

New philosophy chair joins multicultural debate

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The newly appointed chairman of the Department of Philosophy Thursday night called parts of the Faculty Senate's recent multiculturalism recommendations a "recipe for racism."

Daniel Bonevac spoke to a group of about 35 people in the Texas Union Governors' Room about multicultural issues as part of the *University Review's* lecture series.

Bonevac replaced Paul Woodruff, who headed the Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Committee on Multiculturalism, as chairman of the Department of Philosophy on Sept. 1. Bonevac was one of two faculty members invited

by the committee to speak against multiculturalism.

Although he said recent recommendations were better than last year's English 306 plans, Bonevac called non-curricular recommendations by the committee and a student union for minority students "a disturbing reinstating of segregation."

"This is a very dangerous road to start traveling," Bonevac said.

Bonevac made distinctions between "liberal" and "illiberal" views of multiculturalism, saying some "politically correct" agendas tended to stifle open debate. He cited the recent removal of James Duban as chairman of the English Honors Committee as one such case.

"Suspiciously this happened one day after

he spoke out against multiculturalism," Bonevac said. "I'm waiting to see what will happen to me."

Bonevac also criticized certain elements of the academic recommendations of the committee, including the wording of a proposal that UT students be required to take one course about a "non-dominant" American culture.

"The world can't be divided simply into the oppressed and the oppressors," Bonevac said. "What do you say about a white working for a black — is the oppressor working for the oppressed?"

Proposals that students be required to take a course on a "non-Western" world culture are also flawed, Bonevac said.

"Isn't Western culture important enough to be required?" he said. "To be multicultural, you first have to know about one culture."

Bonevac also said students would resent being required to take the courses, especially for students whose degree plans already allow for few electives.

"Nobody likes being required to take more courses," he said.

On more general issues of multiculturalism, Bonevac said multicultural proposals that are politically charged are often "wolves dressed in sheep's clothing," and that a distinction must be made between "liberals" who truly believe in the ideals of multiculturalism and "illiberals that seek to reorganize curriculum for politically overt motives."