

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, CAP, as the committee charged with advising the president and provost about the allocation of our academic resources, has taken on the task of assessing our practices around "what is a course?" There are as many answers to this question as there are courses; we are not an institution where the menu is restricted to large lectures, TA run laboratories and recitations with an admixture of upper division small seminars. Given the diversity of pedagogical and scholarly approaches found at the College, we cannot seek a "one-size fits all" solution. Instead, we invite you to reflect on what we have learned so far about how departments and the College construct (and deconstruct) faculty teaching.

Faculty work hard to build experiences both inside and outside of the classroom that enable students to grow in their discipline. Some of these experiences are more demanding of faculty resources than others. Since our faculty size is essentially fixed, and our scholarly and pedagogical vision so expansive, a resource intensive activity in one area requires that another area scale back.

Faculty at the College also take on a substantial weight of administrative work, as department chairs, program directors and through work on committees major, minor and ad hoc. Until we can determine how to add more hours to the day, resources devoted to this work must also be weighed with those given over to teaching.

Below you will find a summary of the information we have gathered from you and some of the questions we have begun to raise. As the Middle States review team notes in its report of 1999:

"The college continues to enjoy a well-deserved reputation of high expectation and achievement by its faculty. Faculty are respected members of the national scholarly community. They offer a significant array of courses and curricula and are teaching professors of the highest order. However, even with a solid endowment and generous financial support of alumnae, trustees, and friends, it is clear that the institution cannot do everything in these domains that faculty might wish. It is vital, then, that the faculty continue to involve themselves, take leadership in, and claim ownership of the ongoing discussions that will determine the academic direction of the institution in the years to come. The important planning process, which will lead to a focus in academic priorities for the institution, can only be successful with the complete intellectual perspective and contributions of the faculty."

We look forward to our conversations and the perspectives we all can bring to the table.

Committee on Academic Priorities

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Small and unenrolled courses

Current Practices

- A few departments will cancel when fewer than 5 students pre-enroll
- Some faculty will get a de facto course release if no students materialize

Comments , Questions and Options

- More than 8% of our courses (excluding senior research/capstone courses/graduate courses) have fewer than 5 students enrolled – this is the equivalent of more than 8 FTE annually
- Roughly half of these courses are at the 100, 200 level
- Distribution of small courses across the divisions parallels the total distribution of courses across the divisions
- Some of these courses make regular appearances in the curriculum
- Is 5 a suitable cut-off? (An additional 4% of the courses taught each year fall into this category)
- Should we reduce the number of these courses that enroll so few students and free some additional resources?
- Can some of these courses be taught in alternate years? Alternate with Haverford?
- When and how should such courses be cancelled?
- How can we avoid the under-enrollment of courses offered by new and interim (replacement) members of the faculty?
- If a course is cancelled but the faculty member is "under contract" (i.e. everyone but the single course folks), how should we regard the faculty member's future obligations?

Senior experience (seminar, conference, thesis, research)

Current Practices

Three basic models:

- Everyone (or nearly everyone) in department gets a course credit for participating in sr experience
- No one gets any credit (departments w/ this practice include departments with few majors and those with 15 or more)
- There is a structured course and those teaching it get credit
 - Variations on these themes:
 - 1 course to each person participating in a senior seminar/supervising senior theses (majority of faculty in department participate)
 - 1/2 course to each person participating in a senior seminar/ supervising senior theses (majority of faculty in department participate)
 - Credit for supervision when have more than x students
 - Supervise x students and get a release.
 - Each faculty participating in senior seminar gets a full course credit

Comments , Questions and Options

- There are almost as many ways of structuring the capstone experience as there are departments
- The college devotes substantial resources to this; one rough estimate puts it at 25% of the teaching FTE.

- The resources devoted to this are not evenly spread around the college; for example, there are similar departments with similarly structured senior experiences where one department gives credit to all faculty, and the other gives no credit.
- We place a high value on the engagement of students and faculty in scholarship, how do we distribute the resources to support it across the college?

Large courses/Multiple sections

Current Practices

- When enrollment exceeds 45 in 100, 200 courses → give 2 course credit
- When enrollment exceeds 50 → give 2 course credit
- When enrollment exceeds 25 in 300 level courses → give 2 course credit
- Large enrollments in a sectioned course (>45/section) → give 1.5 course credit/section
- Large enrollments in a sectioned course (ca. 40/section) → give 1.5 course credit/section
- Large enrollments

Comments , Questions and Options

- About 7% of our courses have 40 or more students, most of these are in the sciences and social sciences
- About 4% of course exceed 50 students, and roughly 1% exceed 75 students
- The general practice seems to be courses are sectioned when they reach the neighborhood of 50.
- Should large courses get increased credit when they are not sectioned? Or must they be sectioned?
- Should we give double credit for two sections of the same course?
- Should courses that get instructional support (e.g. TAs and/or graders) be treated differently from those that do? Or should graders not be provided if a faculty member gets two credits??
- How does the presence of a TA play into the course equivalency, especially if the equivalency is >1.
- What role does and should workload (e.g. writing intensive, praxis, etc.) play in choosing a limit?

Team teaching

Current Practices

- course with n faculty counts as $\frac{1}{n}$ course for each participating faculty member
- course with n faculty counts as 1 course for each participating faculty member
 - large courses (ca. 60 students)
 - not so large enrollments
- Minimal participation in a course (2-4 lectures in a term) is generally for the pleasure of the students and faculty involved

Comments , Questions and Options

- What are the circumstances under which a single course, taught by 2 or more faculty, ought to be considered as a full course for each participating faculty member? We have a few faculty members who seem to teach with others more often than "the norm." That means that over a period of time these individuals teach fewer courses and less of a range of courses. Is this

fruitful? Might a new team-taught course count more in terms of faculty FTE than a recurrent one?

Courses with laboratories

Current Practices

Note: We are not addressing here courses in which lab coordinators participate; lab coordinators generally teach 200 or more students per year (median load/FTE for the whole faculty is about 75). The labs meet 3 to 4 hours per week per section (typically 3 to 5 sections per week per semester), and coordinators themselves are present during that time. Coordinators also develop new labs, supervise TAs, order supplies, monitor and troubleshoot equipment. This is a full load.

- Course with lab supervised by instructor counts:
 - Slightly more than one course
 - Counts as 1.5 courses
 - Counts as 2 courses
 - Lectures counts as 1 course, each section of lab counts as a course
- Double lab (8 hr/wk for student) count as 2 courses
- Courses with labs supervised by TA count as 1.5
- Pure lab course (no lecture) counts as 1.5

Comments , Questions and Options

- Practices vary widely by department, and depend to some extent on extant staffing in the department (e.g. teaching post-docs).
- Safety of students is an issue; maintenance of expensive, delicate instrumentation is also a need
- What role do contact hours play? Instrumentation trouble-shooting?
- Does the presence of graduate TAs, undergrad TAs, external TAs affect the labor invested in labs?

Course reduction for chairs/program directors/committees

Current Practices

- Most departments take the reduction (the 3 smallest, in terms of majors, do not)
- A few programs do regularly, a few do on occasion
- CAP, CA and IRB chairs get one course release per year

Comments , Questions and Options

- Should this be true for all departments and programs?
- Cost to the college would be about 6 FTE/yr if this went to all dept/program + CAP, CA and IRB
- If not, how to decide when a department/program should have a course release?
- Could some departments that currently use one, no longer do so if provided with some other support (e.g. more secretarial support)? What would that support consist of?
- Should we consider a menu of options? For example, might there be an option for a stipend, or extra research funds, or a course release?

Course reduction for new faculty

Current Practices

- This is not college policy, but negotiated with the provost by each new hire.
- Most new faculty seem to get some sort of teaching reduction; appears to be a standard recruiting option in some fields.

Comments , Questions and Options

- What is the purpose of giving this, in the context of our jr faculty leave?
- Should we give this as a matter of course, or???
- How should this be funded when granted? Department must swallow the course? Replaced?
- Is the teaching reduction for first year only?

Graduate teaching and research supervision

Current Practices

- Taught congruently with an undergraduate section, count in some departments as a single course, in others count as an extra course
- Do count as part of faculty load
- Don't count as part of faculty load

Comments , Questions and Options

- Devise a formula, perhaps five tutorials equal one unit of teaching
- Similar to above for graduate tutorials, five graduated doctoral students and or ten doctoral committees (perhaps a mixture of these) equals one teaching unit.
- Similar to the issues raised about the senior experience. Graduate education is costly, how do we allocate resources to both support this endeavor and reduce its expense.