

Council questions new English division plans

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Daily Texan Staff

Members of the University Council on Monday questioned the amount of faculty involvement and input in the recently approved division of the Department of English.

John Durbin, math professor and member of the University Council, asked why the proposal — which created a separate Division of Rhetoric and Composition — was not presented to the council for approval.

"I take it as an essential principle of sound university governance that the faculty should have primary responsibility for the curriculum, the choice of new faculty and appointments to tenure," he said.

"The proposal raises questions about the degree to which this principle is being followed in establishing the new division," said Durbin, who is chairman of the committee of counsel on Academic Freedom and Responsibility.

Gerhard Fonken, UT executive vice president and provost, conducted the UC meeting in the absence of interim President William Livingston. Fonken said questions about the division should be addressed to Robert King, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

The University Council is a governing body consisting of students and faculty members.

"Many questions have not yet been answered," Fonken said. "The proposal itself is mostly conceptual at this point."

Fonken said the use of a separate division to administer certain courses was not new and quoted a May 1985

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letter to King from a group of senior English Department faculty members proposing a division similar to the approved proposal.

"This body would consist of a director appointed by and reporting to the dean of liberal arts, and a coordinator of upper-division writing and a coordinator of lower-division writing," the letter states.

Waneen Spirduso, professor of kinesiology and health education, said the council needed "formal documentation" to form opinions of the division.

"It would be helpful to have some type of list of concerns that people have expressed," Spirduso said. "It would be helpful to have something documented on both sides of this issue that we can look at and discuss rationally."

Howard Nirken, Students' Association president, said the division was necessary for students.

"This is good for the students and the faculty," he said. "In education, micromanagement is better because it gives the student someone to talk to without going through all the bureaucracy."

Joseph Kruppa, chairman of the Department of English, said the division was not necessary.

"There are other ways to achieve this end," he said. "There are details missing from the proposal. [King] wants to work with the department on this. There is a lot of spadework to be done."



Alicia Wagner/Daily Texan Staff

Wait your turn

Terri Brown, who works for the Texas Union, talked to a passerby as she sifted through posters at a poster sale in the lobby of the Union Monday afternoon. She

was looking for artwork to decorate her new home. She had already found four posters that she liked. The Texas Union has several poster sales a year.