

# English department governance unsettled

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The Department of English has an acknowledged history of being a large department with serious problems. Its communication problems persisted Thursday with a scathing debate over a proposal to change departmental governance.

The English Department Governance Committee Thursday forwarded the first draft of a proposal calling for a number of alterations in the current policy-making system to faculty members. The proposal would officially disband the departmental senate and enhance the powers of senior faculty on the executive committee.

Only tenured faculty members will vote on whether to adopt the proposal. The proposal will be redrafted before a ballot is mailed out, as dictated in the Handbook of Operating Procedures. Under the proposal, only tenured or tenure-track faculty will be eligible to serve on the executive committee.

The measure would require five of the 14 executive committee members to be appointed by Chairman W.O. Sutherland. Six professors, two associate professors and one assistant professor would be elected.

The approximately 60 lecturers, who are hired on a year-to-year basis, are not allowed to participate in voting or to serve on the executive committee under University regulations, said associate professor Alan Gribben, chairman of the governance committee.

But Kurt Heinzelman, associate

professor, questioned the necessity of the changes.

"The real question is why do we need all this?" Heinzelman said. "How can you say we need all this? It eliminates that power from the department and vests it in a small appointed group. It eliminates fully half of the staff.

"The only people in the department are tenured and tenure-track?" he said. "So far as I know we still have lecturers."

The executive committee will continue its function of handling the day-to-day business of the department, but under the proposal its makeup would be weighted more toward full professors. The committee functions include salary and promotion recommendations, and recruitment.

The senate, which served as a forum of elected representatives of all ranks within the department, began three years ago after a review of governance suggested it might help solve the department's problems.

Until that time, tape recordings of the heated departmental meetings were made to ensure that faculty members did not slander each other, Gribben said. The senate "experiment" was intended to allow more to be accomplished with fewer voices, he said, but only added to "a never-ending chain of vetoes."

The senate was effectively shut down in September when Dean Robert King of the College of Liberal Arts placed a ban on meetings within the department. Thursday's meeting was a special dispensation, Gribben said.