Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
University of Texas Arlington
January 28, 1998

Attendance
Senators Amster, H., Beehler, P., Bedow, J., Bradshaw, D., Bright, E., Cantwell, D., Chrzanowski, T., Crowder, W., Ellwood, B., Feigenbaum, I., Linguistics; Harvey, J., Mathematics; Irmhahn, S., Ingram, T., Kellner, H., Luo, T., Maizlish, S., Matthys, J., Moore, M., Morrow, E., Munch, J., Nelson, K., Payne, F., Price, K., Rajeshwar, K., Rodnitzky, J., Roemer, K., Rome, R., Rycraft, J., Terrel, G.; Wilmore, E., Wright, B., Yardley, M., Young, R., Barber, T.J., Student Government; Wilding, T., Library; Witt, R., President; Wright, G., Provost and Hissong, R., Chair. Guest Speakers: Dr. Henderson, Dr. Smith, and Dr. Lancaster.

Call to Order
Rod Hissong, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes
The Chair called for the approval of the minutes of the December 3, 1997 Faculty Senate meeting. The minutes were approved.

Remarks by Faculty Senate Chair
The Senate observed a moment of silence in observance of the death of Dalmas Taylor, former Provost of the University of Texas at Arlington.

The Chair reported that teaching workload figures were being compiled by the administration.

The Chair briefly described how professors will be chosen for Post Tenure Review; to begin Fall Semester 1998. In 1998, the group will include professors who earned tenure or were promoted to full professor in 1992, and anyone who earned tenure in one of the following years: 1986, 1980, 1974, 1968, 1962, 1956, or 1950. Professors who were promoted between 1992 and 1998, from associate to full professor will be reviewed six years from the date of that promotion. Any time a professor is promoted, the Post-Tenure Review clock starts over.

Remarks by the President
The President reported that he had reviewed the Tenure and Promotion and the Grievance Procedure documents and had passed suggestions on to the Chair. Maybe in two or three cases of each document, he would probably flag a section for System review. Both documents are virtually complete.

At their February meeting, the Regents will approve a general procedure for the evaluation of administrators. It is a document that I believe we can work with and end up with a procedure with which we are comfortable. (A copy of the policy was distributed) As soon as it is officially approved by the Regents we can work toward a UTA policy for the evaluation of administrators.

Everything seems to be on track with Post-Tenure Review.
UTA recently hosted, thanks to Mr. Gordon Appleman of Fort Worth, the Executive Committee of the Chancellor’s Council; major donors to the UT System. It is impossible to overstate how well UTA impressed the group.

Dr. Moore, Dr. Henderson, Dr. Smith and Dr. Lancaster demonstrated our digital distance education initiatives. Chancellor Cunningham felt that what we are doing is substantially ahead of anything being done elsewhere in the UT System.

Dr. Heusinkfeld and Dr. Bailey made impressive presentations. Several of the Chancellor’s Council members, graduates of U.T. Austin, agreed that while their alumni loyalty is clearly to the Austin campus, they are prepared to work with this University because something this strong in their own back yard deserves to be supported. The President thanked everyone who helped make that happen over the weekend.

Teaching workload information is being prepared. The request indicated that workload credits for teaching in labs should be excluded in computing the averages requested. It will be presented in the requested format. The President will provide some supplementary information that takes into account workloads assigned to formal instruction and labs because he is a little concerned that some of our colleagues in Engineering and Sciences could feel that the averages that are presented that exclude that data might not accurately reflect their workloads.

At the close of late registration we will have approximately 18,500 students. We are now in the process of re-enrolling students, as they pay tuition, who did not pay tuition on time. We will have, by the 20th day of class, our spring enrollment figures.

The President is still committed to faculty and staff merit raises next year in the two percent range. The final percent will depend upon Fall 1998 enrollment.

The President acknowledged that some of the reorganization in the central administration has given rise to rumors regarding the elimination of faculty positions. The administration has no plans to eliminate faculty positions. There will continue to be some consolidation in the central administration. The administration is trying to do everything possible to economize and free up dollars on the administrative side and to stay away from, as much as possible, having to force economies and efficiencies on the instructional employment side.

Comments from the Provost
The Provost had no formal comments.

Questions for the President and the Provost
Senator Ellwood asked if the University had any plans to establish a shuttle system that would bring students from the planned rail system between Dallas and Fort Worth. The President responded that he did not know at this time, but he would check with Shirley Binder and find out. He commented that UTA has intensified recruiting efforts in the eastern part of the metroplex.
Guest Speakers
Digital Distance Education speakers were Dr. Henderson, Dr. Smith, Dr. Lancaster, and Dr. Moore. Dr. Burl Henderson, the coordinator of the digital distance education program, introduced all speakers.

The group presented a short demonstration of digital three-hour course taught by Dr. Moore and designed to work on a web browser. Dr. Moore indicated that approximately 60 percent of our students are visual learners. The distance education program works ideally for those students. Also, distance education is ideal for students who would not normally be able to attend due to work schedules, home life, etc.

Senator Rodnitzky pointed out that other universities, such as Stanford, offer inexpensive distance education on the Masters level. He questioned the competitiveness of UTA against those universities. Dr. Moore responded that through the use of distance education, UTA could offer courses on a more general level, and be more accessible to more students. Students also would be able to learn at their own pace and in a manner that would allow greater student control.

President Witt responded that other universities have questioned how they will handle distance education. UTA is on track with distance education and having this available on the net may help to improve on-campus education, as well as off-campus education.

Dr. Moore stated that distance education does not mean “miles”, but it does mean “availability”.

Senator Bradshaw asked what the commitment for workload on professors would be in terms of hours, teaching load, etc.

Dr. Moore responded that distance education does require significant time for initial development of each course. There is also a lot of time involved in responding to e-mail questions from students. He later added that distance education is designed to stand with minimal updating. Technology will improve distance education as time goes on. The video components do not refer to temporal references.

Senator Amster suggested that certain survey information should be made available to traditional classroom students. She asked how distance education students could obtain the same benefits as traditional classroom students who have access to interactive discussions. Dr. Moore responded that chat rooms could function in the same capacity.

Senator Cantwell recommended that an evaluation of time, terms of cost, effort, and level of return be obtained.

Dr. Moore responded that he is very comfortable with all aspects of the distance education program. Dr. Smith added that distance education will provide quality education, and it will recoup its development costs. Development of Dr. Moore’s course has involved about 5,000 work hours. The development cost of this, however, will be recouped. Dr. Henderson stated that there are some courses, however, for which distance education will not work.
President Witt stated that part of the University’s strategy is to move forward. We are working with significant associates in order to provide quality education. Partnerships with Silicon Graphics and GTE will help us to keep our focus on education instead of on technology.

Dr. Henderson reminded everyone that distance education is a tool that allows us to reach more students who may not otherwise be able to attend UTA.

Mr. Barber, of Student Congress, asked if any thought had been given to putting the coursework on CD-ROM instead of waiting for advances in technology. Dr. Moore answered that it would take a lot of CDs. About 25 gigabytes equal about 25 CDs, so it is not an option at this time. Dr. Lancaster responded that CDs would limit certain features of the course. For instance, a student would lose the feature of being able to e-mail questions, interact on chat rooms, take advantage of library resources, web pages, etc.

Senator Cantwell asked if it was possible to have a web chat room to contact regarding this. Dr. Smith answered that the web page is distance.uta.edu. People can contact this web site and discuss all these issues.

Committee Reports
Bill Crowder, Economics, Chair of the Tenure and Academic Freedom of Responsibilities Committee reported that the committee was reviewing the President’s suggested revisions of the University Tenure and Promotion document. A revised Tenure and Promotion document will be e-mailed to each of the Faculty Senate members along with the President’s suggested revisions and the committee’s suggested revisions. This will be available for the March Faculty Senate meeting in order to be able to make final decisions at that meeting and then send it on through the system.

There were no additional committee reports.

Old Business
Regarding merit raises and adding new faculty, Chair Hissong asked Faculty Senate members to survey their departments. Hissong deferred the discussion until the introduction of the Rodnitzky Resolution.

New Business
Handouts were available regarding the “Suggested Guidelines for Departments and Equivalent Units”. Senator Moore stated that as a part of the Post-Tenure and Review document, each department requires an evaluation to determine if a faculty member has met a minimum satisfactory performance. That was not defined anywhere and was left up to each department to determine. He asked Faculty Senate members to consider the document (first page only) as guidelines for departments to follow in developing minimum satisfactory performance standards. A motion was made to approve the resolution items 1-6. The motion was seconded.

In debate, Senator Bradshaw asked if the Senate was to be responsible for moving this around campus to each faculty member. This was confirmed.
Senator Payne asked for a definition of the term “formal.” Chair Hissong responded that, in his opinion, it is policies and procedures that are written down and made available to people who want to review them and see what process is going to be considered in terms of post-tenure review. Senator Bradshaw added that it is formal and not content full. There was no further debate. The Resolution passed.

The Rodnitzky Resolution addressed merit raises and new faculty. Senator Bradshaw commented that UTA needs to hang on to their good professors. He suggested that merit raises help do that. Given the current situation, merit raises are probably more important than new hires.

Senator Rycraft asked what “new faculty” meant. Did it refer to new faculty additions or to new faculty replacements. Until that was answered, it was difficult to make a determination.

Hearing no further feedback or debate, a motion to introduce the Rodnitzky Resolution was made and seconded.

Senator Rodnitzky made a clarification to his resolution by adding “or administrators” to item number two, first line, to be read, “...to hire additional faculty or administrators while...”

Senator Amster understood that each department was to get a poll on how each department felt on this issue. She obtained a poll from her department and ascertained that each department has different needs, and her department has a problem with regard to temporary positions and inability to recruit regular faculty. Those who remain must serve on committees and do a good deal of administrative work and graduate supervision, that for some, is a big problem. We need to fill existing positions and supplement the size of the faculty. Maybe other departments have different needs. She expressed concern over having to set limits on an overall basis, when the needs vary so dramatically across departments.

Senator Ellwood pointed out that there should be freedom for the administration to redesign the staff, as necessary.

Senator Cantwell stated that these were merely statements of sentiment and appeared to be quite rational. He recommended the resolution be passed.

Senator Wilmore followed up on statements made by Senator Amster regarding autonomy for individual departments. Individual departments know best what their needs are. She supports, therefore, Senator Amster in regard to autonomy for units to work together and meet their needs.

Senator Young stated that autonomy is a double-edged sword and asked what was the administration’s stand on this.

President Witt responded that the resolution is important. Departments should encourage faculty input. He advised caution because such a vote could be destructive to the collegiality of the department. Without unanimity, the vote may have a lasting negative effect. Before a decision is made with regard to should there be or not be merit raises, there must be more consultation. In the end, the decision must be made. No decision will make everyone happy.
The question was called and the resolution was passed.

Announcements
Senator Cantwell suggested an item be added to the next agenda regarding the roll-around cabinets in the library.

T. J. Barber announced the passage of a resolution regarding the Internet Book Swap. Work is being done to put this in place. The second resolution concerns a National Student Exchange that has passed. He also asked all faculty and staff report burned out light bulbs and dark areas to Student Congress’ Night Walk. Student Congress can be contacted at extension 2293.

Senator Amster wished information on the budget for construction, particularly with regard to the expansion of the library. She also wished to discuss expansion of space for journals. With materials becoming available on-line, she questions the need for this expansion. Senator Wright responded that the hard copy journals are irreplaceable. As an art historian, the color prints in those volumes cannot be duplicated adequately. Be alert to the differences between the actual prints and downloaded duplicates.

Mr. Barber announced that February 8-14 is homecoming week. Student Congress is sponsoring on February 13th as UTA Friday. Anyone wearing UTA apparel, blue and white, is entitled to a 10 percent discount from dining services.

Adjournment
A motion was made and seconded for adjournment.