



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

MEMORANDUM
7 October 1980
Page 2

Department of English
PAR 110
(512) 471-4991

MEMORANDUM

To: Voting Members of the Department of English

From: Governance Committee

Date: October 7, 1980

Recommendations for a Departmental "Constitution"

Background of the Governance Committee

Three years ago it became clear that the Executive Committee Constitution required revision. A committee was set up to draft suggestions for changes, and in November 1978 the revised EC Constitution was approved by the Department. It was then suggested that it might be useful to codify other areas of departmental operations in a larger document (a departmental Constitution) of which the EC Constitution would become one part. The present Governance Committee was established to determine whether a departmental Constitution would indeed be useful, and if so, what should be included in it.

Methods of the Governance Committee

Mindful that various departmental operations had been established informally through tradition, and that traditions can be misinterpreted or forgotten, we began by collecting examples of problem areas where the lines of authority or modes of operation were unclear. Our aim was to identify traditional operations that might benefit from being codified in a departmental Constitution and to suggest areas where it would be helpful to formalize procedures. After identifying some of the main problem areas, we drafted a set of recommendations that was first discussed by the Department on April 18, 1980. We now present our revised report to the Department (exclusive of our already distributed recommendations for revision of the EC Constitution) for the purpose of getting your opinion on

- (1) whether a departmental Constitution would in fact be useful,
- (2) which of our recommendations might be included in such a

MEMORANDUM
7 October 1980
Page 2

document and which should not be included, (3) which portions of our recommendations should be revised, and (4) which additional areas should eventually be included in a Constitution.

Status of the Present Report

As a first step toward drafting a departmental Constitution, we are hereby submitting, for your discussion, modification, or approval, a draft formulation of (1) conduct of departmental meetings, (2) departmental officers, and (3) standing committees. The entire set of recommendations is subject to departmental discussion and revision, and the passages marked ** in the margin and enclosed in double brackets are meant to call attention to specific changes or unresolved questions where your advice is especially solicited.

Attachment: Governance Committee Report
(October 1980)

Discussion of the GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT will follow discussion of the EC RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE DEPARTMENT MEETING ON Fri., Oct. 10.

**The University of Texas at Austin
Department of English**

**Governance Committee Report
October 1980**

Department of English Organization

I. Departmental Meetings

II. Departmental Officers

III. Standing Committees

**IV. Recommendations for Revisions
in the EC Constitution [already
distributed]**

V. Glossary [forthcoming]

**Albert Goldbarth
Kurt Heinzelman
Joe Malof
Chuck Rossman
Jim Shay
Gayatri Spivak
Alan Friedman, Chair**

I. Departmental Meetings

(A) The Department, meeting in plenary session, shall determine all matters of general policy in the areas of recruitment, academic programs and quality, and curriculum. All proposals of substantive import shall be brought to the Department for consideration, except that in cases where final departmental consideration is reserved for other bodies within the Department, such proposals shall be presented to the Department for information. At its meetings, the Department shall hear and act upon reports from its officers and standing committees; determine policy; consider all items on its agenda, and take other appropriate action.

(B) The departmental teaching staff is comprised of "regular" (i.e., tenured and tenure-track) and temporary faculty (whether full-time, part-time, or holding joint appointments with other departments), visitors of the professorial ranks, lecturers, ** assistant instructors, and teaching assistants. [[Voting members of the Department shall include all faculty of the rank of Instructor and above who hold a full-time University appointment and are at least 50% in the Department's budget.]]

(C) Instructors on temporary appointment and Assistant Instructors, full-time or part-time, shall have the right to vote in departmental meetings on all and only those questions which directly concern the rights and responsibilities of their ranks or those courses on whose committees their ranks are represented. The Chair of the Department shall determine what those questions are, but his ruling may be appealed to a vote of the Department itself, excluding part-time Instructors and part-time Assistant Instructors. It is specifically provided that Instructors on temporary appointment and Assistant Instructors, full-time or part-time, shall have the right to vote on any proposal to introduce a new course to which as many as six members from their ranks are likely to be assigned. The Chair of the Department shall estimate such probabilities, but his ruling may be appealed to a vote of the Department itself, excluding part-time Instructors and part-time Assistant Instructors. (Comment: adapted from "TA [AI] Rights and Responsibilities.")

(D) The Department shall meet in plenary session at least twice each semester, preferably at a time when all voting members shall be free of class assignments (e.g., Friday 12-1 p.m.). Notices of meetings shall be placed in departmental mailboxes at least five working days in advance of meetings. Notices shall include a preliminary agenda, subject to revision if additional items are submitted as per the next paragraph. Departmental meetings, so far as the Chair deems practical, shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order and shall follow the agenda ** given below. A quorum shall consist of [(one-fourth)] of the

voting faculty (the number to be calculated and announced to the Department by the Chair at the beginning of each semester); this is also the minimum number of voting members needed for a meeting to begin and conduct its business. A quorum count request shall be in order at any time during a meeting except when someone is speaking. Debate may continue in the absence of a quorum until someone raises the point while no one is speaking. ****** [[A mail ballot of the voting faculty shall be conducted whenever a majority of voting members convened for the purpose of a departmental meeting deem a mail ballot appropriate for a particular issue.]]

(E) Any voting member may place an item on the agenda by submitting it, at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting time, to the Chair's secretary. Should a departmental meeting fail to complete its agenda, it shall resume the following week at the same hour unless prevented by a conflict, in which case it shall resume as soon as feasible. Additional meetings (over and above the required two per semester) may be set by the Chair, or by five of the elected members of the Executive Committee, or by ten members of the voting faculty.

Agenda of Departmental Meetings

(The Agenda may be modified according to Robert's Rules of Order)

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Reports of Officers
3. Discussion of Reports of Officers
4. Old Business
5. Reports of Standing Committees
6. Discussion of Reports of Standing Committees
7. New Business
8. Questions to the Chair
9. Adjournment

II. Departmental Officers

All appointments by the Chair are made with the advice of the EC.

CHAIR: as per HOP 2.103, p. 33, appointed after due faculty consultation for one-year terms by the Dean of Liberal Arts; review before completion of fourth year as per HOP.

ASSOCIATE CHAIR: appointed annually by Chair to assist in administrative duties of the Department; coordinates all course assignments for faculty.

CHAIR, GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE: elected by the graduate faculty.

GRADUATE ADVISER: appointed by Graduate Dean on recommendation of graduate faculty of Department.

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISER: appointed by Chair; ex officio member of Undergraduate Course Committee.

DIRECTOR, FRESHMAN ENGLISH: appointed by Chair with approval of the Dean of Liberal Arts; chairs Freshman English Policy Committee.

DIRECTOR, SOPHOMORE ENGLISH: appointed by Chair; chairs Sophomore English Committee.

DIRECTOR, ENGLISH FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS: appointed by Chair.

DIRECTOR, HONORS PROGRAM: appointed by Chair; directs Honors Program and chairs Honors Committee.

**** DIRECTOR, CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM:** appointed by Chair, directs Creative Writing Program and chairs Creative Writing Committee.

**** OMBUDSMAN:** elected by voting members of the Department from a list of three candidates determined by Chair.

**** ELECTIONS OFFICER:** appointed by Chair from a list of candidates submitted by Governance Committee.

**** PARLIAMENTARIAN:** appointed by Chair.

III. Standing Committees

Much of the Department's business is delegated to its standing committees. Tenured and tenure-track members of the Department are expected to serve on such committees as part of their duties as "regular" faculty. Every effort will be made to minimize the committee responsibilities of faculty in their first year of teaching at UT, of those in their fifth year of probationary service before the tenure decision, and of those in their final year before retirement. Where possible, Teaching Load Credit points will be allocated to those who perform particularly onerous committee tasks.

In the case of committees that oversee courses, faculty members will be selected to represent the broadest possible variety of attitudes toward content and instructional methods. ** [[All course committees, regardless of their constitution, are responsible to the Department as a whole.]] Whenever as many as one-fourth of the sections of any course are taught by T.A.'s and A.I.'s, the Association of Graduate Students in English shall elect a proportion of the membership of the committee for that course as large as the proportion of its sections which T.A.'s and A.I.'s teach, but in no case more than one-half of that committee's membership. One-half the membership of the committee shall be defined by subtracting one (the committee's chair) from the number of members of regular faculty appointed to that committee. When strictly proportional representation on the committee would require a fraction of a member, the nearest whole number of members shall be elected. Elections of T.A. and A.I. representatives on course committees will be held in accordance with the portion(s) of the AGSE Constitution concerning elections. Only T.A.'s and A.I.'s who are teaching a certain course or who have taught that course within the past year and who have at least one term's satisfactory service in the Department are eligible to serve on a course committee. Responsibility for arranging and conducting elections of representatives to course committees shall lie with AGSE. For adjudicating such differences as may arise, responsibility shall lie with the TAC. (Comment: adapted from "TA [AI] Rights and Responsibilities.")

Executive Committee (EC): "The Executive Committee shall serve in lieu of a Budget Council as the committee in charge of recruitment, promotions, terminations, and faculty salaries." (EC Constitution; see also HOP, pp. 34-35.)

Undergraduate Course Committee: Appointed by Chair to recommend to the Department, each semester, course offerings and faculty course assignments. Assesses proposals for one-semester "topic courses." Makes proposals to the Department for long-range changes in curriculum (such as modified course descriptions, the creation or cancellation of courses, policy governing cross-listing with other departments, etc.).

** Freshman English Committee: Members appointed by Chair. Advises Director of Freshman English. Provides sample syllabus for all faculty teaching English for the first time, and provides continuing supervision of A.I.'s and T.A.'s.

** Sophomore and Upper-Division Expository Writing: Members appointed by Chair. Provides syllabus and selects textbooks for sophomore writing courses (E310, Expository Writing; E317, Technical Writing). Coordinates upper-division expository writing courses (E325M, Advanced Expository Writing; E368M, Editorial Procedures; E379C, Topics in Composition).

Sophomore Literature Committee: Members appointed by Chair. Advises Sophomore Director. Coordinates and selects textbooks for E314K (Introduction to Literature I), coordinates E312 sequence (Masterworks of English Literature), and approves variants of E314L (Introduction to Literature II).

[We propose that a single Sophomore English Committee be created to combine the functions of the two current sophomore committees (Sophomore and Upper-Division Expository Writing and Sophomore Literature Committee).

Reasons: A single sophomore committee on the analogy of the single freshman English committee would regularize procedures. Upper-division writing courses are already under the purview of the UCC.]

Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors Committee: Faculty members appointed by Chair in consultation with the EC. AGSE annually elects two A.I.'s who serve in an advisory capacity without vote.

English for Foreign Students: Members appointed by Chair. Advises Director and coordinates "Q" courses.

** Governance Committee: Members appointed by Chair. Scrutinizes the structure and functioning of the Department, including conducting the required review of the EC every three years. Makes recommendations for appropriate changes to the Department.

Recruitment Committee: Appointed by Chair. Implements recruitment policy determined by the Department in the Fall semester and makes recommendations to the EC.

Honors Committee: Appointed by Chair. Advises the Director of the Honors Program, helps coordinate and administer the Program, assists the Director in maintaining the Program's high degree of excellence.

Creative Writing Committee: Members appointed by Chair; chaired by Director of Creative Writing Program. Advises the Director of the Creative Writing Program and aids in coordinating the Program's offerings.

** Curriculum and Planning Committee: [Comment: All three versions of this proposal are designed to create a committee that would have responsibility in the following areas:

- a. recruitment;
- b. long-range planning;
- c. recommending to Chair faculty for appointment as departmental officers and members of standing committees;
- d. coordination of departmental Teaching Load Credits;
- e. providing for exchange of ideas and information among departmental officers, standing and ad hoc committees, and Chair;
- f. items of business that arise from time to time that remain outside the purview of the EC;
- g. "quality of life."

In the day-to-day workings of the Department, a hiatus exists between the responsibilities and the authorities of the Chair, the EC, the standing committees of the Department, and the Department itself. We need a departmental instrument for investigating long-range planning and for analyzing questions that are pedagogically or intellectually, rather than structurally, complex. These matters cannot effectively be handled in an ad hoc manner as they (a) become unavoidable or (b) become a particularly pressing concern of a Chair or a group of faculty members. We need a systematic way to address both very large and very small issues that cannot effectively be discussed in "town-meeting" sessions.

The question of governance at issue here is: (a) whether a pure democracy is necessary or advantageous for a department of this size; (b) whether a more representative form of governance is desirable and consistent with the Department's traditions; (c) whether a new committee entrusted with any kind of broad authority would be a further taxing of departmental service demands; and (d) whether such a committee would or could have effective authority in any case.

All three alternative proposals recognize that the seven items we list above are at present grey areas, that they fall somewhere between currently designated lines of authority and governance, that they are often troublesome, and that they leave the Department vulnerable and elephantine. None of these proposals has originated within the governance committee itself.

Each proposal advocates the establishment of a "super"-committee constituted in roughly the same way. Each has roughly the same function. Each addresses the same issues. The only

significant difference between them is in the area of provenance and accountability: i.e., to whom does the committee report, how is its authority constituted, what does the committee imply about the way our (departmental) lives are governed and about the way this Department sees itself. If provenance and accountability are the only significant differences between the three proposals, that "only" is still profoundly important. For the sake of comparison, the status quo is described first, then the three proposals. The following descriptions are not meant to be detailed or final but to sketch in broad strokes the three different forms of departmental governance that are available to the Department, should it wish to alter the status quo.]

A. Status Quo

"The Department as a whole, in its regular meetings, shall set its general policies, including general policy on recruitment and appointment..." [EC Constitution, IV. (A)].

B. Advisory Committee (Cabinet)

Membership: Departmental Officers (excluding EC members)

Provenance and Accountability: To advise the Chair, possibly with some decision-making functions, since the cabinet would be made up of Departmental Officers who have the responsibilities for important areas; to work with the EC when possible.
[This committee already exists although it meets irregularly--once last year--and is wholly advisory. This proposal would make it formal and permanent, and grant it policy-making authority.]

C. Coordination and Planning Committee

Membership: Department Chair (without vote)
Major Officers of the Department (with vote)
6 elected at-large (2 Professors, 2 Associate Professors, 2 Assistant Professors)

Provenance and Accountability: Coordination of all departmental activities including recruitment but excepting those budgetary matters specifically relegated to the EC. Reports directly to the Department as a whole [[for its information? for its approval?]]. This Committee on Committees would be the Department's most expansive, its overseeing, committee, the one that would most fully apprise the Department of its own workings.

**

D. Departmental Committee (Senate)

Membership: Chair (without vote, except in case of a tie)
Major Officers of the Department (without vote)
14 elected at-large (4 Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 3 Assistant Professors, 2 Instructors, 2 Graduate Students)
[In addition, 2 EC members would be elected from the DC itself; the rest from the Department at-large.]

Provenance and Accountability: This Committee represents the Department and acts in the name of the Department. All members of the Department may attend all meetings and participate in them. All actions of the DC would be made public to the Department and would be final unless there is a declaration of non-support from the Department as a whole (10 votes on major issues, 20 on minor ones). In other words, any vote or action taken by the DC can be halted. Should this occur, the DC would reconvene at once or the Department itself would meet in plenary session to address the issue.

[This is part of the Governance Committee's Report, October 1980.]

V. Glossary

Academic Titles pertinent to the English Department, as defined in The Regents' Rules:

- (a) "Academic titles which may be used but in which tenure cannot be held are":

Instructor. "This title denotes a probationary appointment as a member of an institutional faculty. During the period of probationary appointment to this rank the scholarly competence, teaching performance, and professional promise of the candidate will be evaluated."

Lecturer. "This title is used for persons whose salary rates are comparable to those with tenure positions but who for various reasons should not be given formal tenure appointments."

Assistant Instructor or Teaching Associate. "These titles may be used interchangeably for (1) certain graduate students teaching on a part-time or full-time basis who are in the last phase of their doctoral programs and who are unconditionally enrolled in graduate study, or (2) persons who, because of the nature of their duties, such as in a laboratory or a hospital, do not qualify for one of the usual academic titles and do not hold the academic training or professional distinction usually required for attaining tenure positions."

Teaching Assistant. "This title usually applies to graduate students who are teachers and who are employed on a part-time basis. The only other teaching titles for graduate students are Teaching Associate and Assistant Instructor."

Visiting Professor, Visiting Associate Professor, and Visiting Assistant Professor. "These titles are used only for temporary appointments of persons either visiting from other institutions where they hold similar ranks or who are brought to the University on a trial basis. Such appointments are limited to two years."

- (b) Other ranks:

Professor, undefined
Associate Professor, undefined
Assistant Professor, undefined

Annual Report: The form, supplied annually by the University, for the listing of faculty members' professional activities of the preceding year. It is used by the University administration, and so differs from the Annual Report Supplement, which is used only for EC salary and/or promotion deliberations. (See: EC Constitution, IV C.)

Annual Report Supplement: A solicitation by the EC for faculty to clarify, elaborate on, and give context for items in the Annual Report, and to list activities not included in the Annual Report.

Committees: "Ordinary committees are of two types - standing committees (which have a continuing existence) and special committees (which go out of existence as soon as they have completed a specified task)."

"Standing committees are constituted to perform a continuing function. . . . A standing committee of a society reports to the assembly of that society. . . . Such a committee is generally required to report at least once a year . . . on its activities and everything referred to it during the year. When a standing committee submits such a report at the conclusion of its members' term, the committee is not discharged from further consideration of referred matters on which it reports partially at that time, unless the assembly so votes; thus such matters normally go over to the new committee. The members of the old committee continue their duties until their successors are chosen." (For a list of major Department standing committees see: Department of English Organization, III., "Standing Committees.")

"A special (select, or ad hoc) committee is a committee appointed, as the need arises, to carry out a specified task, at the completion of which - that is, on presentation of its final report to the assembly - it automatically ceases to exist. A special committee should not be appointed to perform a task that falls within the assigned functions of an existing standing committee. . . . [A special committee] ceases to exist as soon as the assembly receives its final report." (Quoted material taken from Robert's Rules of Order.)

In addition, the Chair may appoint other committees in order to delegate responsibilities nominally assigned to him or her.

Counted Probationary Service: see Tenure.

Executive Committee Reporter: A member of the Executive Committee annually assigned to oversee the presentation to the EC of specific faculty members' documentations pertinent to salary and promotion deliberations (e.g., the Annual Report). Every member of the Department liable for salary, promotion, or termination deliberations has an EC reporter. (See also EC Constitution, IV C.)

Glossary, p. 3

Plenary: Strictly, used to describe a meeting "fully attended by all eligible to take part." More loosely, describes the current "town-hall" style of Department meetings in which all voting members of the faculty are eligible to attend and initiate, discuss, and vote on agenda items.

Pool Staff: That body of temporary faculty at the Instructor or Assistant Professor ranks hired usually for the staffing of the Department's lower-division composition and literature sections which exceed the staff capability of the regular faculty and AIs.

Probationary Service: See Tenure.

Regular Faculty: Tenured and tenure-track members of the Department.

Temporary Faculty: Members of the Department hired on short-term contracts, usually for one semester or academic year.

Tenure:

(a) Definition of Tenure:

"Tenure denotes a status of continuing appointment as a member of the faculty" (RR III.6.2).

"Termination by an institution of the employment of a faculty member who has been granted tenure . . . will be only for good cause shown" (RR III.6.3). For examples of "good cause," and of the procedures to be followed in revoking tenure, see RR III.6.3-III.6.7.

(b) "Counted Probationary Service" toward the acquisition of tenure:

The number of years of full-time academic service before a tenure decision must be made. A year that includes a semester's leave of absence is not counted.

"The maximum probationary time that may be served as an assistant professor is seven years. If the individual has held the rank of instructor, the maximum time that may be served in any combination in rank of instructor and assistant professor shall not exceed seven years" (HOP p. 46).

"Only full-time service in the academic ranks of instructor or assistant professor, or any combination thereof, shall be counted toward fulfillment of a required probationary period related to the acquisition of tenure. Periods during which a faculty member is on leave of absence . . . or periods of prior academic service at any institution other than The University of Texas at Austin shall not be counted as service related to the acquisition of tenure" (HOP pp. 45-46).

"For purposes of calculating the period of probationary service, an 'academic year' shall be the period from September 1st through the following August 31st. . . . One year of probationary service is accrued by at least nine months full-time academic service during any academic year. A faculty member shall be considered to be on full-time academic service if he is in full compliance with regental standards pertaining to minimum faculty workloads" (RR III.6.24).

The President's tenure decision is usually made around the middle of the candidate's sixth year. The EC recommendation is sent to the Dean near the beginning of that year. Therefore, the candidate's dossier is usually assembled in the spring of the candidate's fifth year and the following summer.

Tenure-track: Those non-tenured faculty whose appointments are understood by the EC as leading to a tenure decision.

Third-year Review of the EC: Review of the structure and functioning of the EC; conducted by the Governance Committee every third year in order to make recommendations on whether the EC should be continued, discontinued, or modified; recommendations submitted to the Department as a whole for deliberation and action.

Voting Faculty: "A faculty member shall have voting status in a department on departmental matters if:

(a) He holds a full-time appointment in that department as detailed in the budget and holds the rank of Professor, Visiting Professor, Associate Professor, Visiting Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor or Lecturer.

OR

(b) He holds joint appointments in two or more departments, the sum of which corresponds to full-time appointment in the University, and holds any of the ranks listed above." (Quoted from HOP, pp. 27-28.)

"Who Does What": A reference listing, issued annually, of English Department classified personnel. (Other sources of information: the Department Newsletter, issued regularly throughout the academic year; The Regents' Rules (RR) and The Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP), compilations of, respectively, UT System and University rules of governance and organization, available in Parlin 110 for use on the premises; and the University General Information bulletin and Information Handbook for Faculty, issued to incoming faculty members and otherwise available from Official Publications, Main Building IE.) ****** [[One staff person should be officially designated in "Who Does What" to be responsible for and responsive to faculty needs not directly related to teaching activities.]]