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# Discussion of English composition courses becomes faculty feud

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*Daily Texan Staff*

Discussion of the status of E 346K and other English composition courses turned into a departmental feud at a Faculty Senate meeting Monday.

The E 346K requirement has been suspended because Department of English officials say they cannot adequately staff the course.

Senate members voted to appoint a committee to investigate why the department decided to waive the requirement, in response to questions

raised by James Sledd, an English professor, and David Rabban, a law professor.

In a memo issued to Department of English members Feb. 15, department Chairman William Sutherland said the dean of the College of Liberal Arts informed him all UT deans were instructed to waive the E 346K requirement for students under the current and 1985-1986 academic years for evaluation reasons. The memo did not specify who was responsible for the decision.

Debate on the suspended composition class requirement took up

most of the nearly two-hour meeting. Motions to continue the composition course requirements and to determine responsibility for them were postponed.

When Rabban expressed confusion over how and why the decision to require students to take E 346K was made, Sledd said the question was a crucial part of the issue. "That's a very legitimate question, and the answer is nobody knows," Sledd said.

Alan Gribben, associate professor of English, said Gerhard Fonken, vice president for academic affairs

and research, made the decision at the urgent request of Sutherland.

Senate Chairwoman Waneen Spirduso later said that minutes from a Deans Council meeting confirmed Fonken had made the decision to eliminate the course.

Sledd then accused Gribben of misleading the senate by giving false information. Sledd said he was part of the course creation process.

"This is not a family matter, but a matter of University requirements," Sledd said.

James Kinneavy, professor of English and architect of the E 346K

course, read from his report, "The Decomposition of English," which was distributed at the senate meeting, charging the administration of the E 346K course "has been a farce for the past three years."

"I do not believe that the charges which I advanced in my guest viewpoint in *The Daily Texan* on Feb. 20 have yet been answered," Kinneavy read. "The writing program at this university is being systematically dismantled at almost every level and an attempt to replace composition courses by literature courses is under way."

Spirduso said neither the chairman of a department, nor a vice president nor the president normally has the right to eliminate a college catalog requirement. But, if there are not enough faculty to teach the course, the deans can waive such a requirement, she said.

Sutherland, who was also present at the meeting, said UT composition programs were not being dismantled. "The waiver is not an attempt to avoid the University Council's will," Sutherland said. "I am committed to composition on this campus."