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Gribben asks Faculty Senate to screen E306

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Daily Texan Staff

The unique changes to English 306 — a freshman English composition course — constitute a drastic enough difference that they should be reviewed by the Faculty Senate and University Council, an English Department faculty member said Wednesday.

"They [the Faculty Senate and University Council] routinely review things that apply to all colleges, and all colleges require this certain modicum of English," said James Gribben, an English professor. "Any change in a basic course would be addressed by the Faculty Senate and the University Council, and then it's debated through."

But Frieda Speck, the University Council's administrative assistant, said although there are no previous cases similar to English 306, the council does not routinely approve details about courses.

"We change course numbers and course hours and degree requirements but content — no," she said. "To tell a teacher what to teach and not to teach — we've never done that."

Gribben said the English 306 changes constitute more than just details.

"The course should have been renamed," he said. "You cannot gut a course and rename it the same thing."

Linda Brodkey is chairwoman of the lower division English policy committee — the only voting body that approved the initial English 306 changes so readings focus on "Difference: Racism and Sexism."

She said the course is not being changed drastically enough to be reviewed by the senate and council.

"It's not a new course," she said. "It's English 306, and we'll be teaching it like we always have."

Dennis Hranitzky, a University Council student representative and College of Liberal Arts employee, also said the council has no authority over the English 306 changes.

"This is a curriculum reform instigated by Dr. [Standish] Meacham as dean of the College of Liberal Arts," he said. "Since it was Dean Meacham's decision, I don't see that the University Council has anything to say about it."

Meacham was not available for comment Thursday.

Some English professors said this is not

just a disagreement about the proper way to approve the English 306 changes. Instead, they said they feel proponents of the changes are purposely shrouding the issue in "secrecy."

"When you keep things clandestine and secret and there seems to be an agenda, those that have a stake in this are going to vocalize our concerns," Gribben said.

Gribben said proponents of the revamped course are avoiding traditional routines in order to speed up the approval process. "They are just trying to hurry this," he said.

Hranitzky agreed that if the proposal went before the University Council, it would probably be delayed until next fall.

"Well, historically, the University Council doesn't move on this type of reform quick enough for any meaningful changes

to get implemented," he said. "I think it would pass, but I think they would probably get it through about December and implement it in the following fall."

Adjustments in the course's reading materials are another reason opponents believe the changes are not being made clear.

Originally, the policy committee approved Paula S. Rothenberg's *Racism and Sexism* as the textbook for the course.

Then on June 25, Joseph Kruppa, Department of English chairman, canceled orders with the University Co-op for the textbook and announced plans to develop a reading packet.

"A lot of people had trouble with the book because it had weak material and we were only going to use a small part of it."

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Kruppa said.

Gribben complained in a written statement that the committee's decision to use the textbook was overturned without the committee being consulted. "The secrecy of this is just absurd," he said.

James Duban and John Ruskiewicz, two members of the policy committee, said they resigned partly because they were unhappy about "secrecy" surrounding the reading packet.

"Members of the committee would traditionally be responsible for helping to formulate the contents of that packet," Duban said.

Duban said information about the packet is being kept from him. "I did not receive a satisfactory response that in anyway disclosed the nature of the packet," he said.

Brodkey said the committee was not contacted about the switch from textbook to packet, because of the timing of the change.

"It is normal for the group to do," she said. "But the 10 people looking at the syllabus realized the book didn't do what it needed to do, so we went to the chairman."

Brodkey said they went to Kruppa "because it was the summer and three members of the committee are out of town."

Liz Slaughter, University Co-op textbook manager, said routine was further violated when she was not given an opportunity to bid on the reading packet after the English De-

partment cancelled the textbook order.

"I would like to bid on it," she said. "I know we can give students a better price and it's more convenient."

Brodkey said she has only been in the department for two years and she "didn't even know" she was supposed to take bids on the order.

Slaughter, however, said she asked if the Co-op could bid on the order and was not allowed.

Gribben said he was further made suspicious about the assistant instructors' reading material — which is available at Alphagraphics, 2200 Guadalupe St. — when he was told at the print shop that only people whose names were on a list could have a packet.

Brodkey said the list was not meant to prevent anyone from reviewing the packet.

"My assistant simply sent them a list of people who can receive the packet free," she said. "I didn't say no one else couldn't buy one."

But Randy Stallworth, an Alphagraphics employee, disagreed with both Brodkey and Gribben.

"Basically anyone who wants one can come in and sign for it," Stallworth said. "I've just got a list of 76 names — actually just 76 slots. Half these names aren't legible anyway."

Brodkey said she was concerned because none of these complaints had been directed to her.

"Not one of those people have even called me on the phone," she said. "I think when the course is in place it will simply be very different from the way people think it will be."