

Officials differ on temporary professor use

By RENE CRAFT

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UT officials are split over the use of temporary professors, despite a recent report that claims such "temporaries" harm academic standards.

"Hiring temporary people from the industry keeps the computer sciences department in contact," said Jim Pavone, a technical coordinator in the Department of Computer Sciences.

The report, prepared by the American Association of University Professors and published in the July 30 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, cites the flexibility of temporary professors as a short-term advantage, but warns of negative long-term effects.

"The abuse of non-tenure-track appointments can undermine academic standards and lead to the erosion of the quality of undergraduate education," the report states.

"The continuing proliferation of these temporary positions — filled by underpaid instructors with low status and no job security — seems shortsighted and counterproductive."

Nevertheless, Pavone said computer sciences is an area especially suited for outside expertise in the form of temporary professors —

usually visiting lecturers and adjuncts.

He said bringing in industry experts helps keep the department up-to-date and competitive. Full-time professors, whose time is often consumed by teaching and research, cannot keep up with every new development, he said.

"It gives you more flexibility in fluctuating with the market," Pavone said.

"The field is changing every day and we need this setup" of hiring temporary teachers to keep up, Pavone said. "It gives us the perspective from other institutions and provides for a cross-breeding of ideas."

"As far as computer sciences is concerned, the arrangement seems to be mutually beneficial," he said.

But others disagree.

Joseph Kruppa, associate chairman of the Department of English, said from 1981 to 1983 the hiring of nearly 70 temporary faculty members resulted in the entire restructuring of the curriculum to eliminate the need for so many temporary professors.

"We believe people should be hired in tenure tracks or not be hired at all — except in an emergency," Kruppa said.

He said the hiring of "temporaries"

established a two-tier system of teachers in the department and led to jealousy and morale problems among the faculty.

"They were tired of lower salaries and no job security," Kruppa said.

He said many temporary professors were hired in 1981 because of a sharp increase in enrollment.

"It was an unworkable solution to the problem," Kruppa said. "We had to step back and look at ourselves and we realized we couldn't be everything to everybody."

After the decision to suspend and later cancel English 346K, a writing course, the temporary teachers were dismissed and the department has been more productive without non-tenure-track teachers, Kruppa said.

"The department functions a lot more smoothly without the two-tier system," Kruppa said.

Jarvis Ulbricht, chairman of the Department of Art, said temporary teachers are hired in the department when faculty members take a leave of absence. But he said the department usually avoids hiring them regularly.

Coleman Jennings, chairman of the Department of Drama, said only two of 29 professors recently hired were given a year-by-year contract.