modest offerings in journalism), Literature, and Speech. From this informal divisional arrangement the speech curriculum later became the large, separate Department of Speech. (Note: Beginning in September of 1925 Purdue inaugurated work leading to the Ph.D. degree, limited to what were described as "certain lines of pure and applied science." It would be many years before the doctorate would be available in fields outside the sciences and engineering. At the time of announcing the Ph.D.--February of 1925--the total of graduate students in the university stood at 92, out of an over-all enrollment of 3,466.)

Preston H. Scott (A.M.), who had been hired in 1922 as an Instructor in English, was now promoted to Assistant Professor of Public Speaking--the only person in the Speech Section of professorial grade, and the first one since Thurber had been given that title in 1918 (Thurber vanished from the scene after 1920). Scott soon (1927) moved to the College of the City of Detroit--eventually Wayne State University--where he made a national reputation as a leader in the speech profession. Scott's departure opened the way for Alan Monroe to become the senior member of the speech faculty and in effect (although without a formal title for quite a while) the chairman of the speech section.

1926-1927: Two more men were added to the speech staff who later became nationally recognized figures: Paul Emerson Lull (A.B., Albion, 1925) and Edwin Hugh Paget (M.A., Pittsburgh, 1926). Both were listed as instructors in Public Speaking--as was Monroe now--rather than in English. Thus, while the label "speech" was always used in the annual catalogues, "public speaking" was the label attached to faculty titles. This dual practice continued for a number of years, indicating the uncertain character of the speech field during the 1920s and 1930s.

1927-1928: Monroe became the de facto head of the speech section of the English Department with his promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor of Public Speaking. Another man who later became famous (at the University of Denver) became an instructor at Purdue: Elwood Murray (M.A., Iowa, 1924). After two years Murray left to complete his doctorate at Iowa--under Lee E.

Travis (M.D. Steer, who later established the Speech Clinic at Purdue and became a nationally-known "heavyweight" in audiology and speech sciences, also completed his doctoral work at Iowa under Travis.)

1928-1929: The beginnings of theater work were laid with the introduction of a new course, English 50--Play Production and Stagecraft. Likewise, the tiny beginnings of speech correction (now the large and separate Department of Audiology and Speech Sciences) can be traced to a one-credit-hour course (inaugurated in 1927-28), English 23--Foundations of Speech. Interestingly, Monroe (who had just finished his Master's degree in 1927 at Northwestern, under the supervision of the legendary Lew Sarett) was listed as instructor for both the play production and the correctional ("Foundations") course--as well as for three other courses: 107 (Debating), 116 (Advanced Public Speaking, and 140 (The Occasional Speech). It was not unusual in the 1920s and 1930s (even into the 1940s and 1950s) for speech professors to teach a frighteningly wide range of courses, spanning public address, phonetics and speech science, oral interpretation, and theater. This tells us much both about the professors and about the field.

1929-1930: As mentioned earlier, this was the first year that an undergraduate major in English was authorized. By now, a two-course, sequence in journalism had become a fixture: the undergraduate course, English 13 (The Gathering and Writing of News--title changed in 1931 to News Writing) and the graduate-credit course English 115 (Journalistic Writing--title changed in 1932 to Feature Writing). Thus, with the title changes of 1931 and 1932, although course descriptions demonstrated the continuance of work in journalism, the word "journalism" had vanished from course titles. (Journalism would not again undergo a major expansion until the Fall of 1969, when journalism was transferred from English to Speech, with the resulting change of department name from Speech to Communication.)

The Thirties: Expansion and Formal Recognition. Under the energetic leadership of Alan Monroe (and with the sympathetic support of Dr. Herbert Creek, head of the English Department since 1920), the Purdue speech program began rapidly to catch up with other universities in the Big Ten: before the start of World War II, the leaders had been Iowa, Michigan, Northwestern, Wisconsin in the Midwest (in the rest of the country: Columbia Teachers College, Cornell, Denver, Louisiana State, Stanford, and Southern California). Expansion took place so rapidly that space does not permit a detailed account. But we can take notice of several "firsts."

The work in Oral Interpretation began (in 1930-1931) with English 60 (Interpretative Reading), taught--believe it or not--by Monroe and Lull. Argumentation, debate, and what later became group discussion were re-shuffled several times, beginning with the new courses (1930-1931) English 106--Debating: Informal Argument ("practice in committee discussion"); English 107, replacing the old 7a (Argumentation --Debating: Formal Argument. Both of these courses were taught by P. E. Lull, who developed a very large program in competitive debate as well as various forms of discussion (and eventually organizational communication). Lull was the Renaissance Man: deeply involved in public address, rhetorical criticism, experimental studies, theater, and oral interpretation!

Interviewing was first mentioned in the course description of Business and Professional Speaking (English 116), with this new title and a slightly revised course description appearing in 1930-1931. The course later was described as exclusively concerned with "business interviews" (1932-1933), and finally the course title (which had started off years before as Advanced Public Speaking) became The Business and Professional Interview (the number was still English 116) in 1933-1934. Until 1938, the interview course (modern COM 325) retained this odd description: "A study of the use of imagery, motivation, and logic in business interviews." In 1938-1939, the new course description (which remained unchanged for years) was "Analyzing and organizing of information for presentation in business interviews; practice in

adapting logic and persuasion to individual viewpoints; the recognition and resistance of illogical appeal." (The instructors, not surprisingly, were Lull and Monroe--supplemented by Leland Winch.)

The undergraduate speech major, as we have seen, was announced in the Fall of 1931. However, all speech courses were still inside the English Department; and every course bore the label "English," until "Speech" appeared for the first time in 1936-1937. But the speech curriculum remained a division of English, with the department name being changed in that year to "English and Speech." In the following year (1937-1938), the speech faculty--now numbering eleven staff members--was listed separately from the English faculty, but still under the Department of English and Speech. It was not until 1940-1941 that Monroe was formally designated in the Catalogue as "Chairman of the Section on Speech" (in the Department of English and Speech). This was the same year (that is, 1940) that Monroe served as President of the NATS (now SCA).

Highlights of curricular development can be deduced from such items as these:

Speech correction, phonetics, voice science, audiology. Monroe himself took the first step when he effected a radical transformation in English 124 (Standards of Pronunciation), converting it into "a study of speech sounds: the physiology of production, the physics of transmission, and the psychology of hearing" in 1932-1933. Joining the staff in 1935-1936 as "Instructor in English," Max D. Steer within a year or two established the Purdue Speech Clinic, which became nationally recognized. The first major course in the "speech science" program--now the separate department of Audiology and Speech Sciences--that Steer inaugurated was Speech 123 (Voice Science) in 1936-1937. Several courses followed, including theoretical and clinical courses in speech correction, in the years 1937-1940.

Radio broadcasting made its first appearance in 1937-1938 with a course offered in Summer Sessions only: S-105 (Radio Program Planning and Production). But a year later (1938-1939), Speech 55 (Radio Speech) was introduced, with two instructors listed--one of whom was, once again, P. E. Lull. "Preparation and delivery of announcers' continuities and radio talks; elementary broadcasting techniques; training of the voice for radio; practice in announcing and radio speaking in the studios of WBAA."

The word "seminar" began appearing in course descriptions in 1937-1938, suggesting that graduate work in speech was being put upon a respectable foundation--although it was not yet possible to earn a Master of Science degree "in speech" as such. Monroe completed his Ph.D. at Northwestern (under the director of Clarence T. Simon) in 1937, with a thesis titled "Experimental studies in the measurement and analysis of audience reaction to student speakers; and Steer completed his doctoral degree in 1938 at Iowa--like Murray and Tiffin, under the direction of Lee. E. Travis. (NOTE: Travis was also a key member of my own Ph.D. committee at USC.)

The first seminar was a potpourri: Speech 170-171--The Scientific and Artistic Bases of Speech (1937-1938). The course description almost covers the universe: "A seminar dealing with the psycho-physiological, physical, rhetorical, and aesthetic foundations of modern speech principles; methods of measuring speech values." Also in 1937-1938 there appeared for the first time a 200-level course, open to graduate students only: Speech 200--Research Problems in Speech (1 to 4 credit hours). Interestingly, no such course was listed for the parent department, English. The course was described in terms of: "Individual research problems in the field of speech, such as measurement of audience reaction, voice science and pathology, and the phonetic and rhetorical structure of speech."

Graduate assistants (who used to be named in each annual Catalogue for each department) were first mentioned for the Speech Section in 1938-1939. They number two. Again, no graduate assistantships yet existed in English, even though Speech was still a subdivision of the Department of English and Speech (and remained so until the Fall of 1947). Advertisements for Purdue summer-session graduate offerings began in the Quarterly Journal of Speech in 1938. Until after the war, however, it was not possible to enroll in a regularly-scheduled graduate program specifically labeled "speech" as the major area of study. (Early Master's degrees were arranged through co-operation with the Division of Education and Applied Psychology.)

The year 1938-1939 witnessed a large expansion in the graduate curriculum, effected just as the war was about to put almost all graduate work in the United States "on ice." Part II of this history will focus primarily upon the graduate programs. Hence, this is a convenient place to pause in our account. See the next installment to discover how Pauline was rescued in the nick of time from the railroad tracks as the Midnight Express roared around the curve. We leave the Speech Section still in the English Department, with only one full professor (as of 1938), Alan Monroe. But such was Monroe's rapid ascendance to national recognition that he became First Vice President of NATS (now SCA) in 1938, and President in 1940. And his book, Principles and Types of Speech (first edition, 1935) had already become the No. 1 best-seller in the field.

## **Part II: A Graduate Program Takes Root in the Cornfields**

As you read these words in the warm comfort of the 1990s, you might contemplate a sobering thought: In 1883, the Indiana Legislature defiantly refused to appropriate a single cent for the operation of Purdue University--an act they proudly repeated four years later (Phillips, 1968, p. 416). The legislature was probably not out of step with popular feelings about higher education in general, and state-supported colleges specifically. A prominent Methodist clergyman in Indianapolis published a pamphlet in the 1890s with the gripping title, "Facts and Figures Showing that State Universities Are Needlessly Expensive, Radically Non-American and Unavoidably Non-Religious;" and in 1909 the highly popular Governor Marshall declared (he was a Wabash College graduate himself) that he saw no reason to "lavish" monetary aid upon the state universities (Phillips, p. 432). (You're probably wondering how much progress has been made since then.)

Looking at things with the cool detachment of the historian, we can indeed conclude that the flourishing of both "liberal" and "scientific" studies, especially at the graduate level, in the states west of New England, suggests many features of the miraculous. With special reference to the field called "speech" (now speech communication, or just communication), and more particularly to graduate work in speech conducted at a Land Grant College, the miraculous component becomes overpowering. Then, when we focus our attention even more narrowly upon the unfolding of events, starting with a handful of speech-skills courses in the Department of English at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, we must surely gasp in astonishment at the feats accomplished by the late Alan H. Monroe, with powerful and continued support over a long span of years from, first, Paul Emerson ("P. E.") Lull; and, second, Max D. Steer. For a long time virtually all graduate work in speech at Purdue was inaugurated and maintained by these three men. And they were laboring in a region (the Midwest), in a state (Indiana), in a small town (Lafayette/West Lafayette), and on a land-grant campus (Purdue), where they had to wage battle after battle to win every small advance in postgraduate speech education. (Although Monroe and Lull are no longer with us, Steer remains active on campus, as a Distinguished Emeritus Professor, with an office in Heavilon Hall.)

## **The Two Magic Adjectives**

From the very start, Purdue persistently and vigorously advertised itself as an institution devoted to studies which were based upon scientific findings, but which were always to be applied to the solution of practical problems in society. The two key adjectives, then, were always these two: scientific and applied. When combined, they form the facile phrase applied science (not till after the Second World War did Purdue, at least in my estimation, shift the emphasis more toward "pure" science--and, much later, countenance graduate research in the humanities and social sciences).

Let's look at a full-page ad in the Quarterly Journal of Speech for April 1941--just a few months before our entry into World War II decimated the American academic world. At the very top of the ad, in large, bold-face, cursive print we see the phrase "Learning By Doing"--followed on the next line, in full caps "PURDUE UNIVERSITY." The text continues: "Applied to Graduate Work in Speech This Means--" followed by six numbered areas of study. These are: (1) case work in the Speech Clinic, (2) theatre practice, (3) experimental laboratory work, (4) supervised direction of forensics, (5) radio announcing and program planning in Station WBAA, and (6) supervised teaching in college or high school. The practical or applied nature of this program is blatantly obvious. Moreover, we should keep in mind that the year 1941, the year of Pearl Harbor, was a year in which graduate study in speech, both nationally and at Purdue, had achieved levels of enrollment not again to be matched until 1947 or 1948. It was a year in which graduate study in speech had attained a reputation of some maturity, or academic respectability, in the universe of accepted scholarship.

We should also keep in mind that the applied-science ideology dominating all graduate work at Purdue was a natural consequence of the philosophy undergirding the entire system of land grant colleges in the United States. Indeed, a curious fact is that the land grant institutions, operating with federal funding support authorized in the first Morrill Act of 1862, soon came under harsh attack from their agricultural constituents. The National Grange and similar farmers' organizations, politically very active in the last decades of the 19th century, accused the land grant colleges of betraying the goals laid down for them in the Morrill Act. In their understandable zeal to earn respectability among the established collegiate institutions, the "A & M" schools had been moving more and more toward the traditional theoretical and classical curricula. Legislation, the outcome of much turbulence from the protesting citizenry, was passed in the Second Morrill Act of 1890 with the purpose of stopping all this nonsense. This act was much more restrictive than the 1862 law. It explicitly denied all federal funding for curricula beyond the boundaries of: agriculture, mechanics, English, mathematics, science, and economics--all of which had to be taught "with special reference to their applications in the industries of life" (Brubacher and Rudy, 1958, pp. 63 and 401; emphasis supplied). Thus, statutory prohibitions added their weight to the pervasive cultural constraints making things difficult for any land-grant educators (especially those outside the fields of engineering and agriculture) who entertained fancy notions of developing theoretical or humanistic programs at either the undergraduate or the graduate level.

The inclusion of "English" in the list of eligible subjects, from the 1890 Morrill Act, should not be interpreted to suggest that scholarly work in this field was encouraged. The focus in English curricula at land grant colleges, until the 1930s (if not later) remained upon practical undergraduate skills and literature courses. When we neglect to consider this broader background for all land grant universities, we miss the driving forces that shaped the postgraduate curricula in speech communication.

### **Stages in the development of the graduate program in speech**

Most readers may not realize certain crucial facts--facts that may be even a bit startling:

Fact No. 1: The structured graduate offerings in speech--all originally at the Master of Science level exclusively--developed only under the umbrella of the Department of Education, later expanded into a semi-autonomous Division of Education and Applied Psychology. Speech, as a

part of the English Department until 1947, could offer courses only for graduate minors elected by students majoring in other fields. Before 1938, the only exceptions to this rule were specially approved "ad hoc" cases. (See below for what happened in 1938.)

Fact No. 2: Until 1947-48, the relatively few M. S. degrees earned in speech were actually M. S. in Ed. degrees, with theses jointly supervised by faculty members from speech and from the psychology section of the Division of Education and Applied Psychology.

Fact No. 3: The doctoral program (inaugurated with the first Ph.D. in speech completed in 1948) came about largely from encouragement provided by a few key faculty members in psychology--especially Joseph Tiffin (industrial psychology, formerly in speech himself) and H. H. Remmers (nationally famous figure, one of the pioneering specialists in attitude theory and measurement). Informal working relationships, at the purely personal level, between Monroe in speech and Remmers in psychology, and between Steer in speech and Tiffin in psychology, were decisive factors in the establishment of Purdue's nationally recognized Ph.D. program in speech communication.

Now for some specifics.

First, recall that Purdue did not formally authorize the Ph.D. degree until 1925. And the Graduate School as we know it today, with the Graduate Council as its governing body, was not established until 1929 (Indiana University set up its graduate school in 1904 [Phillips, 1968, p. 415]). Further: as mentioned earlier in Part I, no clear delineation of graduate-level vs. undergraduate-level courses existed here until 1935. Finally, Speech became a separate entity within English only when the name of the department was changed to "Department of English and Speech." And this, as we have seen in Part I, occurred in 1937.

Now we come to what I shall call "the mini-version of a magna carta" in 1938. It was this year that saw the publication of the following statement in the Purdue Graduate Bulletin (for 1938-39), simultaneously with the important announcement about the creation of a new Division of Education and Applied Psychology:

By cooperation between the Department of English and Speech and the Division of Education and Applied Psychology, it is possible to arrange programs of graduate study including courses offered by both departments which will provide an integrated training for those desiring to prepare for the teaching of speech, the correction of speech disorders, or specialized work in voice science . . . in general, the work will be designed to fulfill the requirements for the Master's degree with a major emphasis upon speech education or upon the psychology of speech. This may be done by taking both minors in Speech and by including certain additional Speech courses as part of the major in Education or Psychology. Thesis work for students desiring to follow this program will be jointly administered by the two departments. . .

This statement represents the very first time that Purdue University, in printed declaration, had ever officially recognized the possibility of writing an M. S. thesis in the field of speech--albeit with a major, not in speech, but in education or psychology. Restricted though the new policy obviously was, it permitted the camel to get at least his nose inside the tent. Without this rather bizarre arrangement, the massive graduate programs of the 1970s and 1980s could never have materialized.

It's interesting to remind ourselves that, at the moment of birth for the M.S. degree, the Speech Section offered a total of 13 graduate-credit courses (including the all-purpose "200" research problems course); there was only a single faculty member holding as high a rank as Associate Professor (Monroe, of

course), with two Assistant Professors (Lull and Steer) and eight Instructors. Monroe and Steer had just completed their doctorates (the former at Northwestern in 1937, the latter at Iowa in 1938), while Lull was yet to undertake his Ph.D. (at Wisconsin).

Establishment of the Division of Education and Applied Psychology was a highly significant step for Purdue to take. It meant that a large academic unit, with faculty and curricula removed from the venerable School of Science (in which the Department of English and Speech was still housed), would now function in a manner roughly equivalent to a separate school. And the title of this new unit would not include the magic word "science," even though most of the courses would be described as scientific in nature. Thus we encounter an anomaly: graduate work in speech, formally located in the Department of English and in the School of Science, was strictly of an applied-science character; yet the M.S. degree was offered outside the School of Science. (When the doctoral program got started in 1948, in the separate Department of Speech, it also was the result of unusual ad hoc maneuvering.)

How many graduate students are we talking about in the years 1937-39? In 1938, total graduate enrollment at Purdue was only 700 (compared to figures in excess of 5,000 in the 1970s and 1980s). Of these 700, however, a surprisingly large proportion--153 or roughly 22 percent--were enrolled in the new Division of Education and Applied Psychology. Most significant of all, in 1938 there were eighteen Ph.D. candidates (none, of course, in speech), up from only six in the old department of education and applied psychology in 1937. By the end of 1941--at the time of Pearl Harbor--Purdue had granted a total of 184 Ph.D. degrees, of which a mere nine had been earned in Education and Applied Psychology (four of these nine were in the rapidly expanding field of Industrial Psychology, a field where Purdue was to become nationally famous after World War II). Almost half of all the Ph.D.'s (87, or 47 percent) came out of the Department of Chemistry, a discipline in which Purdue has always been pre-eminent--and in which our only Nobel Laureate, Herbert C. Brown, has taught. To put it all in perspective: as the United States entered World War II, Purdue had granted the Ph.D. degree to 123 persons in the School of Science, 28 in Agriculture, 23 in Engineering, 14 in Pharmacy, 9 in Education and Applied Psychology, and 1 in Home Economics. At neither the Master's nor the Ph.D. level was it feasible for a student at Purdue to earn a postgraduate degree in any field representing either the humanities or the social sciences generally (psychology excepted). Since graduate education in the United States almost disappeared during the war years, this state of affairs persisted until after 1950! (I can recall my job-application interview with Alan Monroe, in his office in University Hall after Christmas of 1954. Monroe was completely candid. He told me that graduate work in speech was still struggling for recognition on this campus, and that it was a constant up-hill battle to expand our offerings in the non-scientific areas of the department--rhetorical theory, public address, etc.)

In view of all this, now comes a jolt: the very first M.S. degree "in speech" awarded at Purdue was a quantitative-measurement study in the area we would today call oral interpretation! Like all Master's degrees completed before the mini-magna-carta year of 1938, this one (directed by Monroe) was "ad hoc." It is dated 1932. The student was--amazingly for the dominantly male Purdue campus--a female (three of the first five M.S. speech degrees here, completed during the period 1932-1939, were written by women). The student and the thesis title were recorded in Knower's "Index of Graduate Work" (Speech Monographs, 1939) as follows:

Mary Harriett Mueller, *An experiment in the measurement of the effectiveness of oral reading.*

The second M.S. thesis completed here was dated 1934 (still on an ad hoc basis, of course). Monroe teamed up with H. H. Remmers on this thesis (as was also the case for the third M.S., in 1937). The study is worth special mention, since it was later revised and published as a "Purdue University Study" under the co-authorship of Monroe, Remmers, and Venemann-Lyle. And in this form it became famous nationally as a significant "scientific" contribution to the field of speech--as a graduate student at

Southern California in the early 1950s, I was told that it was a classic. The author and title: Elizabeth Marie Venemann-Lyle, *An experimental evaluation of certain functional criteria of the effectiveness of platform speech*.

The fourth and fifth M.S. theses (1938 and 1939, respectively) were the first in a long series of researches done in the field of speech correction, audiology, and voice science (now represented by the separate Department of Audiology and Speech Sciences); they were, of course, directed by Max Steer. In fact, through the 1950s, roughly a half or more of all graduate degrees in the Department of Speech were executed in the audiology-pathology-voice science area. On a scientifically-oriented campus like Purdue, this was the area of speech that received strong support from the power holders; and it was the area which, immediately after the close of World War II, attracted (for those days) very large monetary grants from agencies of the federal government. In fact, by the early 1950s--even before the new facilities of Heavilon Hall were completed (in 1959)--the Purdue Speech Clinic and Speech Laboratory were rated at or near the top of that field in the U.S.

### **Independence and the Ph.D. – at Last**

As has already been mentioned, the Department of Speech became a separate entity starting in the Fall of 1947. At the same time, by action of the Graduate Council in February of that year, the department was authorized to offer "its own" Master of Science degree. (The Master of Arts was not available until the Fall of 1963.)

By a set of special ad hoc arrangements, the Ph.D. in Speech also came into being at Purdue, with the first and second doctoral degrees completed here in 1948 and 1949, respectively. The first was in the "voice science" area (funded by the Office of Naval Research) and it was directed by Steer: James C. Kelly, *Effect of training on speech intelligibility through synthetic noise barriers*. The second was directed by Monroe and was (predictably) an experimental/quantitative study: Harvey Cromwell, *the relative effect on audience attitude of the first versus the second argumentative speech of a series*. (The Cromwell study was published in two installments as major articles in Speech Monographs in 1950 and 1954.)

When Purdue issued its first Ph.D. in speech in 1948, it joined a select group of American universities (incidentally, a speech Ph.D. was completed the same year at Indiana University--by Huckleberry--but it was in education, not in the department of speech). As of the end of 1948, only 20 universities had awarded the Ph.D. degree in speech (61, for various kinds of Master's degrees). The leaders were:

Iowa, 92; Wisconsin, 84; Northwestern, 60; Cornell, 53; Columbia (Teachers College), 42; Michigan, 40; USC, 31; Louisiana State, 19. Minnesota and Ohio State had granted just nine doctorates in speech by this date.

Penn State and Utah likewise granted their first speech Ph.D's, along with Purdue, in 1948. (Schools like Michigan State, Illinois, I.U., Texas, and Washington had not yet given any doctorates in speech.)

Since its independence year of 1947, the Department of Speech at Purdue has known only four permanent and two interim heads: Monroe resigned the headship in 1963; Mason Hicks was interim head in 1963-64; Ray Nadeau (a classical scholar) was head from 1964 until he resigned the chairmanship in 1973; Ralph Webb served as interim head in 1973-74; and David Berg was appointed head in the Fall of 1974; Charles J. Stewart became head in 1988.

### **Some significant milestones**

1949-50: Graduate work, at the seminar level, became available in the "rhetoric and public address" area, with the creation of seminars in American and British Oratory, and Rhetorical

Theory (the British seminar and rhetorical theory were taught by N. B. Beck, who joined the faculty as an associate professor in 1948, specializing in rhetorical theory and criticism--however, Lull, who had done an experimental study for his own doctorate, actually was the one who first offered all the seminars in rhetoric and public address). Not until 1951-52 did the department offer a comprehensive survey course in the History of Public Address (Beck), covering the whole span between ancient Greece and modern times.

1950: The first graduate degree in organizational communication was completed; it was directed by P. E. Lull, who about the same time was creating an entity within the department known as the "Industrial Communication Research Center" (reorganized as the "Communication Research Center" by W. C. Redding in 1957): William C. Kilgore (now deceased), A study of attitudes of business and industrial supervisors toward their speech tasks.

1954: The humanities became an explicitly recognized area of academic endeavor when Purdue effected a major structural reorganization. The old School of Science and the Division of Education and Applied Psychology disappeared, to be replaced by the School of Science, Education and Humanities. Both English and Speech, of course, were departments in the new school. Other departments, existing now as separate entities for the first time, were: Economics (later transferred to the Krannert School of Management), Education, Psychology, and Sociology. The Department of Speech now offered a full curriculum in theater at the graduate level (supervised by Ross Smith); and the faculty included four full professors (Monroe, Lull, Steer, Beck), three associate professors, and seven assistant professors. There were ten graduate teaching assistants, six clinical assistants, and four research assistants. Published in pamphlet format, the Industrial Communication Research Center issued a widely distributed report (dated June, 1954), called "Business and Industrial Communication from the Viewpoint of the Corporation President"--a survey of the 100 largest corporations in the country, authored by Lull, Funk, and Piersol.

(Note: The first seminar in organizational communication, Speech 694, now Com 674, was approved in 1954, to be offered starting in the Fall of 1955 by P. E. Lull. However, the distressing event of Lull's death--at the age of only 52--in August of 1955 produced a temporary hiatus in the organizational communication program. With the aid of Darrell Piersol, I started taking over the course work and students in this area in the Spring of 1956.)

1963: Another major reorganization took place: the present HSSE (School of Science, Education & Humanities), along with the present School of Science, emerged. Simultaneously, AUS--the Department of Audiology & Speech Sciences--was created when the Department of Speech--having grown to unmanageable proportions--was split up.

1966: More reorganization within HSSE: All work in theater was moved out of the Department of Speech and established as a large division within the new Department of Creative Arts. Also, separate departments were newly established in: History, Philosophy, and Political Science. (During the middle 1960s, an undergraduate--but not a graduate--major in journalism had been developed in the Department of English. For more on this, see below.)

1967: Professor N. B. Beck died, at about the time he would have retired; this precipitated careful study, under Ray Nadeau, of the rhetorical/critical offerings of the department, which now included seminars in ancient and medieval rhetorical theories.

1969: Another reorganization within HSSE resulted in the creation of what we now recognize as the Department of Communication (at the same time the Speech Communication Association

took shape, as a successor to the Speech Association of America; but after much debate, the Purdue Department dropped the word "speech" and went the whole distance in adopting the name "Communication.") With minor exceptions, all the journalism courses were transferred (as of September, 1969) from English to Communication, and with this move our large program in the mass media (particularly at the undergraduate level) took a dramatic leap forward.

1989: The School of Education was made a distinct entity. The eleven remaining departments in what was the School of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education (HSSE) were reconstituted and renamed the School of Liberal Arts. In 1993, the Communication Department moved into the new \$28.5 million Liberal Arts and Education Building.

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References (besides Purdue bulletins and the Knower "Index" in Speech Monographs):

John S. Brubacher & Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition (N. Y., Harper, 1958).  
Clifton J. Phillips, Indiana in Transition (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1968).