

Faculty Senate votes to create committee

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After a heated debate Monday, the Faculty Senate voted 29-9 to recommend that the University Council create a committee to examine the undergraduate writing program.

This proposal follows debates within both the Faculty Senate and the University Council regarding the formation of a Division of Rhetoric and Composition separate from the Department of English.

Alan Friedman, a professor of English who proposed the recommendation, said the committee would address root causes of problems within the undergraduate writing program rather than simply restructuring.

"A unique opportunity exists to address [writing] with the systematic rigor that it deserves," he wrote in his proposal.

Joe Horn, professor of psychology, said the recommendation was "hypocritical" and attacked the department for "teaching politics."

"The Department of English does not believe in grading for literacy or for writing," he said. "I'd like to see an organization that teaches writing and not politics."

Other faculty called into question the decision-making role faculty played in the creation of a new writing division. Several

professors of English have complained that they should have been consulted.

William Sutherland, professor of English, said the governance issue was the faculty's business. "Two committees created to hire and fire within the same department makes no sense," he said.

Daniel Bonevac, professor of philosophy, said a new committee is a waste of time. "There is a committee already within the College of Liberal Arts," he said.

Irene Kacandes, assistant professor of Germanic languages, defended the proposed writing division.

"Just because the committee is only under [the College of] Liberal Arts does not mean it's going to improve writing," she said. "The question of writing is never going to go away. One of our central missions is to make writing better."

Joseph Kruppa, chairman of the Department of English, said faculty should have a say over the writing division because it is such a significant change.

"This wasn't debated," he said. "We didn't have the academic discourse on this. Writing is a changing discipline."

Ira Iscoe, professor of psychology, pointed out that Robert King, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts, requested a list on Sept. 9 of faculty from the Department of English for input. King received the list from Kruppa on Oct. 14.