

Faculty Senate airs concerns over new writing division

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University Council members continued to question Monday the role English faculty members will play in the implementation of the Division of Rhetoric and Composition.

"The faculty is concerned with the governance issue," said Waneen Spirduso, Faculty Senate chairwoman. "They are concerned with the process, but the procedure is equally important."

Robert King, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts, read a prepared statement to answer faculty questions regarding the history of the original proposal to divide the Department of English.

"The general proposal to create the division originated in the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience," he said. "In

1985 a committee of the core faculty in rhetoric and composition from the English Department ... recommended the creation of what they termed the 'Writing Committee,' which was substantively the same kind of entity that has now been adopted."

"The specific proposal that [UT] President [William] Cunningham adopted was developed not by a committee but by me in consultation with Dr. [Gerhard] Fonken," King said.

The Faculty Senate is a component of the University Council, which is a campus governing body consisting of students and faculty members.

Cunningham was president of the University until Sept. 1 of this year, when he took the post of chancellor of the UT System. Fonken is the UT executive vice president and provost.

Joseph Kruppa, chairman of the Depart-

ment of English, said a formal committee should have been formed to explore the proposal before its approval.

"A lot of people resent the fact that it didn't have time to be considered in due academic process," he said. "People are apprehensive about changes rammed through without the proper discussion."

Kruppa said he expects more discussion and motions in future University Council and Faculty Senate meetings.

Howard Nirken, Students' Association president, said the division would benefit students in the end.

"The conflict on how the proposal was drawn up shouldn't stop its implementation," he said. "We don't want to lose the focus of why this was brought about by Dean King. The University needs to establish basic skills and this should not be caught up in a bureaucratic process."

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According to King, three of 144 freshman English sections were taught by faculty during the 1991 academic year and six of 155 sections were taught by faculty during the 1990 academic year. Courses not taught by faculty members were taught by graduate students working as assistant instructors.

"The teaching of writing has become a symbol of the dedication of a public university to its most basic educational missions, and in this we have a problem," King said.

King said that a committee was still being formed and that its role was not to establish guidelines and procedures for the new division, but to advise King.

"I anticipate having the division in place in time to assume responsibility for writing courses on June 1, 1993," King said.

Kruppa recommended English faculty members Evan Carton, Lester Faigley, Linda Ferreira-Buckley, Teresa Kelley, Jim Kinneavy and John Ruskiewicz to work in King's advisory committee.

Ruskiewicz, a professor of English, said the committee would probably address the concerns raised by the council.

"None of these issues are serious enough to prevent the successful implementation of the writing division," he said.

The proposal to implement the Division of Rhetoric and Composition was approved by Cunningham on his last day in office.