



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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PAR 108 · Austin, Texas 78712-1164 · (512) 471-4991

September 9, 1992

TO: English Department Faculty

FROM: Evan Carton, Graduate Adviser

RE: Departmental Meeting to Discuss Division of Rhetoric and Composition, particularly its potential impact on graduate teaching and the graduate program

I would like you to sign a request for a departmental meeting that I am leaving in PAR 108. If the request is endorsed by enough of you, I would also like to ask that you attend the meeting that the Chair will schedule. I think that department perspectives on the proposed Division of Rhetoric and Composition should be openly aired, that the implications of the Division for other areas of the department's program and governance should be explored, and that a constructive response to the proposal should be initiated.

My particular concerns as graduate adviser have to do with the potential limitation or elimination of my ability—or that of future graduate advisers—to offer TA or AI employment to the strongest prospective students; with the effect of such a limitation on graduate student recruitment and retention; with the status of our current written promises to fund continuing graduate students in good standing and with competent teaching records for five years; with the possibility of the replacement of AIs by lecturers at the discretion of the director of the new Division; and with the control by the director, who is not specified by the proposal to be a member of the English Department, over the content of certain English Department graduate courses.

I spoke with Dean King about these concerns yesterday and he assured me that they were groundless, that no purge of English Department AIs or disabling of our graduate recruitment efforts was intended by the proposal and that he anticipated a cooperative and close relationship between the department and the Rhetoric and Composition Division. He also said that the document we received was not meant to be prescriptive in its details and was open to modification in virtually all its particulars, and that he imagined that the Division would be run not by an individual with no structural answerability to the department, but by a committee that would include a number of English Department faculty, especially those involved with graduate teaching in rhetoric.

However open to revision and reconceptualization this proposal may be, it seems to me that we need to talk about it and that, subsequently, as I have told the Dean in person and in writing, he should discuss it openly with us as a group. As a first step, I have asked for this department meeting, which I hope you will support and attend.