

Workload vote draws praise from faculty

By MIKE COX

Staff Writer

The University of Texas tower wasn't bathed in orange light Tuesday night, but if a lot of UT professors had their way, it probably would have been.

Had the victory lights been on, it would have been in honor of the Texas legislature, which now seems certain to tone down its position on faculty workloads at state colleges and universities.

Monday night a House-Senate committee junked a Senate rider setting strict faculty workloads and approved instead a milder provision that faculty workloads should achieve "maximum effectiveness in teaching effort in relation to student enrollment."

"I'm very happy to see it," said English professor Dr. James L. Kinneavy. "I think if a mandatory nine-hour workload had gone through, it would have had disastrous effects," he said. "It would have made it very difficult to hire top senior professors or top people in any field."

Too, he said, it simply would have been "very difficult to carry at least nine hours of teaching."

In his case, he said, he is in charge of UT's freshman English program, which involves 10,000 students.

"That program is bigger than some universities," he said. "I don't see how I could have taught three courses and run the program, too."

The threat of legislature-imposed workloads apparently has passed, but the issue itself is still very much alive. In fact, a committee appointed by the UT Faculty Senate plans to spend the summer studying the issue.

The committee, named by Faculty Senate chairman Dr. William Livingston, already has met twice.

Livingston created the group earlier this month based on a resolution approved by the faculty last March. That resolution, among other things, said the faculty would work toward establishing a mechanism to review faculty workload to "ensure prompt elimination of any and all fraudulent, misleading or vague reporting of courses taught or of faculty teaching loads."