

Synergia

1. The interaction of two or more forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects.

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TOWARD A MORE CONCRETE UNDER- STANDING OF FACULTY WORKLOAD ISSUES



Andrew Scheiber, English
Department

It's no news that the American work week continues to lengthen, and that distance-working technology allows the workplace increasingly to encroach on the time and space once reserved for family, leisure, and other important areas of personal development. In academia this incursion is intensified by increasing performance expectations (especially in teaching and scholarship), and is masked by the fact that many professional activities (research, class preparation, evaluation of student work) are performed at locations other than the workplace, especially at home.

As a chair of a department with more than its share of hardworking, professionally active faculty members, I believe that as a moral and a practical matter we need to recognize some reasonable limit on the number of work hours that can be *expected* of us as a condition of remaining in good standing as employees. For

reasons mentioned above it's not easy to get an empirical account of workload issues, so I'll frame the issue in the somewhat artificial terms that follow.

In modern industrial democracies the 40-hour work week has been an established benchmark for preserving the non-work hours necessary for recuperation, recreation, and reflection—so much so that the employer must normally purchase any time beyond these 40 work hours at an overtime premium. If we assume that a reasonable annualized workload is the equivalent of the hourly worker's 40-hour week, 50 weeks a year (allowing for 2 weeks' vacation time), we arrive at an annual work load of 2,000 hours.

Beginning this year in the College of Arts & Sciences, faculty will be assessed on a rough formula of 50% teaching and advising, 30% scholarship and professional engagement, and 20% service. Assuming we ought to allocate our time and energy in a manner proportional to how we're actually evaluated, *and* assuming a work year of 2,000 hours, we can arrive at the following division of working hours that may be *reasonably* expected of us:

- Teaching: 1,000 hours per annum
- Scholarship and professional engagement: 600 hours per annum
- Service: 400 hours per annum

The problem, of course, is that these activities are not evenly distributed across the calendar year. Teaching duties, for instance, are concentrated in the two "regular" 14-week semesters (at least for

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most faculty members with undergraduate appointments). This represents a basic work-hour commitment *during the semester* of 35.7 hours per week (1,000 divided by 28 weeks) for *teaching and advising alone*.

If we make similar assumptions with respect to the calendar distribution of service activities, we need to add an additional workload expectation of 14 hours to each week of the regular semester (400 hours per annum divided by 28 weeks of regular semester duties). This means that, *leaving aside time spent on scholarship and professional engagement*, full-time faculty ought to expect to put in about 50 hours per week during the course of a regular 14-week semester on their regular duties of teaching and

service (35.7 teaching hours + 14 service hours).

This figure of 50 hours doesn't include time spent on scholarly and other professional activities, which are weighted at 30% of our evaluation as faculty members. Some of these hours (preparation and delivery of papers at professional conferences, for instance) occur during the 28 "teaching weeks" of the year. But in practice I suspect that most of our work in this category is telescoped into those weeks when we are not occupied with the duties of the regular academic semesters. There are 24 such weeks in the year, distributed across January, summer, and Spring breaks. In order to accomplish the 600 annual hours of work in this category one would need to work on research or other professional activities an average of 25 hours in each of these "non-teaching" weeks (600 hours divided by 24 weeks).

Still it's the teaching part of our work that seems to me most implicated in our workload concerns, so let me tease that out a little more. If we hold constant the assumptions that a full-time job is 2,000 hours of work per annum and that teaching is 50% of our work as faculty members, a six-course faculty load works out to a time investment on the faculty member's part of *167 hours per course* (1,000 hours divided by 6).

I don't know about other departments, but for English that seems like a woefully low number for total per-week teaching hours. If my sense of this is accurate, it suggests that our efforts as teachers are subsidized either by borrowing without repayment from hours that should otherwise be allocated to scholarship or service, or (more likely) contributing what is essentially unpaid overtime by working in excess of 2000 hours a year—an uncompensated overage that is purloined from family or personal time.

I realize these calculations are somewhat artificial, but I think it's important to try to identify some quantitative hourly norms for what constitutes a reasonable expectation and allocation of our work efforts. It's neither reasonable nor humane (nor moral, in light of Catholic teaching on the dignity of the worker) to formulate expectations for faculty performance that would require work commitments significantly in excess of the equivalent of full-time hourly employment.

In light of such considerations, it seems to me that there are some key questions that need more concrete consideration than has thus far been given in the defining and calibrating of expectations for faculty.

1. Is it reasonable to assume that a full-time faculty member can perform all of his or her responsibilities at a satisfactory level or better in 2000 work hours per annum, or is it necessary for faculty to contribute extra hours (essentially a form of unpaid overtime) in order to do so?
2. Is the number of hours required to perform satisfactorily or better in each of the three areas of faculty activity (teaching, scholarship, service) proportional to the way in which they are weighted or prioritized in the Faculty Handbook or evaluation protocols within specific units (e. g., the College of Arts & Sciences)?
3. When course releases are given, is the work required or expected in lieu of teaching that course commensurate with the *actual work in hourly terms* that the teaching of the course would require? For instance, is the workload of department or program chairs comparable *in terms of actual hours worked* to the teaching hours from which one is released for those purposes?



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK ...



Sue Chaplin,
Director

To evaluate...or not to evaluate

With fall semester's courses behind us, we can think about starting fresh with new groups of students. What did you learn from your students this past fall; what did they learn from you? What evidence of what really went on in your classrooms do you have? We talk a lot about how inadequate the Student Report on Teaching is as an evaluation of our teaching, but I haven't heard many good suggestions for substitutes. Instead of reinventing the wheel with yet another iteration of SROT, let me suggest an alternative: supplementary evaluations. ***What are supplementary evaluations?*** They are simply information provided by your students at any point during a class or during the semester that helps you assess how you are doing. They might be one minute papers, critical incident questionnaires, muddiest point exercises, or a multi-question midterm evaluation, just to name a few. ***Why do them?*** You get answers to questions about how a specific activity worked or how a particular way of presenting information was received. You can document (in a quantitative way if you choose) that your classroom methods are effective in enhancing student learning. Student responses may help you find ways to become even more successful. You can provide an explanation of how you know what you do is effective in an annual report.

In this issue of *Synergia*, Tom Hickson and Lisa Lamb describe one method of supplementary evaluation (Knowledge Surveys) that can be used in a number of ways to document student learning gains. To learn more about the goals of scholarly teaching that promote student learning, click on "Scholarly Teaching" at the University of Portland Teaching and Learning website: www.up.edu/tl. To find classroom assessments for within-semester evaluations, see *Classroom Assessment Techniques* by Angelo and Cross in the Faculty Development library.



KNOWLEDGE SURVEYS AS AN ALTERNATIVE OR ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL IN THE CLASSROOM



*Thomas Hickson and
Melissa Lamb, Geology*

Why a Knowledge Survey? In response to what we considered inadequate student feedback from the Student Reports on Teaching (SROTs), the geology department tested the usefulness of another assessment strategy in our classrooms this fall. We looked for a tool that was relatively easy to administer and analyze; could produce summary statistics that were reliable and relevant; could gauge student's perceptions of what they actually learned in a class; and would clearly show how the course content encouraged development of higher order thinking skills. We chose Knowledge Surveys as an assessment instrument that could satisfy these requirements.

What are they? Knowledge surveys consist of a large number of questions covering the entire content in a course, and designed to illustrate different levels within the Bloom taxonomy, ranging from knowledge to comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Students do not answer the questions in the survey, but instead, indicate their perceived ability to answer them on a scale of 1-3, based on their confidence. Knowledge surveys are typically ungraded and are conducted at the beginning and end of a course; the difference in confidence level correlates well with actual student performance in the course. (Wirth and Perkins, www.macalester.edu/geology/wirth/WirthPerkinsKS.pdf)

Implementation of KS in geology courses at UST. We implemented the KS in four geology courses, ranging from 12 to 64 students during Fall 2007 semester. The number of questions on the surveys ranged from 67 to over 150, with each coded for level in Bloom's taxonomy. We administered the questions using Blackboard as a survey, given pre- and post-course. Students judged their ability to answer each question based on a 3 point scale of not confident to very confident. Preliminary results of the KS from GEOL 320 shows how it can be used as an assessment tool. With each question identified by Bloom level, gains in critical thinking skills could be determined (see figure). Confidence in answering all questions was markedly higher in the post-course survey, but student confidence declined gradually as the Bloom level increased. Students know they have gained knowledge, and can recognize better the more challenging types of questions requiring higher order thinking. This is precisely the goal of our mission in developing critical thinkers.



A complete version of this article can be found on the Faculty Development Synergia web page.

NEWS FROM THE FACULTY GRANTS OFFICE

www.stthomas.edu/fgo or 651-962-6038

Faculty and staff interested in applying to a state or federal agency should consult the Faculty Grants Office website for links to powerful search engines designed to help you find the most appropriate agency and program. Some programs of particular note include the following (see FGO website for links to these programs).

Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA)

National Institutes of Health

The purpose of the Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) program is to stimulate research in educational institutions that provide baccalaureate or advanced degrees for a significant number of the nation's research scientists, but that have not been major recipients of NIH support. These AREA grants create opportunities for scientists and institutions otherwise unlikely to participate extensively in NIH programs to contribute to the nation's biomedical and behavioral research effort.

Deadline: February 25, 2008

Traditional Fulbright Scholars Program

CIES

Sends 800 U.S. faculty and professionals abroad to 140 countries each year for 2 months to an academic year. Grantees lecture and conduct research in a wide variety of academic and professional fields.

Deadline: March 1, 2008

Advanced Learning Technologies

National Science Foundation

The sponsor supports research that enables radical improvements in learning

through innovative computer and information technologies, and advances research in computer science, information technology, learning, and cognitive science through the unique challenges posed by learning environments and learning technology platforms. It is anticipated that \$2.8 million will be available to fund six to ten projects.

Deadline: April 25, 2008

Informal Science Education (ISE)

National Science Foundation

The ISE program invests in projects that develop and implement informal learning experiences designed to increase interest, engagement, and understanding of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by individuals of all ages and backgrounds, as well as projects that advance knowledge and practice of informal science education.

Deadline: preliminary, March 13; final, June 19, 2008

Broadening Participation in Computing

National Science Foundation

The program aims to significantly increase the number of students who are U.S. citizens and permanent residents receiving post secondary degrees in the computing disciplines, with an emphasis on students from communities with longstanding under-representation in computing: women, persons with disabilities and minorities.

Deadline: May 21, 2008



SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS: CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR FACULTY



*Jane Canney
Vice President for Student
Affairs*

Given the challenges in working within the classroom these days, it is important to note the abundance of resources for faculty in support of students at St. Thomas. Please note the following options.

- Behavioral Leave Policy: designed for situations in which a student's behavior indicates a direct threat to the health and/or safety of self or others. The university reserves the right to remove a student by requesting or requiring a student to take a leave of absence from the university for reasons pertaining to her/his behavior. Contact: Karen Lange, Dean of Students, 962.6050, kmlange@stthomas.edu.
- Personal Counseling Resources: mental health providers offer comprehensive psychological services for students. For assistance in working with students, check out the Personal Counseling and Testing Office Web site at www.stthomas.edu/personalcounseling or contact Dr. Jeri Rockett, Director, 962.6780, gmrockett@stthomas.edu.
- The FLAG Team: interdepartmental committee convened by Academic Counseling and Dean of Students Office. The purpose is to work with students who seem to be having difficulty within the St. Thomas community and determine how to

effectively support their retention and success within the university. The team meets on a regular basis. Contact: Dr. John Krebsbach, Associate Dean of Academic Counseling, 962.6301, jjkrebbsbach@stthomas.edu or Sr. Sharon Howell, Assistant Dean of Students, 962.6076, smhowell@stthomas.edu.

- University Action and Response Team: an interdisciplinary group co-facilitated by the Dean of Students and Director of Public Safety. In response to a changing culture, the group work includes conducting on-going environmental scans, leading the campus crisis initiatives, and performing threat assessments. Contact: Dean Lange, 962.6050, kmlange@stthomas.edu or Dan Meuwissen, Director, Public Safety, 962.5189 or 5555, djmeuwissen@stthomas.edu.
- Hate Crime Policy: developed to investigate hate crime, or bias-motivated incidents, in a direct and thorough manner while striving to respect the rights of all parties involved. Contact: Dean Lange, 962.6050, kmlange@stthomas.edu or Lawrence Potter, Director, Institutional Diversity, 962.6951, lpotter@stthomas.edu.



ONE-TIME SPRING DEADLINE FOR RESEARCH GRANTS

In keeping with our goal to provide more support for faculty scholarship, the Center for Faculty Development would like to announce a one-time opportunity for a spring round of proposal submissions for Research Assistance, Maxi, and Teaching Enhancement Grants. **THE DUE DATE FOR THESE PROPOSALS WILL BE 4 P.M. ON MARCH 25, 2008.** Please note that this is a change from the previous spring TEG deadline. Deadlines for Faculty Partnerships and Partnerships in Learning remain the same—see FDC website for more information.

To ensure success of your proposal, please refer to the guidelines for submission of RAG, Maxi, and TEG in the application instructions at the following website: <http://www.stthomas.edu/fdc/GRANTS/grant.htm>.

Successful proposals in past years (and this fall):

- are clearly written in jargon-free language,
- address all of the points listed in the instructions for project narrative,
- clearly integrate bibliographic references into the context of the project narrative
- identify specific conferences, journals or other venues for dissemination of the work

- provide a realistic and detailed timetable for completion of the work
- provide evidence of readiness to do the project based on a bibliography that is current and comprehensive,
- do not have final reports due to the Faculty Development Center
- attach evidence of external grant support sought following a previous RAG or Maxi award

We will use the same procedure that we adopted this fall for submission of proposals. Send an electronic copy of the checklist, cover sheet, proposal narrative, timetable, bibliography, and your CV to sbchaplin@stthomas.edu, and the proposal will be posted on a secure Blackboard site accessible only to the review committee. Send a paper copy of the coversheet with your signature and that of your Chair or Dean to Pat Alexander, Mail 4034. Both must be received by 4 p.m., March 25.

Several individuals have volunteered to serve as GRANT WRITING CONSULTANTS and can help you develop your ideas into a proposal or give you feedback on the text of your proposal. Please contact them directly to ask if they have time to review your draft well in advance of the deadline: Steve Laumakis, Rob Riley, Sharon Gibson, and Brian Shapiro, as well as Pam Nice and Susan Chaplin from the Center.



**Spring Deadlines for
Faculty Partnerships and
Partnerships-in-Learning:**

February 15 (for spring, 2008)

April 15 (for summer, 2008)

Synergia is published by The Center for Faculty Development, University of St. Thomas. Pamela Nice, Editor

Sue Chaplin, Director, 962-5223

Pamela Nice, Associate Director, 962-6020

Nancy Hartung, New Faculty Liaison, 962-5226

Patricia Alexander, Administrative Assistant, 962-6022

Sara Abdelaal, Student Assistant

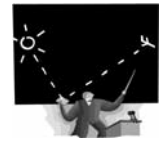
The lobby area and resource room of the Center will be open from 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. M-F. Please stop by!

The opinions expressed in articles in Synergia are not necessarily those of the Center for Faculty Development.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS (SPRING '08)

See the Faculty Development web site for more details: www.stthomas.edu/fdc

E-mail: pmalexander@stthomas.edu for registration.



Teaching for Global Citizenship

Faculty Conversation with Dr. Joy Leary

Author of *The Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*

February 19, 2008

3 - 4:30 p.m.

155 Murray-Herrick

Co-sponsored by Faculty Development and Multicultural Student Services

Dr. Joy Leary, author of *The Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, which was read by a group of faculty, staff and students this past January, will discuss her book and the research on which it was based in an open conversation with faculty. She will discuss how self-esteem, anger and racist socialization apply to the teaching and interactions in our classrooms.

Please register with Pat Alexander at pmalexander if you are interested in attending. Copies of Leary's book are also available from Faculty Development for \$10 for those who attend this session and would like to read it beforehand.

Dr. Leary will also give a lecture on her book from 6-8:30 pm on February 19 in OEC Auditorium. In addition, a Wrap-up Community Dialogue Session will be held February 21 from 11:30 am-1 pm in MHC 304.

All of the Leary events are part of the Multicultural Student Services series, "Pursuit of Truth: Perspectives on America's Legacy of Hate."

Deadline for registration: February 15

Stephen Brookfield Workshops

Preparing Scholarly Book Proposals

Minneapolis

February 25 and March 5

2:30-3:30 pm, MOH 417

St. Paul

February 21 and March 11

3:30-4:30 pm, MHC 155

Understanding and Responding to Students' Experiences of Classroom Learning:

Using the Classroom Critical Incident Questionnaire

Minneapolis

March 27

2:30-4:00 pm, MOH 417

St. Paul

March 26

3:30-5:00 pm, MHC 152

Teaching About Racism: A Conversation

Minneapolis

April 18

2:30-4:00 pm, MOH 417

St. Paul

April 4

3:30-5:00 pm, MHC 155

UST BUSH GRANT



*Robert Werner
Director, Bush Foundation
Program Grant*

The UST Bush grant committee would like to congratulate the following individuals and departments for receiving Bush grants.

Drs. Melissa Loe, Pavel Belik, John Kemper, Magdalena Stolarska, and Mikhail Shvartsman (Mathematics) were given an award to create a calculus course for biology and chemistry majors.

Dr. Tom Ippoliti (Chemistry) received a grant to take nine undergraduate students to the American Chemical Society annual meeting to present the results of their faculty/student collaborative research, in Biochemistry, Physical, Organic, and Environmental Chemistry, and X-Ray Crystallography.

Matt Maruggi (Theology) was given a grant to develop a course where students will synthesize their service-learning projects with life stories of spiritually grounded social change agents. The course will be called "Liberatory Religion and Critical Service-Learning."

Dr. Sarah Schmalenberger (Music) got an award for a team of Music faculty to review and revise music courses for non-majors and to create assessment tools that measure students' higher-order thinking skills in those courses.

Dr. Tony Borgerding (Chemistry) was funded to bring students to a conference to disseminate results of faculty/student research on capillary chromatography and electrophoresis.

Dr. John Buri (Psychology) received money to travel to present results of his work with a student that investigates family dynamics and predicts adaptive and maladaptive ways of thinking in families.

Dr. Greg Robinson-Riegler (Psychology) and **Dr. Steve Laumakis** (Philosophy), together with four students, were funded to travel to participate in a panel discussion of pedagogy and content from their course on Eastern and Western approaches to the study of consciousness and mind.

Dr. Jill Manske (Biology) received an award to fund travel for her and two students to the American Association of Immunologists meeting. There, they will give results of their research studying immune responses to tumors.

Dr. Lisa Lamb (Geology) was awarded money for travel with two students who collaborated with her and other Geology faculty in order to present their research on deformation of the earth's crust in Nevada.

Dr. Joe Fitzharris (History) received an award to travel with a student collaborator to a conference to present their work on African-Americans in the Civil War.

Dr. Shersten Johnson (Music) was funded to redevelop the Orchestration course to use inquiry-based activities that will engage students in practice and theory.

Dr. Bill Kinney (Sociology) and colleagues were given an award to showcase their faculty/student research projects at the 2008 Midwest Sociological Society meetings.



SPRING DEADLINE FOR RESEARCH GRANTS!

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UNIVERSITY *of* ST. THOMAS

Faculty Development
Mail 4034
University of St. Thomas
2115 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105