

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH MINUTES

February 29, 1980

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m., Mr. Moldenhauer presiding.

Mr. Moldenhauer began the meeting on recruitment policy for the 1980-1981 hiring season by briefly describing the context of recruitment policy. During the past six or seven years the policy of the Department has been to find the best candidates regardless of fields. Within this broad policy certain restrictions have been observed in practice: the Department, for example, would not hire two specialists with very similar research interests during a given recruitment season, and certain identifiable staffing needs would be met in particular fields. The policy of general hiring changed during the Fall of 1978 when "slot recruitment" (or the hiring of faculty members for a specific field) was introduced into departmental discussion with respect to composition staffing. The Department thus had already begun to move unilaterally in this direction when the Dean recently expressed his willingness to recruit only for specific slots in the current academic year. Several members of the Executive Committee have expressed their desire for the Department to address the issue of general vs. slot recruitment. Mr. Moldenhauer expected several meetings this semester to be devoted to departmental recruitment policy. In response to a question, Mr. Moldenhauer estimated that the Department will have 4-4 1/2 fewer FTEs of regular faculty at the end of the 1979-1980 academic year than at the end of 1978-1979.

Mr. Wadlington described a "steady state" policy that he believed the Department should formulate; this policy would allow the Department to compensate for normal attrition. Mr. Rossman suggested a more aggressive departmental recruitment policy. He believed the Department should act decisively to shape its own future rather than to react to pressures from the Dean and elsewhere within the University. Alluding to attractive candidates already on the scene in temporary and visiting faculty posts, Mr. Rossman moved that the Department "undertake to recruit up to five highly qualified Assistant Professors for appointments beginning in Fall, 1980." The motion was seconded by Mr. Slatin. Ms. Spivak spoke in favor of the motion; she contended that the Dean would view such a statement as a show of strength by the English Department. The idea of slots geared to student demand is the result of patterns established by the outside world, she said. The English Department would be "trashing the humanities" if it allowed the outside world to dictate its needs, obligations, and focus. It is the obligation of English Departments to change the pattern of those needs; we should be a literature department primarily and should not be typecast into a "service role." Ms. Spivak believed that the English faculty should join together and collectively ask the Dean to look to excellence as well as to slots when developing recruitment policy. The Dean, she felt, welcomes a strong department.

Mr. Moldenhauer reminded the group that last fall vigorous departmental discussion of recruitment was reflected in the Minutes; the Dean read those Minutes before he ordered the moratorium on recruitment. In January Mr. Moldenhauer reminded the Dean of faculty the Department would be losing, and the Dean responded by saying, "I will approve limited recruitment in the following areas...and you can have x amount of dollars for a recruitment search." Mr. Wadlington responded that the Dean's moratorium was not meant to stifle discussion on recruitment; rather, the Dean wanted the English Department to begin serious discussions of what it wants to do and how it plans to go about realizing its objectives. The Department needs to develop a justifiable and coherent policy on recruitment that expresses serious efforts to deal with the staffing of freshman composition. The Dean's concern, Mr. Wadlington concluded, is that we use our regular staff efficiently.

Mr. Byerman questioned whether the efficient use of present faculty would provide adequate coverage of both lower-division courses and specialized fields. Mr. Moldenhauer replied that this depended upon one's definition of efficiency. Although it may not seem efficient to use a highly-trained specialist to teach freshman composition, even the garden variety Plan I student benefits from a well-trained mind; to some this would be efficiency. Regular recruitment practice plus the AI system has not been sufficient to staff all of the English Department's courses, and temporary instructors have been hired to staff many lower-division courses.

Mr. Gordon believed that it was almost impossible to talk to Dean King about quality because he's interested only in quantity. Mr. Rossman agreed that the Dean thinks quantitatively but believed he's of two minds: on the one hand he wants a quiet, efficient machine that makes as little trouble as possible; on the other hand, he wants an aggressive department that he can showcase to his superiors. The Department should simply take care to appeal to his second, more aggressive mind.

Mr. Friedman reported that the University Council Committee on General Education Requirements will soon recommend changes in the University-wide English requirement in something like the following form: (1) 12 hours of writing courses beyond E306; (2) 6 of these 12 hours must be at the upper-division level; (3) some or all of these 12 hours may have literary content, so that the literature requirement (6 hours) and some of the writing requirement could be satisfied simultaneously; and (4) class size in the lower-division writing course should be limited to 20 students. Mr. Friedman explained that any or all of the 12 hours required might be taken at the upper-division level and that any or all of these 12 hours may be taken in courses in other departments (the English Department would certify these courses to insure they had a substantial writing component). In response to a question, Mr. Friedman said that this recommendation would not be tied to a different admissions policy. He added that the proposed requirement of 12 hours beyond E306 was a de facto judgment that E306 was not deserving of college credit and, therefore, more or less skirts the issue of establishing a remedial course. Currently, he said, 18% of University students place out of E306; the Department may feel that this figure is too low. Mr. Heinzelman said that because courses in other departments might satisfy any or all of the 12 hour requirement it doesn't necessarily follow that the English faculty would need to be enlarged. Mr. Friedman agreed, and he suggested that although

the English Department would have the bulk of students, its literature courses would be competing with writing courses in other departments. Few courses involving heavy student writing exist in other departments, he said in response to another question; the Committee would probably urge the development of such courses.

Mr. Moldenhauer reminded the Department that the teams for freshman composition proposals were meeting this week and next and urged interested faculty members to submit suggestions directly to the teams.

Mr. Malof argued, with reference to Mr. Rossman's suggestion that current non-tenure track faculty be considered while the opportunity remained, that the Department is bound to recruit through a national search. A national effort is expensive. Even if the Department voted unanimously in favor of Mr. Rossman's motion concerning recruitment this year, he reasoned, the Dean must be persuaded to look for the very best people regardless of slots and to release money for such a search. Ms. Spivak contended that Mr. Rossman's motion would at least allow the Department to make a strong, coherent statement to the Dean. Mr. Wadlington advised that the Department should present a recruitment policy statement as part of a package; the package should include a philosophical argument about recruiting coupled with a notion of how the English Department intends to reform lower-division staffing. Ms. Spivak agreed that the Department should reach a consensus through in-house discussions, then clean up its act and take a proposal to the Dean; today's meeting, she said, is the place for such in-house discussions.

Mr. Moldenhauer expressed his belief that the Dean's confidence in the Department is directly tied to the Department's ability to reach agreement on important matters and to follow through in practice. The willingness of regular faculty in fact as well as principle to teach freshman composition does much to increase the Dean's respect for the Department; the upper administration is also pleased.

Mr. Malof wanted to know why 5 slots were being requested; why not 3 or 4 or 12? Mr. Rossman explained that two of these 5 were the slot positions the Dean had authorized, that 5 was not a magical number, and that his motion was not a mandate to hire 5 new people but rather a starting point for discussion that reflects the Department's concern for unfilled positions and that stresses the desire for excellence. Mr. Malof asked who would be in charge of outlining the proposal to the Dean. Mr. Moldenhauer and others suggested that Mr. Rossman and Ms. Spivak would be the logical persons to prepare a draft.

Mr. Friedman called the question. The following motion, as amended, was voted upon:

The English Department will undertake to seek up to five highly qualified Assistant Professors for appointments beginning in Fall 1980.

The motion passed with 18 votes in favor, 3 opposed and no abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.