

To: The Teaching Assistants Committee  
From: The Freshman English Policy Committee  
Date: March 9, 1978

Dear Colleagues,

A T.A. member of our committee has brought to our attention the letter on T.A. probation which you circulated to all T.A.'s on February 2, 1978. We do not wish, in any way, to preempt the duties or challenge the authority of the T.A.C., but we feel justified in asking for clarification of several points in your memo and in venturing a few suggestions for handling T.A. probations since the FEPC constitution states in article II, section B, that

The Freshman English Policy Committee is responsible to the Teaching Assistants' Committee and the Executive Committee for recommendations in matters of personnel assignment and performance.

We would like to request that the TAC consider the following questions relating to this document on T.A. probation:

1) Procedural Questions:

- A) Is it consistent with section 4 (on reappointment) of the Current Procedures and Policies for Teaching Assistants in the Department of English, issued to T.A.s when they are appointed?
- B) Does it take into consideration Policies and Procedures for Dismissal and Termination of Appointment stipulated in Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter III, Section 6?
- C) Does the TAC have the authority to draft regulations concerning T.A. probation without recommendations from the FEPC as stipulated in our constitution?
- D) Can any action of the TAC take effect without the approval of the English department Executive Committee?

2) Substantive Questions:

- A) Does this document specify
  1. The definitions of "incompetent," "slightly under par," "irresponsible," "negligence," and "woefully inadequate,"
  2. The specific length of time the Probationary T.A. has to show "reasonable improvement,"
  3. The Criteria used for removal of the T.A. from probationary status,
  4. The number of semesters "after counseling" the T.A. will be subject to being put on probationary status,

or

5. Why a Probationary T.A. cannot have summer teaching considered in removing his probationary status?

B) Does this document consider

1. The overall record, especially of experienced T.A.'s, in addition to teacher evaluations
2. The rights to privacy of a T.A. (specifically in regard to "members of the TAC will both observe his teaching of his class and will discuss his performance with the members of the class in his absence" and "When there is a potential candidate for probationary status, the entire TAC, including its two student members, will review the evidence carefully. It will normally consider extenuating circumstances (e.g., a new course, serious family problems) and discuss the case with the T.A. and other relevant parties before acting."

or 3. Provision for appeal of the TAC's judgment?

Besides posing these questions, we would also like to make the following suggestions:

- 1) That the TAC devise a systematic means for evaluating (not merely probating) T.A.'s that would include measures to be taken before a T.A.'s performance is judged so unsatisfactory that he be put on probation.
2. That some sort of numerical scale be established that would specify exactly which items on the teacher evaluation were being considered and what scores on those items would lead to probation. (For example, if the range of scores on the over-all teaching category can range from 2 to -2, then a -1.3 would require a T.A. to have further counseling, a -1.5 would require that he use the facilities of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness and a -1.75 to a -2 would require probation.)
3. That a list be established of other considerations besides teacher evaluations that would be considered in probation questions.