

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

September 19, 1979

TO: English Department Faculty
FROM: Joseph J. Moldenhauer, Chairman *JM*
SUBJECT: Recruitment Policy: Additional Considerations

This memo supplements my memo of 18 September on Joblist copy and contexts for the discussion of recruitment. The factors I present below may be of particular interest to the untenured staff, both tenure-track and temporary.

Admissions and Registration

1. The English Department has no direct means for controlling undergraduate admissions to the University.
2. Aside from setting maximum-size section limits, the Department cannot control registration in those courses (mainly lower-division "service" courses) where registration is heaviest.
3. Sections of upper-division courses, with instructors named, are scheduled by the Undergraduate Course Committee and the Associate Chairman, with departmental approval, well in advance of the semester when they are offered. Lower division courses are scheduled, as a rule without instructor designation, in numbers designed to meet anticipated student demand.
4. In the event of student demand during registration above the capacity of the scheduled sections, new sections are created to the extent allowed by regular faculty capability, the Dean's ability to fund temporary Instructorships, and the availability to temporary Instructors. A decision not to create extra sections in response to heavy enrollment pressure must be made in consultation with the Dean.

Funding and Budget

1. The Department's budget is at least roughly related to the number of its student registrations. The State "funds" student registrations at a certain level for undergraduates and a higher level for graduate students.
2. If the Department's registrations should fall sharply, as, for example, due to a General Faculty decision to eliminate a program which is mandatory or almost mandatory for large numbers of students, the Department's budget would also fall sharply (such an event would have lamentable educational consequences as well). Although the need for temporary Instructors would be reduced or eliminated by such a development, regular faculty positions would also be jeopardized.

Staffing

1. A.I. teaching capability in lower-division courses is limited by restrictions upon the number of applicants admitted to the Ph.D. program--restrictions self-imposed by the English Department. It is limited also by the number of A.I. applicants from other departments who are qualified to teach our courses skillfully.
2. Regular faculty teaching capability is limited by the effective maximum of three organized sections per semester for each faculty member on full-time instructional appointment, and by the variables of leaves, retirement, and the like. Regular faculty members carry conference, thesis, and dissertation students as well. They are expected to serve the Department, College, and University on committees, and they are expected to engage in scholarly and creative work.
3. Pool faculty teaching capability is limited in part by the effective maximum of four organized sections per semester as a full-time appointment. Temporary Instructors normally do not teach conference students or carry committee responsibilities. Publication is not a condition of continuance.
4. Generalizations about the advantages or disadvantages of service in the Instructor "pool" are hazardous if they are not based upon the attitudes of the temporary Instructors themselves. Pool members will be glad, I'm sure, to share their views with regular faculty members.
5. For the past two years, pool employment has been restricted, with a very few anomalous exceptions, to persons with doctoral degrees. A substantial number are our own new and recent Ph.D.s, persons who have not yet found suitable academic posts elsewhere. In making pool appointments and reappointments, the Executive Committee determines the qualifications of the applicant to teach particular courses and studies evidence of teaching effectiveness. Participation in MEC Course-Instructor Evaluations is a condition of reappointment to the temporary staff.
6. The major advantage of the "pool" to the Department, in my view, is that it provides an accordion factor whereby varying numbers of lower-division students can be taught from semester to semester. Regular, probationary faculty cannot and should not be hired without a national search or on as short notice as pool appointees. The staffing of all our pool-staffed lower-division sections with regular faculty would require the Department to hire approximately 40 Assistant Professors. The effects upon faculty quality, competition for upper-division and graduate teaching opportunities, and promotion decisions in the Department and above would be drastic. (Unlike many other departments, we cannot meet registration increases by increasing the size of our "lecture sections." The courses on which registration pressure falls most heavily have section limits of 25--for composition courses--and 40--for lower-division literature courses.)
7. Temporary Instructor appointments are limited by the number of faculty lines and dollars the Dean can make available from all portions of the College budget, and by the number of qualified applicants. In past years the Department has hired every pool applicant. This year, the pool was unusually large; approximately 3/5 of the applicants were offered full- or part-time positions, the last ten or so during registration and adds/drops.

8. There is no impediment (except with new Ph.D.s from our own Department) to a temporary Instructor's applying for a regular, probationary appointment. Application must, however, be made within the Department's recruitment deadlines, and the candidate must be measured fairly against others applying for Assistant Professorships.

Promotion and Tenure

(See also #6 in the preceding section)

1. There is no empirical or documentary evidence that the Administration applies a "quota" to the number of tenured posts in English.

2. Although I haven't checked the figures, I believe that English has a larger proportion of untenured to tenured faculty than many--perhaps most--of the other departments in the College.

3. The number of initial applications for positions on the English faculty has been falling pretty steadily for the past five or six years. As recently as 1975, there were almost 1,000 applications. Last year the figure was 564. The number of applications tallies generally but not closely with the nature of the Joblist ad (e.g., specifying fields for application or specifying fields where application is unwelcome).

4. The Department has made a dozen or fewer offers and has hired seven or fewer new untenured staff each year for the past six or seven years. The intermittent desire of the Department to hire larger numbers has not translated into wholesale appointments. This is because the standards applied in the recruitment procedure remain high, the number of applications declines, and the number of really attractive applicants does not grow.

5. The Department's track record for promotion of probationary staff to tenure has been respectable. In the past nine years about seventeen sixth-year faculty have been recommended for promotion to Associate Professor. In one instance I can recall, from 1973, the Administration denied the promotion. In the same nine-year period, nine or ten sixth-year Assistant Professors have been recommended for termination by the Executive Committee; in two or three of these instances the Executive Committee requested promotion on an appeal basis in the seventh year, when new developments warranted reconsideration. (None of these requests were successful, however.) Last year our two sixth-year candidates were promoted.

6. I would estimate that only about half of the probationary faculty of the past decade have reached the sixth or up-or-out year. A few may have been promoted "early" (see Regents Rules for Regents' timetables). Several have taken positions--usually tenured positions--elsewhere before the tenure decision here. Some have left the profession before the tenure decision. Attrition of current and future tenure-track faculty members through acceptance of other teaching posts or through adoption of alternative careers cannot, of course, be predicted confidently. "Early termination," while a possibility, has not been practiced by the Executive Committee.

7. The much-apprehended phenomenon of a "tenure crunch" might occur for the probationary ranks as a whole if the Department experienced a sudden, major, and predictably long-lasting drop in registrations (due, for example, to

elimination of lower-division English requirements or a radical tightening of admissions requirements). Such a scenario aside, it seems likely that if the Executive Committee recommended for promotion eight or more sixth-year Assistant Professors in a given year, a smaller proportion of these candidates would receive Administration approval than has been the case in the past, even if all were as highly qualified as candidates recommended by the Executive Committee in the recent past. In other words, the crunch could be feared for a given "entering class," but not for Assistant Professors already in service when that class was hired. Past attrition rates suggest that this possibility might materialize if something in excess of 12 Assistant Professors were hired in a given year. The English Department has not been hiring at this level.