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Deans postpone English 346K requirement

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Daily Texan Staff

Students now enrolled at the University will not have to take English 346K, which was required for graduation for everyone under the 1983 catalog. An estimated 7,500 students were expected to take the intensive writing course next year.

Gerhard Fonken, vice president for academic affairs and research, said Sunday that he had asked the 11 undergraduate deans to postpone the requirement. After consultation, the deans agreed, he said.

The postponement means the course will not be offered at all next year, said Joseph Kruppa, associate department chairman.

The action was revealed in a letter sent Friday to members of the Department of

'The English department was unable to provide the number of courses and instructors required.'

—Gerhard Fonken

English by William Sutherland, department chairman.

The postponement could conceivably last until fall of 1986, the letter reports.

Sutherland's letter states that the course's original concept — teaching students to write in their own fields — has been undermined by students taking the sections that fit their schedules and not their disciplines.

This semester the department offered 82 sections of E346 — Writing for Different

Disciplines. Sutherland said last week that the onslaught of students expected this fall would force the department to offer approximately 150 sections.

"The English department was unable to provide the number of courses and instructors required," Fonken said.

Grading standards are also a problem, the letter reports.

"Factoring out the sections taught by regular faculty, over 84% of the students last fall made A or B," the letter states. "Clearly, this is a course whose standards we do not understand or are not willing to enforce."

Postponing the course will give the department time to review it and "try to figure out what to do," said Robert King, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

John Cook, a lecturer on a committee

overseeing the course, said E346K has the ordinary problems any new course would have. "It's very, very new — it hasn't had a chance to develop," he said.

Alan Gribben, associate professor, said he and many other faculty members are relieved the course has been postponed. "(The course) has massive problems and needs to be re-thought," he said.

Eliminating the course will mean that students could graduate from the University without taking an English composition course, English professors have said.

Currently English 306 and 316K are also required. But students can place out of 306, while 316 is a literature survey course.

Wayne Rebhorn, professor of English, said the course should be eliminated because it is redundant — other courses with

substantial writing components are already required.

But halting the course also will mean that many lecturers will not be rehired to teach next year. Gribben said the professors would try to find suitable employment for the lecturers who would lose their jobs.

Kurt Heinzelman, associate professor, said the change would eliminate all lecturer jobs.

"Apparently the lecturers won't be in the English department next year," Heinzelman said. "I don't think we will need any lecturers without 346K."

Maurine McElroy, undergraduate advisor, said she will not know whether to advise students to drop the course until she sees Sutherland's letter.