Faculty Senate Meeting
September 24, 1997

The Faculty Senate met in regular session Wednesday, September 24, 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, and Senators: Amster, Beehler, Bradshaw, Bright, Crowder, Devarajan, Jones, Baloun, William for Ellwood, Feigenbaum, Gaupp, Harvey, Imrhan, Kellner, Maizlish, Matthys, Moore, Morrow, Munch, McDowell, Nelson, Price, Raja, Rodnitzky, Roemer, Rome, Rycraft, Terrell, Watkins, Wilmore, Wright, Wyers, Yardley, Young, and Ex Officio Members: Barber, Student Government; Saxon for Wilding, Library.

Call to Order
Rod Hissong, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed new and continuing members.

Approval of Minutes
Chair Hissong called for the approval of the minutes of the April 22, 1997, Faculty Senate meeting. The minutes were approved.

Remarks by Faculty Senate Chair
Chair Hissong stated that he is going all electronic by the end of the semester. Call him if any problems in receiving senate information arise.

The System approved the Post Tenure Review document and the Board of Regents will consider it at their next meeting. The Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom and Responsibilities will review the Tenure and Promotion document. The university continues to work with tight budget constraints. The Budget Liaison Committee will work closely with the administration with regard to this issue.

The current distance education policy is vague. The Senate will provide the faculty's perspective. The faculty is particularly interested in issues regarding preparation, revisions, and the long-term use of digitized courses. These issues are also being addressed at the UT System level.

Another issue that affects the faculty is the core curriculum mandate that sets the number of hours transferable from one institution to another.

Remarks by President Witt
At the General Faculty meeting, it was indicated that the enrollment figures through the past year were disappointing. Final figures showed enrollment was 19,779. New policy changes did not help as much as hoped. Originally bills were to be paid by Census Day. That has been moved to the 20th class day. This means students delayed paying their bills and waited to see how their classes were progressing before dropping. At this time, the university has dropped 511 students for non-payment, bringing the total enrollment to 19,268 students.

The University has been trying to accommodate reinstatement of students. The main issue affecting enrollment is retention. Applications and admission
figures increased but maintaining enrollment is a problem. The SAT scores are significantly higher than last year. A study indicates that TCJC Southeast campus has accepted many of the students UTA admitted. DCCD, TCJC, and Collin County will be working with UTA in coordinating student movement into UTA degree program.

We need to have courses that students need, when they need them, including evenings and weekends. There is a problem with providing the courses and providing the faculty to teach these courses. There must be a balance between courses offered and faculty available and interested in teaching these courses at the times the students require.

The Post Tenure Review document has only three minor changes; two regarding punctuation and one regarding the word “tenure” and its usage in a particular paragraph. The document will be presented to the Board of Regents.

Two Faculty Senate proposals in process were discussed. Regarding the Promotion and Tenure document, President Witt indicated that he was supportive of a grievance procedure but that the current draft provided for multiple grievances and that this could be cumbersome. Regarding the draft Grievance Procedure, President Witt expressed concern with its complexity but strongly supported the need for a procedure.

In October, the Coordinating Board will discuss and consider approving the continuation of programs of all currently enrolled Humanities Ph.D. students.

Remarks by the Provost
The Provost welcomed new members. He discussed his responsibilities and experiences during his three years as Provost. Many have been ongoing. He expressed concern over the demand for courses and matching the course demand with faculty availability. He mentioned the new faculty development leave program as an accomplishment. Eleven faculty members, although more were deserving, received a development leave this fall.

He noted that Dale Anderson, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate School, helped faculty members in the areas of research and the indirect return policy. Dale suggested that a larger portion of funds be returned to research projects, even if it was a small amount. This provides more money to departments that use it for needed equipment.

Central administration now pays the computer hookup charges; instead of the departments. The entire university will have internet access by the end of the academic year.

Merit pay increases continue to be a priority. We will set aside funds for additional faculty merit raises.

The provost devotes at least one day a week to student retention. He has concluded that the university needs to better coordinate its efforts. One suggestion is that we employ supplemental instructors. Also, some have suggested using graduate students as mentors for incoming undergraduate students.
Faculty members can affect retention rates. If all 600 faculty members made a
difference for each student who enrolled, UTA could maintain a higher degree of
retention.

Questions for the President and the Provost
Senator Rodnitzky inquired about the average salary increase. President Witt
answered that he believed it was approximately 3%. Although he did not have
that exact information at hand, he would provide it.

Senator Maizlish asked what percentage of the faculty received a merit raise.
President Witt estimated it to be approximately 75-80% at some level. He will
provide a summary document in the future.

Senator Myers questioned percentages for merit increases for the staff except
for faculty. President Witt responded that he believed the merit increases,
received by the majority of UTA staff, in addition to the legislated $100.00 per
month raise had produced large percentage increases for some.

Senator Kellner inquired that (for faculty) if 25% may not have received merit
raises, has this been widespread? President Witt responded affirmatively and
indicated that merit increases were considered on the basis of teaching,
research, and service. The Provost interjected that he had met with the
college deans and department chairs regarding merit-based pay raises. He felt
that teachers were as meritorious as researchers. He and the President both
wanted to look at the “total,” teaching, research, and service.

Senator Maizlish inquired about the statistics regarding work load increase.
President Witt responded that he would get this information to you. Average
organized class loads did go up across UTA and will go up again due to 1/4 loss
of enrollment that means a loss of formula funding. He stated that one
problem is trying to maintain merit raises with fewer resources.

Senator Young asked President Witt to refute or confirm rumors of pressure to
put tenured faculty in lower division teaching positions. President Witt
responded that legislative action had resulted in a change in formula funding
policies. There is now a premium or “bonus” paid for semester credit hours
produced by tenure track faculty. A decrease in enrollment results in a
decrease in formula funding. He indicated that increased involvement by
 tenure track faculty could help. This could also tie money to performance
variables. Other discussion of formula funding also included the emphasis
formula funding places on graduate level courses over undergraduate level
courses. President Witt stated UTA needs to establish a better balance between
undergraduate and graduate level courses in regard to formula funding.

Senator Amster voiced concern over the reserve for salary increases for
gender equity. President Witt stated that the university had set aside some
money for gender inequities such as in Social Work and other departments.
Adjustments still need to be made. Faculty should contact Mary Ridgway for
additional information regarding structural inequities.

President referred to the Facilities Update handout regarding projects
completed during the 1996-1997 fiscal year and projects scheduled for
completion this fiscal year. He noted that changes have been made in the
organizational chart and discussed budget reductions in Finance and Administration. He emphasized the need for reinvestment in recruiting and retention.

Old Business
None.

New Business and Adjournment
Chair Hissong discussed the need for committee assignments and how the group could divide in order to make those assignments.

Chair Hissong asked for announcements and received none. He asked for a motion for adjournment effective immediately after completing committee assignments. The motion was made and seconded.