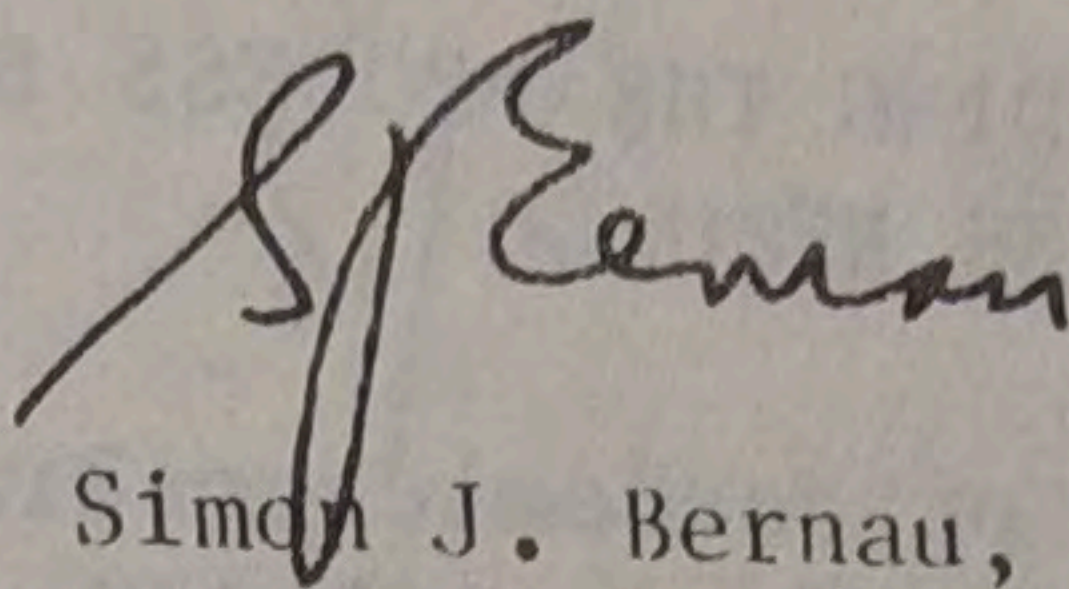


DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE REVIEWING THE E 346K ISSUE

Waneen W. Spirduso (Physical & Health Education), has forwarded the following report to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. This report will be discussed at the Faculty Senate at its next meeting on April 29, 1985.



Simon J. Bernau, Secretary
The Faculty Senate

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE REVIEWING THE E 346K ISSUE

1. POSITION REGARDING THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE DECISION TO WAIVE E 346K WAS MADE

The Faculty Senate recognizes the difficult nature of the problems facing the English Department that led to the recent decision to waive E 346K as a degree requirement for the academic year 1985-1986. The Senate recognizes that it was the view of the department's administration that the projected enrollment in E 346K for the Fall Semester, 1985, presented the department with conditions which precipitated a global waiver for one year of a course required in the degree programs of every College and School of The University of Texas. Nonetheless, the Senate does have concerns regarding the apparent absence of faculty consultation preceding or accompanying the decision. It is our view that the administration, at all levels, of a university of the first class must involve faculty in decisions of educational policy and curriculum. Our own Regents' Rules (IV. 2.1) declared that the faculty has a major role in the governance of the institution in the area of general academic policy and welfare, subject to the authority of the Board and subject further to the authority that the Board has vested in the administrative officers and subdivisions of the System. In addition, "The Board will not, except in extraordinary cases, act on important matters of academic policy until it has received, or requested and obtained, advice thereupon from the institutional faculty or faculties affected or their legislative bodies" (RR IV.1.2). The same policy should apply to the central administration of this University and to The University of Texas System. Even though emergency conditions may have existed, and even if the decision was correct, the Executive Committee which was acting for the faculty of the English Department in an emergency should have been consulted prior to the decision. Additionally, the general faculty should have been more directly informed of the decision, the rationale, and the time frame for resolving the issues. These actions would have facilitated faculty understanding and perhaps support for the decisions made by the English Department.

2. POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING THE WAIVER OF E 346K

The Faculty Senate encourages the English Department to provide a solution to the problems raised by the waiver of E 346K, as expeditiously as possible, preferably by the September or October meeting of the University Council. The University Council (April 20, 1981), the General Faculty (May 28, 1981), and President Flawn (September 17, 1982) approved E 346K as a specific degree requirement for all undergraduate students except those in Plan II and foreign students (who take E 346Q).

The Faculty Senate feels that a waiver of E 346K for longer than a year might well signal a breakdown in the processes by which educational policy, once decided by the faculty, is implemented by the English Department. Clearly, a prolonged waiver of the E 346K requirement would be unseemly in a great institution such as ours. The deletion of the upper division writing course or the failure to provide some comprehensive plan by which this writing component requirement might be fulfilled would not only ignore the Vick Committee Report recommendations, but undermine a major stride of progress in this University's war on academic mediocrity.

3. POSITION REGARDING THE PROCESS BY WHICH A SOLUTION TO THE E 346K PROBLEM MIGHT BE REACHED

A basic tenet of academic governance is that matters of educational policy are the responsibility of the faculty. The Faculty Senate urges the administration of the English Department to facilitate faculty involvement in the resolution of this issue. Faculty of the English Department are encouraged by the Faculty Senate to accept their obligation to produce, through traditional scholarly interaction, one or more solutions to the problem of staffing E 346K, working within whatever financial and other types of constraints exist. In addition, since this issue involves every degree program in the University, the English Department should be aggressive and creative in seeking faculty involvement from other departments within the University. This may include conferring with curriculum committees of various Colleges, the Educational Policy Committee of the General Faculty, or Faculty Senate or University Council subcommittees.

4. POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING APPROPRIATE ISSUES FOR THE FACULTY SENATE

Matters of individual course content, teaching methods, course standards, grading, and staffing are properly the functions of the departments offering the courses, and are not the business of the Faculty Senate. Disagreements regarding these issues should be resolved within departments, for it is highly improbable that they will be solved by shrill debate before the wider audience of the Senate. It is also assumed by academicians that intradepartmental or intra-collegial issues, especially controversial ones, that are encompassing enough to involve a large segment of the university, have been fully explored through open, objective, and scholarly exchange prior to their presentation in a university-wide forum. While unanimity is not expected on all academic issues, it is expected that collegial consensus will emerge from academic debate.