Minutes
Faculty Senate
The University of Texas at Arlington

The Faculty Senate met in regular session Wednesday, April 23, 1997 at 2:30 p.m. in Conference Room 4, Davis Hall. Chair Rod Hissong presided.

Attendance:

Present were President Witt, Provost Wright, Chair Hissong, Senators Amster, Black, Boone, Bradshaw, Bright, Burquest, Chrzanowski, Danahay, Dunn, Ellwood, Fairbanks, Gaupp, Harvey, Ingram, Luo, Manry, McDowell, Moore, Raja, Rajeshwar, Rodnitsky, Roemer, Rome, Rycraft, Walker, Wang, Watkins, Weems, Wilmore, Wright, Wyers, Yardley, Young.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the March 26, 1997 meeting were approved.

Remarks by Chair Hissong

Faculty Senate Chair Hissong announced that the Faculty’s Development Leave Policy had been approved by the System and will be in place next fall. He then announced that the current copy of the proposed Promotion and Tenure document was being distributed.

Remarks by the President

President Witt commented on current legislation under consideration and the impact it would have on higher education. He and the provost were spending a substantial amount of time in Austin appearing before various committees, some were considering the funding of Special Line Items. Special Line Items were going into the conference committee in good shape. The President was disappointed that no one from the metroplex was appointed to the committee. He added that we were working closely with the committee members. The bill on the Fee Waiver was in progress and that four members of the UTA staff had been able to go to Austin to lend support.

The President then commented that the Faculty Development Leave Program is moving forward. The funds are available for the program. Additionally, two or three pieces of legislation that have come out of the Senate are in various stages of review. One which is to be completed in the relatively near future is the grievance procedure. A sticky point is the ability to grieve merit raise recommendations and decisions. We could possibly get caught up in an extremely large number of committees every time we go through the merit raise process. The document on the evaluation of administrators is currently under review.

Remarks by the Provost

The Provost addressed two issues. He first discussed the challenge of student retention. He has reviewed the current initiatives for student retention across the university and hopes that by September 1997 all of the units will have in place some new retention initiatives that are especially designed for that unit. He encouraged faculty to recognize the important role they play in retaining
students. He stated that this does not mean faculty are not currently active but he hoped they would become more active.

The second issue was the state of the budget. He has had two rounds of talks with the deans and one result has been more realistic figures for travel, M&O, and department expenditures. We are in the process of determining merit raises and will be able to make definite decisions only after the final State budget is passed in Austin this summer.

Questions for the President and Provost

Senator Bradshaw: The University Library Committee is planning another round of cuts. The cumulative effect of the cuts has begun to affect faculty recruitment. He spoke in support of the library and wanted the president and the director, Tom Wilding, to know someone is thinking about this.

President Witt: Witt agreed about the impact and added that Wilding and the library staff had done an extraordinary job of stretching the budget. The budget outcome will determine the amount the library can be strengthened. Tom has made bringing more electronic resources to the library the highest priority and this is expected to be a primary solution.

Provost Wright: Some requests for equipment for the Library have been approved.

Senator Young stated that he had heard that Fall applications were up dramatically and wondered if this was true.

President Witt responded that the news was good but incomplete. It may change moderately as the year progresses but he was expecting it to hold.

No further questions were asked.

Old business:

The Periodic Review of the Faculty was removed from the table for further consideration.

General discussion regarding this document included truncating all of section 2D4 beginning with sentence, “the University. . .” all the way to the bottom of the section. A motion was made to accept this cut.

Senator Ellwood objected to the truncation. He felt it provided some specificity which he felt was important.

Senator Amster felt that some specifics were not appropriate and could be deleted in order to maintain the spirit of the document.

Senator Ellwood discussed the reasons why these specifics were included and so that reasonable relevance could be recognized.

Senator Amster stated too many specifics could provide objections by various departments.
After further debate the motion to delete carried.

Senator Young asked for a definition of “good cause”.

Senator Bradshaw commented that it could refer to moral turpitude. It could also include performance reviews on post tenure review.

Senator Young stated he did not oppose the amendment, just the statement regarding, “good cause.” He recommended that it be changed to reflect something along the lines of professional incompetence.

Senator Moore called the question on the Periodic Evaluation of Tenured Faculty document.

The motion to approve the document passed.

New Business

Election of new officers. The officers for the 1997-1998 academic year were elected. Rod Hissong will be Chair, Brooks Ellwood will be Chair-elect, Michael Moore will serve as Parliamentarian, Elaine Wilmore will serve as Secretary, and Robert Young will be the COFGO representative.

A motion to consider a resolution expressing opposition to periodic evaluation of tenured faculty was made and seconded.

It was asked who would receive the resolution. The chair stated that he would send it directly to the Chancellor with copies to the president and the provost.

The resolution passed without debate.

Announcements

The chair asked the senate to remember Professor Jim Stevens, who is in poor health and had undergone extensive surgery.

Senator Moore announced some faculty were being asked to issue course evaluations beyond the normal forms. These are trial evaluations that might be used next fall across the university.

The chair thanked the body for its hard work this year.

A motion to adjourn was made and carried.