

Liberal arts dean establishes award

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In their quest for better working conditions, lecturers in the Department of English have received a boost from the dean of the College of Liberal Arts in the form of a teaching excellence award and an effort to appoint lecturers earlier.

Dean Robert King released a memorandum to the Executive Committee of the Department of English this week in which he states: "The time for lamentation has passed. We owe it to our students to concentrate now on the positive advantages of having lecturers as part of the faculty of the University."

To this end, King said he is establishing a Teaching Excellence Award for English lecturers and pushing for earlier appointments of lecturers whose hiring traditionally is subject to precise enrollment predictions and funding assurances.

In October, Joseph Kruppa, associate chairman of the Department of English, said that for this semester 22 lecturers were hired in March, 13 in June, 14 on Aug. 23 and 16 between Aug. 30 and Sept. 9.

King said, "I think we should jointly strive to secure May appointments for roughly 75 percent of the lecturers," for fall semester.

He added: "In addition to the standard evaluation form handled by the Measurement and Evaluation Center, I would like to see included in the lecturer evaluation peer assessments, grading data, exit-survey data, plus the results of other instruments the department may wish to devise that are tailored especially to the teaching effectiveness of the lecturers.

"Length of service — provided that service is consistently good — should also carry weight in the evaluation procedure."

James Skaggs, elected lecturer representative to the Department of English Senate, said: "I think it (King's memorandum) shows an administrative sensitivity and awareness of the complexity of the problem He deals with the situation realistically rather than in some sort of abstract ideal structure I find his situation both in terms of observations and conclusions workable, humane and supportive."

Skaggs said: "You can see among the lecturers even, people who are in different positions in that some are hired early and some are hired late. Because of this some have more grievances.

"What I'm trying to do is better the conditions for all lecturers and strengthen the department as a whole because I believe a strong cadre of lecturers who are committed to undergraduate teaching is a great asset to the department."

The dean's statement "is going to be a great help" to the English Senate subcommittee studying the lecturers' situation, Skaggs said.

Skaggs; Sharon Wevill, elected lecturer representative to the English Senate; David Jolliffe, assistant instructor in English; Wayne Lesser, associate professor of English; and Thomas Whitbread, professor of English, sit on the subcommittee that was established at an English Senate meeting Nov. 19.

The committee will make recommendations to the senate on status and evaluation and rehiring procedures of the lecturers.

King said: "There is nothing shame-

ful or embarrassing about being a lecturer. They have earned our respect, admiration and gratitude. I urge the department to translate these feelings into tangible recognition."

Kruppa said, "That's the one place in the document where I have a question mark. That's something we'll have to talk about."

He added that what seems most tangible would be increased salaries or lighter workloads. However, both he and King point out that budget constraints prevent this in the foreseeable future.

"Given the uncertainty of future enrollments, given the sharp sensitivity to staffing needs to relatively small fluctuations in enrollment, and given basic budget constraints, no large university is ever going to supply to an English department enough regular positions to hire everyone it needs on tenure track," King said.

"There can, therefore, be no useful talk of permanence for the lecturer positions. Permanent is precisely what they are not," he said.

However, King added that no "dramatic drop in enrollment is likely to occur within the next several years, so that, realistically, we will doubtless continue to need substantial numbers of lecturers for the next several years at least."

Skaggs said "continual or ongoing" are better terms than "permanent" to describe the future role of the English lecturers.

Joseph Moldenhauer, chairman of the Department of English, could not be reached for comment.