

# Gribben defends stance on E306

Professor: I'm doing 'correct thing'

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A UT professor told graduate students Thursday that more freedom and a need for further discussion are the reasons he urged the University to postpone the decision to incorporate issues of racism and sexism into English 306.

Speaking to about 20 graduate students in Calhoun Hall 103, Alan Gribben explained his actions.

"We had a small committee vote four to two in favor of making enormous changes in the curriculum. I felt it was within my First Amendment right to appeal and inform people what was going on," Gribben said.

Gribben said he turned down an invitation to speak on the issue at a West Mall rally July 27 because he had been given less than 24 hours notice and he wanted to have a chance to debate on "neutral ground."

At Thursday's "neutral ground" question-and-answer session Gribben said he was wary of a proposal that was "rammed through" and would have such widespread effects. "I am afraid of mandatory courses where students are told how they must think," he said.

Greg Hanners, a graduate student, said he has a problem with the way things have been handled.

"Four weeks before the start of school and I have no syllabus," he said.

In response, Gribben apologized. "I'm in the same position myself. Had my advice been taken in the spring ... we could have avoided this situation," he said, suggesting that old syllabi could be duplicated.

Gribben explained that a major problem has been the lack of dialogue between faculty members. "Let's hope that the faculty has learned that if we don't want matters discussed statewide let's discuss them among ourselves," he said.

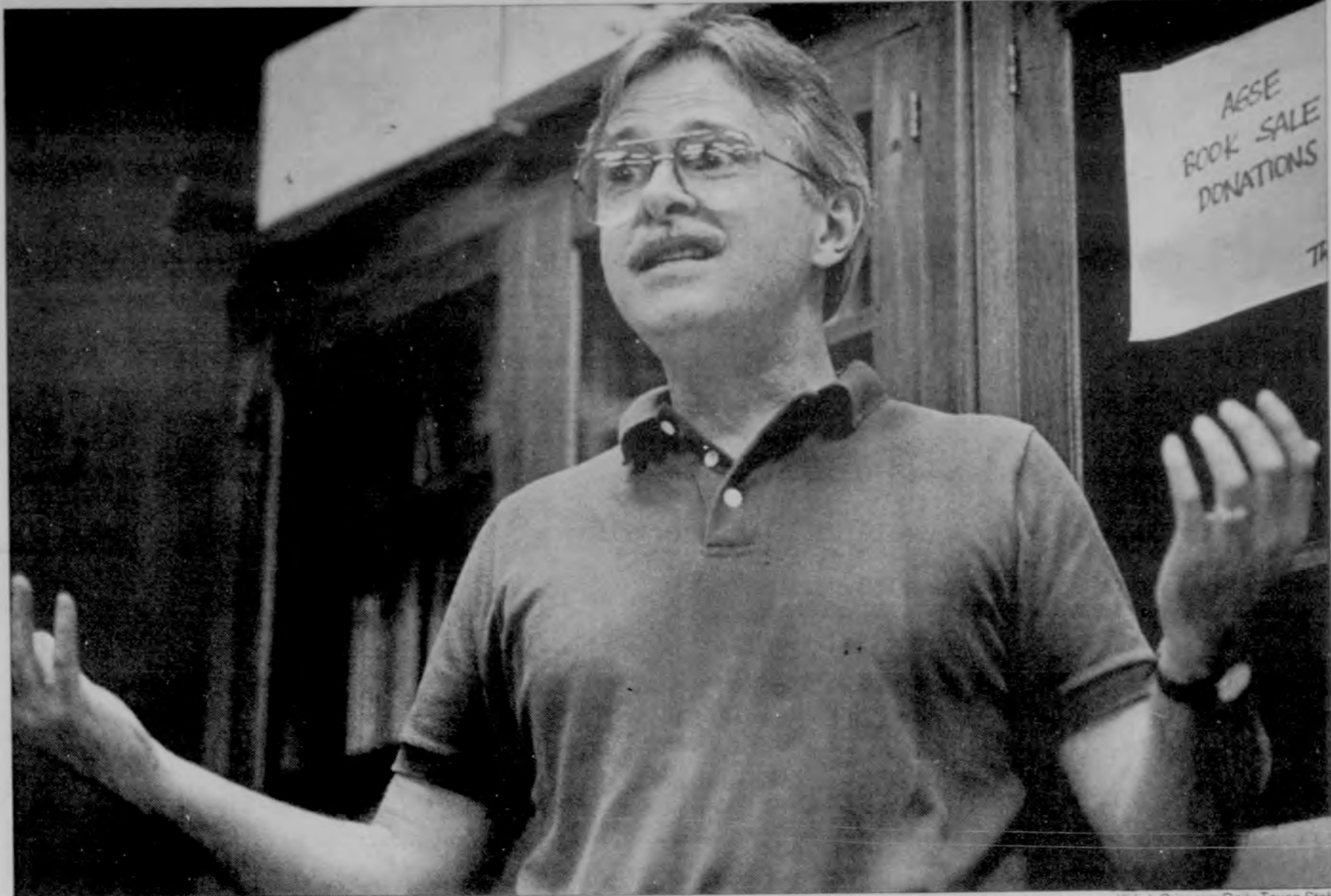
Kathy Mitchell, a graduate student in English, asked Gribben to explain, if he wanted matters discussed in the open, why he sent a letter to Anne Blakeney, a member of the UT Liberal Arts Foundation Council.

"She [Blakeney] contacted me because of her concern and urged me to express myself to her," Gribben said.

In the letter, Gribben said the Department of English had become dysfunctional.

Gribben also reaffirmed his membership in the National Association of Scholars, which has also expressed an interest in postponing the new E306 class.

"If you don't think I've paid for that [NAS membership], look at the



Kirk J. Crippens/Daily Texan Staff

English Professor Alan Gribben discussed with graduate students Thursday his actions on the English 306 issue, which have recently drawn fire.

anonymous posters being put around campus calling me a right-wing extremist," he said.

He also said his position on the E306 issue has had other hidden costs and costs he did not want to talk about. "It has jolted me, but I'm doing what I believe to be the cor-

rect thing," he said, adding that his influence in the chairman's office has declined.

"I actually thought I was doing graduate students a favor. We always traditionally have let graduates make choices. This was like an academic freedom issue, and I was

stunned by the student backlash," Gribben said, adding that he did not understand why the graduate students were so willing to throw their freedom away and only have one textbook.

Gribben said that from now on he was not going to be a big player on

the issue because it will go through other channels.

"I have stepped back and asked that more attention be given to this. I think the University will get the 306 they want, and if they want the new 306 then I will bow to that," he said.