

MINUTES OF THE DEPARTMENTAL MEETING OF APRIL 19, 1984

Professor Sutherland opened the meeting and appointed Odlin secretary.

Discussion began on the limits of business to be transacted during the meeting. Megaw moved that the discussion of the Lecturer question be carried on in the Committee of the Whole and Kinneavy seconded the motion. After debate on the procedural implications of discussions within the Committee of the Whole, question was called on the motion, which passed 29-21. Kruppa was designated to chair the Committee of the Whole.

Megaw began discussion in the Committee of the Whole, saying that the Senate proposal did not address all problems concerning either the writing courses or the individuals teaching them. He also said that the time was propitious to deal with the Administration on the issue.

Hairston commented that a change of culture had taken place in the Department over the years with the rise of new classes (an elite professoriate and slave laborers). She asserted that the current situation at UT and other schools across the nation constitutes a threat to the profession as a whole, that it weakens the professoriate, that it is sexist, and that it harms both undergraduate and graduate studies in the Department.

Rebhorn commented on Hairston's remarks, saying that assumptions in her statement were undocumented, that recriminations were counterproductive, and that the creation of the Lecturer situation at UT was more the result of patchwork decisions than deliberate strategies.

Odlin noted that one particular issue that had yet to be addressed in any of the meetings or written proposals was the effect of the wording of the suggestions in relation to the foreign student courses. He pointed out that the current Senate proposal would, if strictly interpreted, fail to provide graduating AI's teaching those courses the same priority in the hiring of Lecturers as UT English Department Ph.D.'s, since most of the AI's teaching those courses come from the doctoral programs in Linguistics and Foreign Language Education. Such an interpretation could, he noted, lead to the placing of unqualified individuals in the 346F courses, which will soon need staffing.

Gaines addressed the statements of Rebhorn, saying that burn-out among Lecturers was real and that there was increasing dissatisfaction with the existing system. Kinneavy urged that no hasty decisions be reached by the Department in dealing with the Lecturer issue. He also urged close cooperation with the Administration, saying that the Senate proposal would not likely be accepted by the Administration. He proposed the creation of a standing committee on Lecturers which would include members of all ranks, including Lecturers.

Discussion ensued on the status of Megaw's proposal, which was followed by comments from Reed and Burch on the Lecturer proposal offered by several AI's, which called for a fixed number of postdoctoral Lecturer positions to be available for new Ph.D.'s.

Carton listed actions which the Department could take: a cap on the number of Lecturers, a moratorium on new hiring, a decision not to do any last-minute staffing, and rigorous evaluation of current Lecturers. Reed commented that the proposal of Cook did not address the question of a cap on Lecturers. Davis expressed his general support for the proposals of Hairston and Kinneavy.

Twombly moved that the proposal of Megaw be reported from the Committee of the Whole and much discussion of procedure ensued. Friedman deemed the proposal of Megaw to be self-contradictory and ultimately conservative. He then passed out a proposal which called for: 1) the creation of a committee (drawn from "the Department's various ranks") to arrive at a consensus among various proposals on Lecturers, to articulate "alternatives where irreconcilable differences of opinion exist" so that the Department may be presented with a clear set of options; 2) speedy review by the EC of applicants for Lecturer positions in the coming year, a review which would give priority to (up to) five new UT Ph.D.'s and to current Lecturers.

Gribben asked Kruppa how much power the Department had to refuse to staff courses. Kruppa directed the question to Sutherland. Sutherland spoke of his own resolve to have the Department address the Lecturer issue decisively. He added that Dean King had told him that no one in the Department had asked the Dean for additional lines in the budget. Sutherland emphasized that the current time was favorable to address the Lecturer issue and also favorable to contact other departments on the possibility of having Lecturers staff writing courses in those departments. Pointing to individuals in the Law School who had previously been Lecturers in the Department, he saw such new arrangements as a way to encourage further professional growth among Lecturers. He noted that rhetoric and composition are essential components of the Department and counselled against any dichotomy in purpose between those in rhetoric and those in literature.

Walter questioned whether a move by Lecturers from the Department would only lead to them becoming second-class citizens in other departments. Skaggs noted that the majority of Ph.D.'s being hired in the nation had ranks comparable to that of Lecturer in the Department. He added that the current faculty teaching lower division courses at UT were the most qualified to date and that there were few cases of burn-out among Lecturers in the Department. Farrell said that the reward for a job well done should not, in any occupation, lead to termination. He also noted that recruiting of tenure-track faculty for the Department was extremely difficult, and he therefore believed that Megaw's proposal was impossible to put into effect.

Sledd said that the time had come to try for the impossible. He urged the faculty to resist a trend toward a corporate mode of governance being imposed on universities. He spoke of a technocratic conspiracy among individuals who had no concern for basic writing courses.

Discussion returned to Friedman's proposal and the procedural status of that proposal. Carton moved that the Committee of the Whole be dissolved and Hairston seconded. By a vote of 48-2 the Committee of the Whole was dissolved. Kruppa reported to Sutherland that no conclusion had been reached by the Committee of the Whole.

Sutherland then explained the procedure for motions and amendments for the Department to introduce and vote upon. Skaggs moved that provisions 2 and 3 of the Senate proposal be deleted. Davis seconded the motion. Reed spoke against deleting the second provision. Farrell moved that there be separate votes taken on provisions 2 and 3, and the motion was seconded. Friedman commented on Skagg's motion. Kinneavy called the question on voting to close debate on Friedman's proposal. The vote passed with over a two-thirds majority. Discussion returned to Skagg's proposal. Carton moved to separate the voting on provisions 2 and 3 of the Senate proposal and the motion was seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 28 to 10. Discussion proceeded to which members of the Department could vote on provisions 2 and 3. Sutherland ruled that part-time faculty and AI's were not eligible to vote. The ruling was challenged by Megaw but then sustained by a 20-12 vote. The original motion of Skaggs' was changed; the new motion included: 1) an amendment to the Senate proposal to delete that proposal of all provisions except the first and fourth, and 2) a resolution to refer all other provisions to a committee appointed by Sutherland in accord with the proposal of Friedman. Passty moved that the fourth provision be amended to give current Lecturers top priority in hiring. After discussion by Burch and others, a vote was taken and Passty's motion was defeated 5-15 with one abstention. Sledd moved that all conditions in the fourth provision Senate proposal be deleted except that stipulating that the hiring of Lecturers proceed on the basis of merit. The motion failed by a vote of 9-21. The question was then called on Skaggs' motion which passed 26-7 with one abstention. On the understanding that another departmental meeting would be called to continue discussion of the Lecturer issue, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Odlin