

# Honored professor plans to leave UT

## Frost uses award ceremony to blast University's approach to education

**Steve Higginbotham**

Daily Texan Staff

At an awards ceremony held to honor her and a fellow professor, a UT associate professor of English charged that the University has robbed students of their educations and later announced her plans to find other employment.

"In my University, in my department, undergraduate teaching does not count," said Kate Frost.

Frost, who has worked for the University since 1974, and Robert Prentice, associate professor of business law, were honored by the Students' Association Policy Committee at an awards ceremony held to laud the teachers' outstanding achievements.

The ceremony — titled "The Last Lecture Series" — gave the professors the opportunity to speak as if it were their last lecture.

"Teaching excellence and a dollar will get you a cup of coffee at this University," said Frost, who accepted her award on behalf of 56 teachers her classes selected as exceptional.

Less than two hours after receiving her award, Frost said she is "actively seeking other employment," adding that she plans to leave the University in May.

Frost said the concept of the university has changed from its beginnings in the Middle Ages when students gathered together to discuss philosophy.

"It certainly wasn't about boards, faculty and regents. The students got there first," she said. "The university should be taught by professors and assisted by administrators. Is this what you see around you? Folks, you were robbed."

The Texas educational system, Frost said, does not want its students educated — the system wants students "certified." "Educated children ask questions — and rock boats," she said.

Frost said change must begin with the students, and urged them to "get off your duffs and take back your University."

"Why must you wait in lines like Russians to get a monster-class like E316K?" she asked.

Frost said the scene last summer of one Chinese student fending off a column of tanks in his fight for free-

dom changed her, and she encouraged UT students to learn from his courage.

"Can you do less for your education, which is your freedom?" Frost asked. "He was just one student. Think of 38,000 students and a tank."

In a February speech to the Faculty Senate, UT President William Cunningham said he believes the University's "traditionally keen focus on undergraduate education has become blurred, and that we must recommit ourselves during the next few years to a heightened concentration on the undergraduate program."

Amid much controversy, UT officials added 50 new faculty positions in late January to reduce the student to teacher ratios.

During her speech, Frost also stressed the University's lack of concern for writing courses, citing the closure of English writing labs.

"Once upon a time you could get a lot of help in writing courses," she said. "Then the teaching of writing became expensive," because of the amount of time and effort it takes to teach the courses.

Frost said teaching writing courses, which was once held as a job of importance, is now looked down upon.

"Everybody who's anybody didn't want to teach writing. I heard one professor say 'Composition stinks,'" Frost said.

She also said that too often professors put publishing papers and books above teaching. "Publication gets raises, tenures and promotions," she said.

Heavy dependence on graduate students for teaching lower and upper division English classes is another reason students are not receiving an adequate education, she added.

"Last semester, out of the 57 sessions of English 306, 100 percent were taught by graduates," Frost said. "This spring, out of 45 sessions, 37 sessions are taught by graduate students still struggling with their own work."

Frost, who received a standing ovation after her speech, added the biggest gripe she received from her students was "professors who leave all their teaching to TAs and disappear to do their research."