

Opportunities arise for former UT English lecturers

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Although some of the English lecturers who found themselves unemployed at the end of last semester have since found other jobs, many others are still wandering aimlessly around the job market.

Former lecturer Elizabeth Bell expressed her current job situation quite succinctly: "What am I doing now? Well, I'm collecting unemployment to the tune of \$189 a week, and I'm hunting for a job."

But Bell and at least one other former lecturer have responded to a solicitation from Houston law firm Vinson and Elkins, which is offering jobs as legal assistants to people

with master's degrees and doctorates in liberal arts fields.

Judy Bolling, Vinson and Elkins' legal assistant coordinator of recruiting, said she sent a letter to the UT Department of English when she learned English 346K was being dissolved.

The department discontinued the junior-level composition course last semester, and all the lecturers who taught the course were dismissed. Only five "line item" budgeted lecturers will remain on the teaching staff.

"We are not necessarily recruiting for positions that are currently open," Bolling said. "But we are al-

ways willing to talk with people about career paths."

Bolling said she learned about the English lecturers' plight from a former UT English instructor who works as a legal assistant at Vinson and Elkins.

"I knew that would be a good source for applicants for legal assistant positions," Bolling said. "We are constantly looking for good communicators, or what we call good raw material.

"I know from experience that if we don't have something today, we will probably have something tomorrow," she said.

Vinson and Elkins has the largest legal assistants program in the

country, and employs about 130 assistants to perform various research and writing functions, Bolling said.

About 110 of those assistants work in the Houston office, and the others work in the firm's Austin and Washington, D.C., offices.

Other former lecturers have obtained jobs at various junior colleges, and at least one will be working in the College of Engineering as a writing instructor.

The School of Law will continue its program of using lecturers to teach technical writing to law students, but the law school will be responsible for hiring those lecturers. In the past, the lecturers were hired by the Department of English and

"loaned out" to the law school, which was responsible for paying them, said Joseph Kruppa, assistant chairman of the Department of English.

Kruppa said the English department also is helping the lecturers find jobs on an individual basis.

"I know various members of the department have contacted (prospective employers) about the lecturers, and I know several individuals are being placed," Kruppa said.

In the meantime, Kruppa is heading a committee that is studying the future of composition courses in the Department of English.

"We are simply discussing various ways of thinking about the Eng-

lish department," Kruppa said. "We are exploring whether we can keep 346K in the future and what kinds of writing courses we can offer."

Kruppa said some students still are required to take the course to graduate, but that the deans of the various colleges are waiving the requirement or substituting writing courses in other departments.

"There are a variety of options available to the students, depending on the standing of the student, the college in which they are enrolled and so forth. Students who are concerned about this need to talk to their individual deans," Kruppa said.