

Thanks to the UT Faculty and Staff

A Letter to Members of the Campus Community

September 11, 2000

The University of Texas at Austin

Dear Colleague,

I want to thank you, our faculty and staff, for your service to students, colleagues, and the people of Texas last week. I know that some of you did so even while feeling great concern over issues that have been under discussion in recent months. I honor and thank all who were at their posts. This University has a special place in this world, and its work is not ordinary. It is both appropriate and important that we find a way to work out our internal problems without removing The University's value, even temporarily, from those for whom we exist to serve.

You have my personal commitment that progress on employment issues will remain at the top of my priorities. Our new Vice President for Employee and Campus Services, Pat Clubb, and our new Director of the Office of Human Resources, Kyle Cavanaugh, are talented leaders who bring valuable new ideas and new energy to the scene. Their initiative to form an elected Staff Council will soon provide a sounder basis for giving staff a greater voice in the formulation of University policies. I am already working, not only with Pat and Kyle, but also with all vice presidents and deans, and with many others on the campus to formulate a budget policy for next year that can support the greatest possible improvement of pay and benefits for faculty, staff, and graduate assistants.

For the next legislative session, starting in January, improved compensation will be the University's most important goal. Beginning with our first hearings, later this month, in preparation for the coming legislative session, I will emphasize the need for the State to address compensation systematically and broadly. The compensation problems that we face are not unique to us. They apply to all state workers, certainly in the Austin area. The very breadth of the need should help to focus legislative attention on the issue.

In the end, we need to recognize that all of us have a hand in setting the character of the University as a workplace. Decisions about resources, work conditions, and relationships among coworkers on this campus are made by you, me, and thousands of our colleagues every day. This is a time when we are questioning our habits and policies as a community. That's a good thing, and it will lead to improvement. Progress will involve all of us.

As we proceed, let us remember that this is indeed no ordinary place--that great things have been made possible in countless lives, over generations, by the consistent commitment of people here at the University.

I thank you for that commitment.

Sincerely,

Larry R. Faulkner