

TO: Members of the departmental senate
FROM: David Jolliffe, graduate student representative
DATE: 4/4/84
RE: Why I intend to vote against the Lecturer proposal

Because I am sure that this afternoon's senate meeting will be dominated by emotional speaking and lobbying, I would like to eliminate the need for my participation in the same by sharing with you in this memorandum why I intend to vote against the proposal on lecturer matters. I hope I can convince you to vote with me.

What I contend is, in large measure, complementary to Maxine Hairston's assertions in her 3/23/84 letter to Professor Sutherland, but my ideas are supported by personal and familiar examples. If you have not seen a copy of Maxine's letter, I am sure she will show you a copy.

I think it is ironic that the departmental senate can claim, within the span of one month, that it is determined to improve the quality of English graduate studies at U.T. and that it intends to institute a revolving-door employment policy for lecturers. Such policies at U.T. and other major universities will effectively kill graduate studies in literature at U.T. and other universities and will leave graduate programs in literature intact at only a handful of "prestige" universities.

Let me demonstrate my point by describing the job search of this year's U.T. Ph.D.s. As far as I know, the only two U.T. products who have landed tenure-track positions this year are Tom Miller and I. I won't presume to assess Miller's quality, but I feel certain that I received

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an offer not because I am that attractive a candidate, but instead because universities are still opening tenure-track lines in my specialty, rhetoric and composition. Consider, however, the plight of our products in literary studies. I need not give names; you know they are excellent candidates--at least two I know have published books, and almost all have published articles and delivered convention papers. Why can't these fine candidates get jobs? I believe it's because so few universities are opening tenure-track lines and are relying on part-time

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Indeed, this very department has fueled this belief. If you would examine my file in the graduate office, you would see that most of the admissions committee did not want to admit me and that I did not receive a fellowship because of my low G.R.E. scores. I smile when I think that I have published an article in a refereed literary journal, coauthored two technical reports and one book, and delivered papers at three national conventions during my years at Texas

faculty instead. The "prestige" universities--Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Hopkins, Berkeley, to name the few which come to mind--are putting out enough Ph.D.s each year to fill all the attractive tenure-track positions in the country. Think objectively for a minute: you are on a hiring committee, and you must choose between two relatively equal candidates, one from Yale and the other from Texas. Which candidate gets the job?

I believe that U.T. can set a precedent for other large universities to follow by opening at least five new tenure lines a year for the next ten years; by tenuring lecturers who have done outstanding work in teaching, writing (not necessarily scholarly publication), and course development; and by consistently rehiring lecturers, regardless of their years of service, who have convincingly proved their merit. If other universities would be brave enough to follow U.T.'s lead, more tenure-track lines would open, U.T. Ph.D.s could get jobs, and the market would open, at least partially, again.

I have said enough. Before I close, however, I must comment personally on the false beneficence and paternalism which lies behind the practice of hiring new U.T. Ph.D.s as lecturers so they can have time to find a job. The way to place new U.T. Ph.D.s, I believe, is to support them while they are graduate students: give them more research money, give them more travel money, talk to potential employers well before the students hit the job market, give them co-authorships on articles and books. I thank my committee--not necessarily the department--for doing that for me. The way not to place candidates is to expect them to look for jobs after they've been convinced that the system doesn't really want them.