

Rhetoric division faces scrutiny by new committee

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The University Council adopted a resolution Monday to create a committee to examine UT undergraduate writing programs and make recommendations for their improvement.

The resolution, proposed by Waneen Spirduso, Faculty Senate chairwoman, was approved by a vote of 34-27 after a 30-minute discussion.

Opponents of the resolution charged that it will obstruct the implementation of the new rhetoric and composition division proposed by Robert King, dean ad interim of liberal arts, and former UT President William Cunningham.

Spirduso said either UT acting President William Livingston or incoming President Robert Berdahl will decide when the committee will form.

"There's no telling what will happen with it. At any rate, it's out of my court and into theirs," Spirduso said.

King, who voted against the formation of the new committee, said it would not change the course of his program.

"We're on track to establish the Division of Rhetoric and Composition. It will go into effect on June 1. [The new committee] will not affect it all, as I can see," King said.

Proponents said the new commit-

tee will allow faculty and student input into the program, which they said has so far been denied.

"The motion is not meant to be obstructionist or partisan," said Allan Friedman, professor of English. "I would submit that questions — substantive, procedural questions — have simply not been answered."

Friedman charged that the new division was proposed without including the opinions of the faculty members and graduate students who will carry out the program.

But Howard Nirken, Students' Association president, said King's recently formed advisory committee already deals with concerns about the program.

"We debated this for two hours at the last meeting. We need to move on," Nirken said. "I just don't feel it's necessary to set up a committee to check up on another committee's work."

Nirken said the new committee should focus only on the substantial writing component program and its findings should go into a general recommendation to the Rhetoric and Composition Advisory Committee.

"The program is a done deal. We need to work with Dean King's committee and express recommendations for the proposal as it stands," Nirken said.

But Spirduso said the new committee will probably scrutinize the rhetoric and composition program as part of its general investigation.