

E306 advocates claim foul play

'Polemicist' says Gribben served as anonymous source for columns

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According to records obtained by the student publication *Polemicist*, the chief opponent to changes in the English 306 syllabus granted interviews to two state-wide publications last July, serving as an unnamed source for articles that E306 proponents claim misrepresented the class as a tool for political thought control.

Through a routine open records request to the office of Joseph Kruppa, chairman of the Department of English, *Polemicist* obtained copies of a letter to Kruppa from Stephen Balch, president of the National Association of Scholars, in which Balch defended the right of Alan Gribben — the most vocal opponent of changes to E306 — to grant interviews to *Texas Monthly* and *The Dallas Morning News* on proposed changes to the E306 syllabus.

The changes to the required writing course, which were postponed until next fall, unified writing topics under the theme of issues of difference.

Columns written by William Murchison in *The Dallas Morning News* and Gregory Curtis in *Texas Monthly* claimed the syllabus changes created a class that could be used as a political tool to propagate leftist ideologies.

Gribben, a professor of English, refused to comment Monday on his involvement in the publications' columns. English professors James Duban and Maxine Hairston, other critics of the E306 changes, also did not return phone calls on Monday.

English Department professors and administrators have come under intense fire from some alumni and members of the National Association of Scholars, which said the course the department created would pressure students to conform to a set of political beliefs as a result of the material proposed in the syllabus change.

College of Liberal Arts Dean Standish Meacham postponed the class until next fall after the course continued to receive negative media attention.

But professors who served on the committee proposing the E306 rhetoric and composition syllabus revisions said the new focus of the class was not on gender and race discrimination, as presented in the media, but rather on the way a society deals with the issue of difference among its members.

Students would have been required to read opinions from court decisions dealing with such issues as age, physical ability, gender and race discrimination. Students would have then written argumentative essays supporting their positions on the issues discussed.