



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712-II64

Department of English
PAR 110
(512) 471-4991

September 1, 1984

Dear Bill:

I must respectfully disagree with the explanation you gave *The Daily Texan* on August 31 for the three-fourths time hiring of lecturers in the English Department. As early as last spring, influential members of the department's executive committee were indicating that no more than 30 full-time lecturer slots would be available in the fall—despite healthy registration projections. Yet, at almost the same time, you were cancelling forty-seven classes for the autumn term, including numerous sections of E 307, E 308, E310, and E317. (There was no consultation with the freshman office before the E307 and E 308 courses were dropped.) So at the very moment the department was worrying publicly that it would not have enough classes for lecturers to teach in the fall, it was quietly cancelling the sections that would have enabled it to employ these people at full time.

While it is true that the cancelled sections represent courses being phased out under the new English requirements, the classes were already on the books and could have easily provided the necessary buffer between the old and new programs—if the department had actually been seeking a way of assuring the continuity of its staff. As you know, the courses (especially "Expository Writing" and "Technical Writing") are popular with students and would have had no problems with enrollment. Once the new English programs were fully in place, the department would have been under no obligation to continue offering these classes.

I am led to believe, therefore, that the decision to place lecturers on three-quarters time was the result of a deliberate policy, and not—as you indicate in the article—due to the logistical problems of implementing the new English requirements. The department itself created the situation which made it seem necessary to put lecturers on reduced service (and salary). There was—so far as I am aware—no pressure on the department from the college or elsewhere to hire lecturers at three-quarters time. If the department's motives were, as you say in *The Daily Texan* article, to keep all fifty-seven lecturers on staff in a year of light enrollment and to assure the quality of the teaching staff, then the policy has proved—as many in the department predicted—extraordinarily ill-advised. Some fine lecturers have been forced out of the department, or been compelled to split their appointments with other institutions, or have discovered that local high-tech companies value their teaching and writing skills more than the English department does. Morale among lecturers (and among other faculty aware of what is happening) has rarely been lower. And, ironically, far from preserving a dependable pool of able instructors, the department has, in fact, seen its available staff reduced so that once again it has been compelled to scramble to find personnel even for its reduced course offerings. Hiring has gone on to the last minute (when the only guarantor of quality is luck) and many lecturers have finally been awarded what they should have had from the beginning—the assurance of full time employment.

Perhaps most damaging of all, the Department has told the community and the university what it believes a Ph.D in English is worth: about \$12,500 per year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John J. Ruszkiewicz".

John J. Ruszkiewicz
Director of Freshman English