

# Motivations questioned in re-formation of AAUP

Eric Feistel

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Some UT faculty and students fear political motivations are the basis for the recent re-establishment of the local chapter of a national organization of college professors.

John Ruskiewicz, an associate professor of English, said the motive behind the re-formation of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors is "likely political."

"I intend to join," Ruskiewicz said. "I don't think those people should be the only members, and I don't think they can restrict membership to people of certain political views."

According to the AAUP charter, the organization is politically neutral and holds academic freedom and the right of faculty to decide their own mode of governance as fundamental principles.

A UT professor and former chairman of

AAUP said the organizers neglected to invite him to attend the chapter's organizational meeting last Wednesday.

The professor, who did not want to be identified, said he did not want to be associated with AAUP because "I don't like the idea of the chapter being organized for political reasons."

Organizers of the UT chapter are re-establishing the group because of debate over political correctness, said Kurt Heinzelman, associate professor of English and acting president of the chapter.

Renewed national interest in AAUP is one of the primary factors that led to the re-establishment of the local chapter which formerly disbanded in 1986, Heinzelman said.

Another concern Heinzelman noted was the dissolving of the executive committee as the governing body of the Department of English by Robert King, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts. The executive committee was replaced by a budget council

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— UT professor and former AAUP chairman

comprised only of full professors, rather than elected departmental faculty.

"We've wanted to get AAUP back at the preeminent university in the state of Texas for years now," Heinzelman said.

Larry Carver, associate dean of liberal arts, views the reorganization of the AAUP chapter as "very serious."

"I'm sure they are very concerned about [English] departmental governance," Carver said, adding that the formation of any group is "fine and good."

"I just don't think the national AAUP fosters a particular political view," Carver said.

Although Heinzelman said the AAUP "has nothing to do with curriculum," he said the AAUP would be a useful tool in preserving the rights of faculty in disputes such as the one over the new English 306 proposal in the spring of 1990.

Heinzelman explained that although the new E306 proposal — which would have given the course a multicultural angle — had nearly unanimous support from the faculty, it "was stopped by a couple of administrators."

He added he did not know why there has been intense criticism about teaching non-Western political ideologies in English classes.

"I wish I knew," Heinzelman said. "It probably comes from patriotic hysteria, misunderstanding and grandstanding."

Anthony Wilkins, chairman of Students Advocating Valid Education, said his organization "would support multiculturalism as long as it was not politically charged."

"Their [proponents of multiculturalism] problem is that they see everything in terms of a racist, sexist and dominant culture, and they fail to see what is real," Wilkins said. "Who decides what is a non-dominant culture?"

Wilkins said many advocates of adding "political ideologies of Third World and non-Western cultures" to English curriculum fail to look at the "literary value" of a work. "They don't look at writing for writing's sake."

Heinzelman said the allegations of political motivations for teaching non-Western ideologies is "absurd," explaining that all curriculum at the University is determined by such motives.

Heinzelman said the idea was "not to drop" Western literature, such as the Greek classics, but to add non-Western literature.

Heinzelman said formal elections for officers in the new chapter will be held next spring.