



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

PAR 108 · Austin, Texas 78712-1164 · (512) 471-4991

April 4, 1990

Professor Linda Brodkey
Chair, Lower Division English Policy Committee
PAR 131

Dear Linda:

Because I felt that our Lower Division English Policy Committee had insufficiently discussed a textbook adoption policy for E.306, I yesterday abstained from voting on the motion to approve merely one book for use next year by every Assistant Instructor and student of E.306. I would like the minutes of the meeting to reflect the serious reservations which I voiced about the potential undermining of pluralism entailed in such a single-text policy.

While I continue to value the cordial tone of our discussion, I had more time to think about the issues last evening. In all good conscience, and with a deep sense of respect for the personal convictions harbored by the other members of the committee, I must now express a sense of regret for having failed to vote directly against the motion to adopt one text for every section of freshman English. Even a "pilot" course sets precedents, and I believe that this precedent would be an unfortunate one in its disregard for alternatives.

As you know, I voiced support for--and even tried to help formulate--a follow-up motion that would allow Assistant Instructors to propose a variant text once they have had a semester of experience with the prescribed book. While I continue to regard this motion as a step in the right direction, I now wonder if the element of choice would come too late to suit the diverse interests of many first semester freshmen and of those Assistant Instructors who may not deem the prescribed text appropriate for the most effective teaching of composition.

These queries reinforce my sense that we need more discussion. As you know, one of our colleagues missed the meeting because of an honest oversight in scheduling. Inasmuch as he, too, has reservations about a single-text adoption policy, I would like for our committee to reopen the matter for discussion next week. We stand to hear new perspectives, including his thoughts about at least eight other books for possible adoption. I would hope that, following this deliberation, we could then vote again on issues which will affect thousands of students and numerous teachers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim", written in dark ink.

James Duban
Associate Professor of English

xc: LDEPC