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Department of English
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September 21, 1984

TO: Members of the Department of English

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

On Wednesday afternoon the Executive Committee met with the Dean to discuss his recent letter to the department. I would like to give the department, not minutes of the meeting--which was informal--but my understanding of what was said there.

The Dean began by saying that he didn't think it was right to say that we have a "Lecturer problem." He thought it more accurate to say that we have an "enrollment problem." The English Department has always had more students to teach than its regular staff could handle. Traditionally, classes that could not be staffed by regular faculty have been handled by A.I.'s. A few years ago (as the graduate program was trimmed) the department found that A.I.'s could not handle all the additional classes; so full-time temporary staff were hired. As enrollment burgeoned, the number of Lecturers grew with it. The position of Lecturer, he said, has become an important one for The University. Our problem lies in the fact that the old structure can no longer stand the strain of our present enrollments. Time will not solve our difficulties. Enrollments are not going down. There will not be fewer students to teach in the future.

The Department of English is doing and has done a good job. That is not the issue. The point is we cannot continue as we are; we must find a new structure. Whatever that structure is, it must be in place next fall. The department cannot stay in this transitional state very long.

The Dean keeps an open mind. It was clear from his discussion that he sees the new structure requiring some separateness of the composition program. He would also expect that the new structure would allow professional development for a person in the position of Lecturer. He reiterated that the Lecturer position must be improved under the new system.

He wants suggestions. He will see any faculty member of any rank who wishes to see him. He will be pleased to have letters on the subject. Since he emphasized the point, I will underline. For the next week or two the Dean will see any faculty member who makes an appointment with him. He does not want delegations who purport to speak for others. He wants those who speak for themselves. In the meantime members of the Executive Committee are urged to seek out faculty opinion and convey it to the Dean. Members of the Executive Committee will not be asked to submit a detailed plan; rather they are asked to submit suggestions or principles upon which the details of a new structure could be built. Details will be worked out in the implementation.

Following the Dean's suggestion, I urge all members of the faculty to submit their ideas. We all need to work together on this. We must look forward.