March 25, 1987

To: The Faculty

From: Educational Council

Subj: Freshman Winter Term Program

We recommend that the Faculty vote to adopt the Freshman Winter Term Program outlined below. This program will replace the "Texts and Contexts" proposal laid on the table at the March faculty meeting.

1. All students will be required to complete a section of a common Winter Term course. Normally, the course will be taken during the freshman year. This requirement must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.

2. The course will be organized around a common theme, with faculty members teaching sections of the course encouraged to use some texts in common.

3. Sections providing different perspectives on the theme will be limited to 15 to 20 students each. The different sections will be fully described in the Winter Term catalogue. Students will register for the course by indicating their preferences from the sections offered.

4. Many of the lectures, performances, films, and other events in the Winter Term Convocation Series will be related to the theme of the common course.

5. This program will go into effect in the January 1989 Winter Term. The program will be reviewed by the Educational Council in the Fall of 1991 as part of its review of the larger Freshman Core Program.

RATIONALE

We believe that this program represents an improvement over the "Texts and Contexts" proposal, while maintaining some of the strengths of that earlier proposal. The program proposed here provides for a common intellectual experience for most members of the freshman class during Winter Term. This common experience will strengthen the Winter Term curriculum, and will provide a complement to the Fall Term Freshman Seminar Program. The Winter Term program will also offer opportunities for an extension of intellectual life outside the classroom during January, for faculty as well as students. We hope that this program, and its concurrent Convocation Series, will result in increased
intellectual dialogue among members of the community—students with students, students with faculty, and faculty with faculty.

The time for completion of this requirement is established as the end of the sophomore year in order to accommodate the needs of February freshmen and freshmen enrolled in continuing language courses. Other freshmen may wish to delay completion of this requirement until sophomore year, in order to take a departmental Winter Term course during their first year at Middlebury.

Participation in this program on the part of faculty will be voluntary. Students will have a choice of many sections in the common course. Each section will take a different approach to the theme, an approach which reflects the interests and specialization of the faculty member teaching the section.

Approximately 25 sections of this course will be needed each year. We are confident that this many sections can be offered without adverse effects on the rest of the Winter Term curriculum, and while maintaining current policies on released time.

If this proposal is adopted, the 1986–87 Educational Council will propose a number of themes for the 1989 Winter Term to the Curriculum Committee. The 1987–88 Curriculum Committee (should that panel remain in existence) or the 1987–88 Educational Council (should the Faculty Council’s recommendation for subsuming the Curriculum Committee’s jurisdiction under that of the Educational Council be accepted) will choose the theme for the 1989 Winter Term. The choice will be made after an open committee meeting at which faculty suggestions on the theme will be sought. Examples of themes for this course include “Origins,” “Creativity,” “The City,” and “Evolution and Revolution.”
March 25, 1987

To: The Faculty

From: Educational Council

Subj: College Writing Program

We recommend that the Faculty adopt the following resolution on the College Writing Program:

1. The Faculty reaffirms its commitment to writing across the curriculum and throughout the four undergraduate years. The Faculty supports the principle of a cross-disciplinary writing program which integrates the teaching of writing with instruction in specific disciplines.

2. Student writing should be systematically included in appropriate courses beyond the freshman year. Many departments are already offering such courses. All students should have at least one significant writing experience in each of the three upperclass years. Faculty advisers should impress upon their students the importance of enrolling in writing-intensive courses throughout their undergraduate careers.

3. Students should be strongly encouraged to undertake projects such as essays and theses in their major departments. All departments should strive to make such options, which offer students the opportunity to complete a substantial piece of written work, available to their majors.

4. Administrative support should be provided to the College Writing Program. The Faculty supports the appointment of a Director of Writing who would coordinate the teaching of writing at Middlebury. The duties of the Director could include the establishment of an ongoing faculty support and development program for the teaching of writing, administration of the writing requirement in the Freshman Core Program, and development and teaching of upper-level expository writing courses.

RATIONALE

The Educational Council believes it appropriate for the Faculty to vote in favor of this resolution in order to express its support for the place of writing in the curricular revisions now being adopted. The items in this resolution represent recommendations of the Special Committee to Review Writing Effectiveness and Directions, which met during the Fall and Winter of 1986-87, and issued its report on January 26, 1987. The Educational Council believes these recommendations to be sufficiently important that they should be adopted by a vote of the full Faculty.