



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

Office of the Chairman

TO: Members of the Department of English

FROM: W. O. S. Sutherland, Chairman *WOS*

DATE: September 17, 1984

SUBJECT:

This morning I received from the Dean the letter attached to this memorandum. I have conveyed it to the Executive Committee. I welcome this action. It signals that the administration is aware of the extraordinarily complex and deep-seated problems which beset our department. It marks a significant movement toward their resolution. My conversation with the Dean makes it clear that the welfare of the students is the primary consideration at all levels of the administration, a priority all of us would certainly agree with. I would add that for the sake of the department and its faculty, the rights of the Lecturers and the role of the regular faculty must also be defined.

The system which we have followed and are now following has been placed under great pressure by the needs of The University. The E.316K and 346K requirements passed by the University Council will soon increase the temporary staff beyond anything we have known, in spite of the department's decision to eliminate the second half of the freshman program, E.310, E.317, and related courses. We must consider what adjustments, arrangements, or restructuring will help us solve the problems we face.

Our department has been placed in the hands of its own elected Executive Committee; I think that indicates it retains the confidence of the administration. We have a period--I would expect a short one--in which we can work through the formal review toward a solution. I would urge faculty members to formulate their ideas and communicate them either in writing or in person to the Dean.

This is our chance. The channels of communication are open wider now than they have ever been before. Doubtless there are group interests, personal interests, and (I expect) personalities involved. Such matters should not be allowed to prevail over our two great responsibilities: teaching the required courses well and maintaining a first-rate English program for both our undergraduate and graduate students. No department has more to offer than English. We must find means and structures that allow our faculty to direct its energies toward our goals of teaching and scholarship.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

September 14, 1984

Office of the Dean
West Mall Office Building 201

Chairman's Office Dept of English
UT Austin

Acknowledged _____ File _____

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Refer To _____
Please Answer _____
Please Read and Return _____

Prof. William Sutherland
Department of English
PAR 110

Dear Professor Sutherland:

For the past year I have followed with increasing concern the conditions in the Department of English related to enrollment trends, logistical and staffing problems of required courses, and departmental governance. I have spoken, individually and in groups, with a large number of faculty members of all ranks in the Department of English. Many faculty members, including a majority of the tenured faculty of the department, have informed me they share my concern. It is clear that the problems in the department are more complex and severe than any that we have encountered in many years.

Given the extraordinary responsibilities of the Department of English to all students at The University of Texas at Austin, I must take exceptional action to ensure that these responsibilities are met in an orderly and effective manner. I cannot stand by and allow the department to drift into turmoil and indecision. Solutions to these problems require immediate action.

Therefore, I will institute a formal and comprehensive review of the department's problems and concerns including, but not limited to, matters of enrollment management, staffing and logistical matters, departmental governance, and related issues. I will seek and will be pleased to receive advice and suggestions from members of the department in the course of this review.

I reaffirm that, in accordance with common University policy, departmental authority is vested solely in the Chairman and the Executive Committee. The Chairman and the Executive Committee may not delegate their authority to any other group or groups within the department. Accordingly any other by-laws or procedural mechanisms by which the department has managed its affairs are hereby suspended.

I ask for the fullest cooperation and assistance of your office, the Executive Committee, and the faculty in our efforts to resolve the problems which confront the department.

Sincerely,

Robert D. King

Robert D. King
Dean

RDK:lp