

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH MINUTES

February 8, 1980

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m., Mr. Moldenhauer presiding.

Mr. Moldenhauer encouraged the teaching staff to sign up soon for the teams created to study and develop proposals on various aspects of freshman composition. These teams will begin meeting shortly and will have a working life of two to three weeks, so there is some urgency in the matter. He then opened the floor to general discussion.

Mr. Simon asked about the prospects for recruitment for the 1980-1981 year. Mr. Moldenhauer explained that the Dean had recently expressed a willingness to open three to four slots in specific areas; faculty within these areas will be convened Monday and Tuesday to discuss how their perceptions of staffing needs correspond to registration results. Departmental meetings may be held in the near future to discuss recruitment further. Mr. Moldenhauer expects that such positions might be filled from the pool of candidates who applied before the fall 1979 deadline. Mr. Malof was concerned that at this late date the best candidates may be committed to other positions; wouldn't it be wise for the department to re-advertise? Mr. Moldenhauer suggested that the department had little choice in the matter; the next MLA Job Information List will be published in April or May and would be too late for departmental use. The department could advertise in The Chronicle of Higher Education, but he believed that most respondents to a new ad would already have applied, last fall, through the MLA Job List. Mr. Shay felt that faculty from other universities might be attracted by further advertising. Mr. Moldenhauer said this was true, but the Dean's position was that hiring should be at the beginning assistant professor level. Mr. Moldenhauer added that if qualified candidates do not exist for a particular slot, that slot will simply not be filled that year. The department is under no obligation to fill every vacancy each year.

Mr. Heinzelman was worried that the University Council Committee on Educational Requirements might do away with the University-wide English requirement without input from the English Department. Mr. Kinneavy assured him that the Committee would not make recommendations without input from the department; the Committee invites individual presentations, and Mr. Kinneavy felt that the Committee also desires input from the department as a whole. Mr. Moldenhauer said that Professor James Vick (Chairman of the Committee) had assured him that the department would be kept informed of the progress of the Committee.

There was discussion of the Dean's policy of denying leave-of-absence for tenure-seeking candidates when that leave defers the up-or-out decision by a second year. Mr. Moldenhauer thought the Dean's position was sensibly motivated; the Dean doesn't want junior faculty to stall the tenure decision, and this position has support at the Vice-Presidential level. However, Mr. Moldenhauer stressed that the Dean's policy would be affected by contingencies. For example, it seemed unlikely that he would deny a leave for a prestigious fellowship, even had that faculty member previously taken a semester's leave. Mr. Farmer noted that this Dean was willing to make exceptions to a prima facie rule, and Mr. Moldenhauer advised faculty members to continue to pursue their plans on an ad hoc basis.

Ms. Hart asked if it was possible to entice visitors at the senior level as a general practice. Mr. Moldenhauer said that the department has long encouraged visiting relationships outside of exchanges; salary for visiting faculty is generally easy to fund because it is taken from soft money, money temporarily freed by regular-faculty leaves. Mr. Moldenhauer listed the drawbacks of heavy dependence upon visiting faculty: (1) teaching capability is reduced because visitors are assigned lighter loads than regular faculty; (2) visiting faculty cannot contribute in a continuing way to departmental duties (for example, tutorials) because they are transient; and (3) commitment of visiting faculty is not as firm an agreement as a regular appointment and could conceivably be broken at the last minute. Mr. Moldenhauer further explained that the Dean has reservations in principle about temporary hiring of extremely expensive visitors. The Dean is concerned with economy in the student-teacher ratio area as well as the monetary area.

Ms. Haney-Peritz expressed concern that assistant professors are greatly overworked when asked to sit on departmental committees and therefore shy away from such tasks. She asked if it was possible for faculty members to get reduced assignments when accepting positions on the Executive Committee; if not, she suggested that the department may wish to discontinue the two assistant professor positions on the EC. Mr. Moldenhauer said that in the past "certain course relief" was given to EC members (for example, junior faculty would be assigned a 3-2 rather than a 3-3 course load); however, there is no provision in present workload regulations for Teaching Load Credits (TLCs) awarded for departmental governance. The administration assigns nine administrative TLC points for each department regardless of its size; between three and six of these must be taken by the Chairman, and up to three are taken by the Associate Chairman. This year the English Department was awarded six additional administrative points from the President's "piggy bank" of spare points; these six points were allotted to the advising centers for much-needed relief. The administration is very emphatic that the current TLC rules be enforced. Mr. Moldenhauer sympathized with the plight of junior faculty and acknowledged that the work of the EC can be a great burden to young faculty members who already have little enough time for scholarship and teaching. He suggested that the EC workload may be switched around to provide some relief but warned that too much of this could lead to disenfranchisement of the junior EC member.

Mr. Carton was concerned that other departments within the College had many faculty members with 2-2 course assignments. It seems that these faculty members teach a large enough section of students to get multiple credits for a course, and they use Teaching Assistants extensively to grade papers. Could English do this? Mr. Moldenhauer explained that this was true; if these large sections were broken into smaller sections, the faculty member would have to teach more sections per year. In some departments (for example, Government), large sections (150 or more) are an effective method of instruction. Furthermore, Teaching Assistants don't fall under the TLC regulations, and these departments feel that TAs should be used extensively. Whether this method of instruction could be employed in any part of the English curriculum would be a question that the department as a whole must answer.

Mr. Renwick was baffled about what to do when he has more conference students than he can handle in a single semester. Mr. Moldenhauer replied that this predicament occurs when students make last-minute decisions about conference courses, and although it can be rough on the faculty member, he should not disconnect the student after the semester has begun. One answer to this problem would be to require students to solicit conference supervisors at pre-registration.

Mr. Wimsatt wanted to know how much money there was in the budget for outside speakers and how that money was being used. Mr. Moldenhauer reported that the Dean had given \$1,500 to the department from Academic Development Funds to pay for visiting lecturers. Of this amount, \$500 had been previously committed. Other uses to which the fund had been put are: (1) \$100 to the HRC to repay an I.O.U.; (2) \$300 for a Renaissance lecture by Prof. Thomas Green of Yale (other funds were committed from elsewhere in the University, also); (3) \$250 for a lecture by Prof. R. V. Cassill of Brown University; (4) \$100 for Profs. Franco and Jameson in a criticism symposium; and (5) \$50 for Tillie Olsen. The department hopes to get a poet en route from the AMP meeting in San Antonio with the remaining funds. Recommendations for visiting lecturers are made by a departmental committee (Bowden, Ohle, Rebhorn); this committee scrutinized suggestions made by faculty members and made recommendations to the Chairman. Mr. Moldenhauer advised faculty members with further suggestions for visiting lecturers to get in touch with Prof. Rebhorn.

Maureen Walker presented a list of suggestions from non-teaching graduate students. These included (1) to maintain a list of non-teaching graduate students in the faculty lounge and to encourage the staff to take messages for them; (2) to maintain mailboxes for these students; and (3) to investigate the possibility of installing a PAX phone near the students' cubicles. Mr. Moldenhauer responded that the PAX phones were a very likely possibility and he would investigate the matter further. He added that he would not be averse to putting a list of these students in the faculty lounge, but he encouraged non-teaching graduate students to have expected messages directed to their homes or sent to them by mail.

Mr. Simon asked if it was possible to make accessible to the department books and articles published by current faculty. Mr. Moldenhauer said that these publications are not part of the personnel files and that economic restraints seem to have inhibited the tradition of giving complimentary copies to the Chairman. The publishers now give few, if any, free copies to authors. It is possible that the Dean might release Academic Development Funds to help faculty defray these costs; and, indeed, we have in the past bought books for the Atwood Library from these funds. The Atwood Library is a fine place for the display of such works. It currently contains publications from the 1930s-1960s; there might be a question as to whether shelf space is presently available in the library. Ms. Flowers suggested that the department issue a call to faculty members to volunteer copies of their publications and also urged the Chairman to ask the Dean for money for the purchase of books by the faculty. Mr. Moldenhauer stressed that responses to the first suggestion would have to be voluntary, but he agreed to float it and would ask the Dean for money. Mr. Malof suggested that the department could set up a depository (perhaps in Patt Newbill's office) for faculty publications that are loaned to the department rather than donated.

Mr. Moldenhauer discussed the reinstatement of the departmental newsletter. Many faculty members have cited the need for such a publication. The newsletter would be published fortnightly; it would include a two-week calendar of activities for the department and would showcase the work and interests of faculty and graduate students. It would be a modest newsletter that would not be too much of a burden on the faculty editor, who would serve not as an investigative reporter but as a "clearinghouse" for information given to him. Faculty members would rotate the editorial responsibilities. Mr. Moldenhauer stated that he would release a memorandum about the Newsletter sometime next week.

On this same note, Mr. Moldenhauer urged the faculty to lay aside false modesty and inform the UT News and Information Service of their professional activities on an ad hoc basis. It is important that others know what the English Department and its faculty are accomplishing. He suggested that faculty members could give information to Pam Wheeler for transmittal to the UT News Service.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.