

To: Tenured and Tenure-track English Faculty

From: English Department Governance Committee--Alan Gribben  
(chair), Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, Wayne Reborn.

Date: February 1, 1985

As specified by The Handbook of Operating Procedures, our Governance Committee has undertaken the stipulated third-year review of our Executive Committee and departmental structure. We are recommending a simplification of procedures, a shift toward restored powers for the Chair, and more frequent participation on our Executive Committee by tenured faculty members. The attached proposals condense our present governance document into a set of guidelines one-quarter the length of the existing rules.

Only tenured members of the English faculty are eligible to vote on adopting the new governmental guidelines, but assistant professors are invited to join all professors and associate professors at an informal meeting of the Governance Committee to discuss these proposed reforms. A mail ballot will then poll the tenured ranks. The Dean of Liberal Arts must approve any system that we adopt.

The informal meeting will take place on Thursday, February 7th, 3:30 p.m., in Parlin 105. If you cannot be present, the Governance Committee invites your written questions or opinions. We hope that these reforms accurately reflect the current sentiment of our faculty and enable the Department to respond effectually to the ever-changing problems that beset a large English Department.

Objectives of the new English Department guidelines:

- Inaugurate a friendlier, less legalistic tone in our governance procedures.
- Expose more assistant professors to the inner workings of the EC, but also protect their valuable research time and their summers.
- Strengthen the Chair's abilities to guide and shape the Department.
- Avoid the parliamentary maneuverings of Robert's Rules of Order, recently discouraged as unfair and time-consuming at the 1984 ADE Summer Seminar.
- Enable full professors to wield considerable influence on the EC.
- Discard the intricacies of the Hare system in favor of a direct voting method.
- Circulate more associate professors through the Executive Committee.
- Instill more flexibility in our methods of coping with sudden developments.
- Abandon the English Senate, which was never provided for in The Handbook of Operating Procedures, had no legal status, and led us into front-page headlines and acrimony.

Department of English  
University of Texas at Austin  
Guidelines

I. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of six professors, two associate professors, and one assistant professor makes decisions regarding faculty salaries, promotions, terminations, and recruitment, and advises the Chair on any other matters.

- A. The Chair of the Department, who has a vote in Executive Committee decisions, calls and presides at its sessions. The Associate Chair also is an ex officio member of the Executive Committee, and has a vote.
- B. The Chair may appoint up to three additional members of the Executive Committee from the ranks of associate professor or professor to expedite the committee's work or to fully reflect the Department's interests and needs. Their term shall be for one year. Reappointment for another year is possible at the discretion of the Chair, but the appointees are then ineligible for election or appointment for one or two years, however long they served.
- C. Professors serve two-year terms, and are elected on a rotating basis so that no more than three begin serving in any one year. Associate professors serve one-year terms. Assistant professors serve one-semester terms. No one of any rank is eligible for consecutive terms of service; at least one full term must intervene before he/she becomes eligible again.
- D. A quorum shall consist of eight members (ex officio members included). A majority of those present shall prevail. The summer quorum shall be one-half plus one of those in residence. There will be no assistant professors on the Executive Committee during the summer term, unless the Chair asks the Spring semester assistant professor to continue his or her membership.
- E. Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings shall be taken by one of its members. All votes and discussions concerning personnel decisions are to be considered strictly confidential.
- F. If the Chair is unable to preside at a meeting, the Chair shall designate a full professor to serve as presiding officer.



## II. Eligibility for Executive Committee Membership

Tenured and tenure-track members of the Department's professorial ranks who hold full-time university appointments are eligible to serve on the Executive Committee. Faculty members on joint appointment must have taught at least one course in the Department during either of the two semesters preceding the election. Faculty members on visiting or temporary appointment may not serve. The Chair shall rule on any complications regarding eligibility.

- A. Faculty members who begin leaves-of-absence or who retire become ineligible for service on the Executive Committee on the date when their departure commences. Those members whose tenure-track appointments are scheduled to terminate at the end of a year shall not be eligible to serve during that year.
- B. Members of the Department carrying heavy responsibilities elsewhere in the Department may request that their names be withdrawn from the list of eligible candidates by submitting a letter of explanation to the Chair, who approves such withdrawals.
- C. Assistant professors are not eligible to serve during their fifth year of teaching, as computed by the Chair.
- D. The Graduate Studies Chair shall not normally serve on the Executive Committee, owing to the separate responsibilities of the Graduate Program Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee.
- E. Those faculty members who have been notified of promotion at the time of an election shall be classified on the ballot by their new rank.

## III. Voting in Elections

All full-time members of the continuing English faculty (as specified in the printed budget) are eligible to vote in Executive Committee elections. Members who are on leave shall be permitted to vote, but they are not entitled to ask for ballots to be sent to them through the U. S. mail.

- A. The method of voting will be by direct election; that is, the candidates receiving the largest numbers of votes within each rank will join the Executive Committee.
- B. Elections for assistant-professor members of the Executive Committee for both semesters will be held at the beginning of the Fall semester. Members of the Executive Committee of the professor and associate professor ranks shall be chosen in elections held as soon as possible after the beginning of the Spring semester. New terms for the latter ranks begin on March 1st.

- C. After the elimination of ineligible and withdrawn names, there shall be a nominating round for choosing as candidates half of the eligible names within each rank. Members of the entire continuing Department as specified in the printed budget shall vote on the candidates of every rank, each faculty member marking the names of half of the candidates. In the final round of voting, those candidates previously selected shall again be voted on by members of every rank of the regular Department. Three professors and two associate professors will receive each person's vote. (The fluctuating number of full professors elected will be affected by resignations, but the objective is to have six full professors serving, with no more than three elected in any election if possible.) In the Fall semester election, conducted similarly, two assistant professors will be chosen; the one receiving the most votes will serve on the Executive Committee during the Fall semester, and the runner-up will replace him/her at the beginning of the Spring semester.
- D. Vacancies occurring between elections shall be filled by runners-up in the previous election, in the order of votes received, unless the Fall or Spring Executive Committee election will take place within two months; in the case of an imminent election, new candidates, finalists, and elected members should be chosen then to fill the vacancies.
- E. If unusual problems arise concerning Executive Committee elections or membership, the departmental Chair shall be joined by the appointed Elections Officer and the Chair of the Governance Committee in resolving the question.

#### IV. Executive Committee Policies

- A. The Executive Committee is empowered to make recommendations to the Dean regarding modified service and emeritus status.
- B. Persons who wish to be considered for promotion may send a written request to the Chair.
- C. The Chair should inform each member of the Department of the salary recommendations made by the Executive Committee. The Chair, rather than the Executive Committee, will make salary recommendations for Executive Committee members.
- D. Every third year (as required by The Handbook of Operating Procedures) the Governance Committee shall review the operation of the Executive Committee and recommend to the Department its continuation, modification, or replacement.

#### V. Departmental Meetings

The Chair may call a full departmental meeting whenever it seems advisable to inform faculty members about significant developments or in instances when the Executive Committee



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wishes to seek the Department's advice. Votes of continuing faculty at such meetings are advisory to the Executive Committee and the Chair concerning matters of salaries, promotions, terminations, recruitment, or other areas normally within the Committee's or Chair's responsibilities.

- A. The meetings shall be conducted by simple procedures of motions, amendments, and substitute amendments, as explained and ruled by the Chair.
- B. A quorum shall be fifty percent of the voting members of the department as specified in the printed budget, but the chair may rule at the meeting that a smaller number may proceed to meet for purely informational and advisory reasons without any votes being taken.
- C. The Chair is obliged to call a meeting to discuss an urgent issue when forty percent of the tenured and tenure-track faculty sign a petition requesting such a meeting. That meeting must take place within one week of the petition's being presented to the Chair.

#### VI. Departmental Officers and Standing Committees

Chair: Appointed by the Dean of Liberal Arts, after due consultation with the English faculty. Reviewed before completion of his/her fourth year, as specified by The Handbook of Operating Procedures. Has final authority in matters relating to committee, course, and room assignments; also is the chief administrative officer in charge of support staff and public relations. Convenes the Executive Committee and is empowered to appoint and charge special ad hoc committees to perform specified tasks not easily carried out by the standing committees.

Associate Chair: Appointed annually by the Chair. Assists in the administrative duties of the Department. Coordinates all course assignments for the faculty.

Graduate Studies Chair: Elected by the English Graduate Faculty in the Spring semester for a term of two years. Convenes the Graduate Programs Committee and presides at meetings of the English Graduate Faculty (the Graduate Studies Committee).

Graduate Advisor: Appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Chair, after nomination by the Graduate Programs Committee.

Undergraduate Advisor: Appointed by the Chair. Ex officio (voting) member of the Undergraduate Course Committee.



Undergraduate Course Committee Chair: Appointed by the Chair. Polls faculty preferences and presides at meetings of the Undergraduate Course Committee that recommend proposed course offerings.

Elections Officer: Appointed by the Chair from a list of candidates provided by the Governance Committee. One-year term. May be reappointed for another year.

Executive Committee: See Above.

Graduate Programs Committee: Ten members, including (as ex officio voting members) the Graduate Studies Chair, the departmental Chair, the departmental Associate Chair, and the Graduate Advisor. Three other members shall be appointed by the Graduate Studies Chair, and three shall be elected by direct vote in the Spring semester soon after the Executive Committee elections; the terms of these six people shall be two years. The Graduate Programs Committee is in charge of graduate course scheduling and assignments and all academic plans and policies relating to the English graduate programs. In matters that significantly alter the degree requirements or change the concept of certain programs, it is customary for the Graduate Studies Chair to convene the English Graduate Faculty (the Graduate Studies Committee) and allow them to debate and vote on the issues. The English Graduate Faculty traditionally meets at least once a semester.

Recruitment Committee: Appointed by the Chair to screen applications and make recommendations about candidates to the Executive Committee.

Governance Committee: Appointed by the Chair. The three members study the structure and functions of the Department, and every three years they conduct the required review of the Executive Committee. They may also make recommendations for alterations in the larger departmental structure during these reviews. Their terms should rotate so that one new member joins the committee each year. The Chair shall designate the member who acts as committee chair.

Undergraduate Course Committee: Appointed by the Chair. Solicits the faculty for course preferences and presents to the Chair a set of course proposals.

Other departmental officers and standing committees (such as the Honors English Committee, the TA-AI Committee, and committees designated to oversee particular courses) may be appointed by the Chair as tradition suggests and when the Chair perceives a need. However, it is understood that the Chair has ultimate authority over graduate student financial aid and teaching appointments.

Transition Arrangements

(February 1985 Election Only)

Upon adoption of these new guidelines, eligibility for immediate service on the Executive Committee by its present members will be determined as follows:

- Any current (or recently resigned) members who have served a period of two years on the Executive Committee as professors or associate professors will not be eligible for the next two years beginning this spring.
- Any assistant professor members who have served one or two years are ineligible for those same periods.
- Professors or associate professors who have served only one year of their two-year terms will automatically continue to serve out their elected terms, providing continuity.