

Faculty wants justice

The biggest "problem in the Department of English" (*Texan*, Sept. 20) isn't in the Department of English at all but in the offices of the administration.

The administration and the bureaucracy of the English department pushed through the present requirements in English. By that action, the administrators and the bureaucrats from English indicated their belief that the writing courses are so important that they deserve to be required.

The administration has absolutely refused, however, to provide the normal academic rewards to the people who teach those required courses, mainly 52 lecturers, 75 assistant instructors and 19 teaching assistants — almost two-thirds of the English department's total membership. Those people are un-

protected by tenure. In general, they are overworked and underpaid. They would like normal recognition and acceptance, pay commensurate with the importance of their duties and some real voice in the conduct of their academic lives. Yet Dean King has said publicly (Dec. 3, 1982) that "no large, public university is ever going to supply to an English department enough regular positions to hire everyone it needs on a tenure track." A substantial proportion of the English department's "regular" faculty has moved to deny the lecturers their vote; and Dean King's latest action is to announce that all authority in the department resides with "the chairman and the executive committee." Mere teachers are to be treated as lesser employees of a great corporation, whose motto seems to be "Millions for MCC, but nothing much for literacy."

It was Abe Lincoln in 1858 who told the Illinois Republicans that "this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." Neither can the English department endure one-third free and two-thirds peon. To create a new Department of Rhetoric would simply be to pour the same dirty water from one boot to another. If the administration wants to end the turmoil around the writing courses, the administration must reward the teachers of writing. If the administration won't reward the teachers of writing, it must either abolish the writing courses or put up with the

turmoil. As Dean King begins his "formal and comprehensive review of the (English) department's problems," he should look first among the decision-makers at his own and higher levels.

*James Sledd
Professor of English*