

English Department to vote on new governing body

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The English Department will vote this week on a plan for a new governing body proposed two weeks ago by the department's former chairman.

At the department's Nov. 15 meeting, William Sutherland, a professor of English and former chairman of the department, proposed implementing a combination of the present budget council and an executive committee as the department's governing body.

After revisions to the proposal were made at the Nov. 22 meeting, the faculty members present voted to put the proposal before the entire department through a

mail ballot.

The department has been governed by a budget council, which comprises all full professors in the department, since Sept. 1. Before that date, an executive committee, consisting of about 30 elected faculty members of all ranks, had been in place for more than 20 years.

Every three years the department's mode of governance comes up for renewal by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Without the dean's approval the governing body automatically reverts to a budget council as it did this September.

While English faculty members overwhelmingly approved the executive committee during a February departmental meeting, Robert King, acting dean of liberal arts, said he was "inclined not to approve a

continuation of the Executive Committee mode of governance as the department has proposed."

According to a letter to Joseph Kruppa, department chairman, King said he felt neither the department nor the college was "well served" by an executive committee and felt a budget council would better serve the department.

Many faculty members expressed their disapproval of King's decision, prompting Kruppa to write to King asking him to meet with faculty members to discuss King's concerns about the executive committee.

Since the change to a budget council, several faculty members have continued to complain about the new governance structure, which Sutherland said prompted him to draft his proposal.

"I went ahead and did it because no one else did it. I think practically all of us wanted representation from all ranks and we had to get it done now if we wanted an executive committee for next semester," Sutherland said.

After departmental revisions, which Sutherland said he endorsed, the proposal calls for nine elected full professors, five elected associate professors and two elected assistant professors. In addition, two full professors and one associate professor will be appointed by a rotation method to serve on the new governing body. Faculty members will be elected within their rank and voted on by the whole department.

"What we've reached is a form of government that the department worked out and supports. I'm really very pleased," he

said. "If the mail ballot goes the way the department meeting goes it should pass."

Despite serious divisions within the department concerning curriculum and the governing body in the past, Sutherland said the departmental meetings concerning his proposal were "pretty calm."

"There wasn't a hot debate but a discussion. The executive committee is really what defines the department because it recommends hirings, promotions and salaries and it's really very important that we come together on what the department wants," he said.

Trisha Stroud, senior administrative associate in the English Department, said faculty members were mailed ballots Monday and a final count will be taken early next week.