
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

February 5, 1998

Department of English
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Dear Senior:

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) requires that the University of Tennessee give a comprehensive major field exam to all graduating seniors on a five-year cycle. It is the English Department's turn this year. I'm writing this letter to tell you that your name appears on a list of probable May graduates provided by the Office of Evaluation Services.

If you are in the literature concentration *and* will be graduating in May 1998, you are *required* to take the Major Field Achievement Test in Literature on one of the following dates: Wednesday, April 15th, from 2:30 to 4:30; Thursday, April 16th, from 4 to 6; and Saturday, April 18th, from 10 to 12. The exam will be given in HSS 62. You must take the test in order to graduate. Failure to take the test means that your diploma will be held until you satisfy this requirement.

I ask now for a moment of your time to explain what's at stake here. The University stands to receive \$5.6 million if the graduates from the 14 departments to be tested during 1998-02 show an overall improvement from the last testing cycle. (We last tested 1992-1993.) If we don't improve, we could lose some or all of that money. As you now doubt know from first-hand experience over the last year or so, we need funds more than ever as other state appropriations are cut back. This is an instance where your effort can improve conditions at UTK. And although you personally may not benefit from such improvement, others will. I ask you to think of your brothers and sisters, cousins and neighbors, or even your sons and daughters to be, who might one day find themselves in the same classrooms that you've sat in. By doing your best on this test, you can make a difference in the quality of their education. Think of the instructors who inspired you to love and remember a line of poetry, who showed you the intricate structure of a novel, or who helped you develop your own voice as a writer. By doing your best of this test, you can help them do the same for students who follow after you. In short, you might look at this test as your first opportunity as an alum to contribute to your alma mater.

We need your help, which means that we need you to do your very best on this exam. The results of the exam will remain confidential. They will not appear anywhere on your transcript, nor will your performance in any way affect your GPA. Because we want you to do your best, we have created some incentives. We will award \$25 gift certificates to the top ten takers of the test. We will also provide some refreshments after the test.

To help us prepare for administering the test, please let us know when you plan to take it by calling or emailing Chana Bird, (974-5401; cjbird@utk.edu). If you feel that you are not required to take the test either because you will not graduate in May or because you are not in the literature concentration, please call so that we can verify that information. (We will receive a list of all those who have applied to graduate later in the month.)

And you can always call or email me (zomchick@utk.edu) with any questions that you may have. In the meantime, I hope that you have a good rest of the semester, and I congratulate you on a job nearly done.

Sincerely yours,

John P. Zomchick
Associate Professor
Director, Undergraduate Studies