

English lecturers question teaching workload-research ratio

Editor's Note: This is the third of a three-part series on controversies surrounding UT English lecturers' positions. Today's story focuses on lecturers' workloads, which some lecturers feel do not allow them enough time for research.

By LAURA FISHER
Daily Texan Staff

By the end of the semester, one lecturer in the Department of English estimates she will have graded 846 papers, 80 tests, 500 quizzes and 79 research papers from her four lower division classes. For \$16,200 a year she will have worked an average of 55 hours a week, but accomplished nothing in outside research.

"These people are hired mainly to teach lower division courses, not to perform the duties of tenure-track faculty. We want them to concentrate their energy on teaching," said Joseph Kruppa, associate professor and associate chairman of the Department of English.

Lecturers are not required to serve on any departmental committees, nor to perform any research. These exemptions are meant as "a kind of compensation" for the lecturers, said Joseph Moldenhauer, professor and associate

chairman of the department.

Still, some lecturers and professors feel the workload of the English lecturers ought to be reduced to allow them time to research and write articles. This would at least increase the chances of some lecturers eventually getting on the tenure track, they say.

Of the 70 lecturers hired this semester, 49 teach a full-time course load. That is, they are contracted to teach four courses in both the fall and spring.

"With a 4-4 course load the people will tend to burn out because they are such conscientious teachers," said a lecturer who asked not to be identified.

"The deliberate separation of teaching from research destroys the argument which has always been used to justify the primacy of research itself — namely, that only researchers can be good teachers," UT professor of English James Sledd said.

"I am a strong supporter of the 3-3, and I think most of the department is. But budgetarily it's not possible," Kruppa said.

Lecturers can request a lighter course load, but they are paid less accordingly. This semester 10 lecturers teach three sections, and 11 teach two sections of English.

Of the basic freshman course in composition, "44 graduate students are teaching 54 sections; 31 lecturers are teaching 64 sections; 9 tenured or tenure-seeking faculty are teaching 10 sections," Sledd said he was told by Robert King, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

"When I asked King why that situation is tolerated, he answered that state universities regularly teach such courses in that way," Sledd said.

The Association of Departments of English, a national organization, recommends that college English teachers should spend no more than 12 hours per week each semester in the classroom if they are involved in undergraduate instruction and no more than nine hours per week if they are involved in graduate instruction.

The ADE also says that in sections of college and university English departments, the number of students should not exceed 20 in composition courses and 35 in literature courses.

The average number of students in the basic freshman composition course sections this semester is 23, with a maximum set at 25, Kruppa said.

Rod Davis, a lecturer in English with a 4-4 course load, wrote an article in

June for the *Dallas Times Herald* magazine, *Westward*, in which he said, "Using lecturers to do the donkey's share of the department's work suggests that lecturers are the migrant farmworkers of academia."

Salaries for full-time UT English lecturers range from \$15,000 to \$18,500 for a nine-month contract.

In comparison, the starting salary for temporary, non-tenure track lecturers with doctorates is \$20,000 at Harvard, \$18,000 at Arizona State University and \$12,000 at Boston University. In Texas it is \$17,000 at Rice University, \$15,500 at Southern Methodist University and \$10,400 at the University of Houston.

Beginning salaries of tenure-track UT assistant professors average between \$17,000 and \$18,500.

The sentiment that the lecturers are "second-class citizens on second-class pay" is felt by some lecturers as well as by Sledd, who said in an interdepartmental memo in March: "The English department will now be publicly and officially divided into white folks and niggers."

Sledd later said, "When I asked why the lecturers and graduate students are so poorly paid, he (King) said he didn't have the money to pay them better ...

that means simply that UT chooses to spend its money on undertakings other than the cultivation of literacy."

King said, "People say 'what a rich university' but that's the Available (University) Fund (interest from the Permanent University Fund earmarked for construction). We can't use that to pay teachers."

Instead, most of the money for teachers' salaries is appropriated by the Legislature, and "no state university is appropriated enough money for permanent faculty positions in English," King said.

Therefore the \$800,000 or so that pays lecturers comes from "soft" money, or money from temporarily vacated faculty positions in the English and other departments. This amount varies each year. Even with longevity increases, "it (the soft money-lecturer salary balance) has been a break-even situation for some time," King said.

In spring 1981, a general faculty report to the University Council stated the Department of English and the College of Liberal Arts hope "the teaching of composition will be endowed with the respect which it deserves."