

To: The Freshman English Policy Committee  
From: Jana Wainwright  
RE: The TAC's statement on probation of T.A.'s  
Date: Feb. 8, 1978

The attached is a statement distributed by Wayne Reborn, as T.A.C. Chairman, on his committee's proposed probation policy for T.A.'s. I thought this statement should be brought to the attention of the FEPC because it seems to bear directly on our grade inflation problem, because the FEPC might, on behalf of T.A.'s, wish to request that the TAC clarify some of the ambiguities in this document, and because the FEPC constitution specifies in Article II, section B that

The Freshman English Policy Committee is responsible to the Teaching Assistants' Committee and the Executive Committee for recommendations in matters of personnel assignment and performance **[underline mine]**

I should like to request that the FEPC consider the following questions relating to this document:

- 1) Procedural Questions:
  - A) Is it consistent with section 4 (on reappointment) of the Current Procedures and Policies for Teaching Assistants in the Department of English, issued to T.A.s when they are appointed?
  - B) Does it take into consideration Policies and Procedures for Dismissal and Termination of Appointment stipulated in Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter III, Section 6?
  - C) Does the TAC have the authority to draft regulations concerning T.A. probation without recommendations from the FEPC as stipulated in our constitution?
- 2) Substantive Questions:
  - A) Does this document specify
    1. The number of semesters "after counseling" the T.A. will be subject to being put on probationary status,
    2. The specific length of time the Probationary T.A. has to show "reasonable improvement,"
    3. The Criteria used for removal of the T.A. from probationary status,
    4. The definitions of "incompetent," "slightly under

par," "irresponsible," "negligence," and "woefully inadequate,"

or 5) Why a Probationary T.A. cannot have summer teaching considered in removing his probationary status?

B) Does this document consider

- 1) The overall record, especially of experienced T.A.'s,
- 2) The rights to privacy of a T.A. (specifically in regard to A and B marked on your copy of the statement),

or 3) Provision for appeal of the TAC's judgment?

TO: All Teaching Assistants

FROM: Wayne A. Reborn  
Chairman, T.A.C.

DATE: 2 February 1978

Attached is a copy of the statement defining Probationary Status for T.A.'s which the T.A.C. approved last fall. Before the Committee makes it a matter of policy, I think it is desirable to ask those most directly affected by it to give us some feed-back. Please read this document with care and let me know if there are any features of it you find truly objectionable. Be sure to support those objections with arguments so that the Committee can decide on the validity of what you are saying.

Thank you for your cooperation.



## PROBATIONARY STATUS

Once a T.A. has completed the counselling process, he may be placed on probationary status if his teaching is judged by the T.A.C. to be incompetent or if he is irresponsible in performing his duties. If the T.A.C. places a T.A. on probation, it will also take measures to help him improve his teaching: additional counselling, work with the Center for Teaching Effectiveness, etc. If the T.A. fails to show improvement after a reasonable time (or two semesters), he will not be reappointed.

The primary evidence the T.A.C. will use in determining probationary status for a T.A. is his teaching evaluations. The fall evaluations will be reviewed in the spring when they arrive, and if they show a real deficiency, the T.A. will be placed on probation at least through the subsequent fall semester. The spring evaluations arrive in the summer, and if they are deficient, the T.A. will be placed on probation for at least the following fall semester. During that semester the T.A. will work to improve his teaching and members of the T.A.C. will both observe his teaching of his class and will discuss his performance with the members of the class in his absence. The T.A.C. will make a decision to reappoint the T.A., keep him on probation, or not to reappoint him at the end of the fall semester. He will normally not be kept on probation beyond the end of the next semester.


It should be made clear that T.A.'s will be put on probation only for real incompetence or negligence, not for a slightly under-par performance. The teaching evaluations will be used with great caution, since their inadequacies are legion, and both the numerical scores and the students' written comments will be consulted. When there is a potential candidate for probationary status, the entire T.A.C., including its two student members, will review the evidence carefully. It will normally consider extenuating circumstances (e.g., a new course, serious family problems) and discuss the case with the T.A. and other relevant parties before acting. One final word on probationary status: it should not be thought of as a sword of Damocles hanging over everyone's head, but as a way to help us improve the teaching of those few T.A.'s (probably no more than a small handful each year) whose performance is woefully inadequate.

3. Terms of Appointment. Appointments of Teaching Assistants for 1974-75 are made in accordance with the descriptive titles, definitions and salary scales of the following table:

Teaching Assistant I - a holder of a Bachelor's degree, with or without prior teaching experience. Academic year salary - rate of \$3200 for 50% time appointment for first year and \$3400 for 50% time appointment for second year in the Department.

Teaching Assistant II - a holder of a Master's degree or its equivalent with or without prior teaching experience. Academic year salary rate of \$3600 for 50% time appointment for first year at this level and \$3750 for 50% time appointment for second year at this level.

Teaching Assistant III - a graduate student who has been admitted to candidacy for the Ph. D. or its equivalent, with or without teaching experience. Academic year salary rate of \$3750 for 50% time appointment for the first year at this level and \$4000 for 50% time appointment for second year at this level.

 4. Reappointment. The reappointment of a Teaching Assistant is based mainly on two judgments:

(1) Satisfactory service in the Department, in the opinion of the Committee on Teaching Assistants, whose evaluation is based on reports from counselors, course chairmen, and Course/Instructor Surveys. All Teaching Assistants are required to participate in Course/Instructor Surveys each semester.

(2) Satisfactory progress towards an advanced degree, in the opinion of the Committee on Teaching Assistants, whose evaluation is based on a report of the Graduate Adviser if the Teaching Assistant does not have his Ph. D. supervisory committee, or on a written report of the Ph. D. supervisory chairman if the Teaching Assistant has an official committee. This Department expects a Teaching Assistant with a B. A. degree to complete his Master's degree within 4 semesters, and a Teaching Assistant with an M. A. degree to be an official Ph. D. candidate within 4 semesters. He is expected to complete any grade of X within 1 semester (counting the summer as a semester).

No graduate student is eligible for employment as a Teaching Assistant for more than 7 long term academic semesters. Those graduate students meeting the eligibility requirements for Assistant Instructor may