



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
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To: Graduate Students and Faculty in English

From: W.O.S. Sutherland, Chairman

I have read the petition which a number of graduate students signed.

As soon as I received Dean King's letter informing me that graduate students would no longer be allowed to vote on faculty committees, I made an appointment with Beth Daniell and Mara Holt, both members of the Freshman English Policy Committee, to explain what had happened. We talked, and I told them that although I would not be able to allow AI's to vote on the committee that we would, in consultation with students, develop a method to assure that AI's in the course had genuine means of input, had ways of making their suggestions and ideas felt. Since I had only just received the letter from the Dean I had not had time to develop a method. I wanted them and the graduate students to know that I valued their counsel and also understood the usefulness of their having a line on their resumes indicating service as a "member" or "consultant" to the committee.

I informed both women because they are on the FEPC, and I wanted them to know that they would continue to serve until the end of the year, that no one would be dropped from the committee, and that their textbook selection process should go ahead.

Shortly after, Tom Reber came in, and I told him essentially the same. I suggested to him that although we had to change our procedures, this would make it necessary to look again at how students had influence in creating the course, and that we might develop ways for even more students to make their ideas felt. For a good while we have limited ourselves to those students named to the committee. I also told him I wanted all students who would like to be on the committee, or whatever we have, to have an opportunity to volunteer. I gave Tom Reber a copy of the Dean's letter, which made it clear that students were not to vote but should be consulted. I told him, as I had told the two members of the FEPC, that after consultation, I would find a way to give AI's and TA's a role that allowed their knowledge and ideas to be used in the courses they taught.

I'm sorry the students who signed the petition did not wait to make a judgment about the new method that will evolve, but I will continue to see if we can work out a satisfactory procedure. The FEPC is devising one now that may be acceptable. I and others on the faculty will welcome suggestions.