

TEACHING

FROM PAGE 1

Teaching the Basics

While lauding the overall quality of education at UNC, the report states that some students graduate without attaining all the basic skills the General College program is designed to teach.

Some courses fail to encourage the development of basic skills, the study reports. "Although the current general education program is based on the premise that all of its courses will devote some attention to developing the core skills of reading, writing and speaking, individual courses seldom encompass all of these skills."

Conover said the three components of teaching at UNC — faculty, students and program structure — shared the responsibility for inadequacies. Students might not be aware of and interested in the general education goals. And faculty might not be devoting adequate effort to teaching basic skills, she said. "It could be that faculty are dedicated to teaching but are not necessarily focused on teaching all the necessary skills."

Also, the program could be structured better and should convey its goals to faculty more clearly, she said.

"The goal is that the skills and the learning of those skills will be more emphasized throughout (students') undergraduate education," Conover said.

Evaluate Work in the Classroom ...

Several sections of the report recommend changes in how faculty are evaluated. "The idea is to make it more geared toward improving teaching and making teaching better," Gless said.

While students rate their professors at the end of most courses, faculty do not monitor one another's teaching as consistently. Procedures and frequencies of evaluations vary between departments and programs, and tenured professors tend to be evaluated less often than newcomers. Peer reviews — which the report calls necessary for accurate evaluations — often are not included.

"In the absence of peer review, many faculty believe that their teaching has not been seriously evaluated," the report states.

The report recommends that the University require comprehensive evaluations of all instructors every five years that include reviews by peers and that focus on improving teaching.

White said some faculty might resist attempts to conduct more frequent and comprehensive evaluations.

"We have a certain number of tenured deadwood on the faculty who wouldn't like being evaluated at all," he said.

But White said most faculty would welcome evaluations as long as they were not conducted so often that they interfered with research. "Most of the faculty here are hard-working and feel that if they're evaluated, they have nothing to fear because they're doing a good job."

... And Reward Good Teaching

The report also expresses concern that while "most faculty regularly engage in a variety of activities to improve their teaching," praise of teaching is not sufficiently public or explicit. Teaching awards and informal praise help emphasize the importance of good instruction, but some faculty still believe that "there is very little attention and reward given to good teaching."

"UNC should encourage chairs and senior administrators to offer, in creative ways appropriate to their situation, greater public endorsement of the value of teaching, greater public recognition of excellence in teaching, and greater public commitment to the improvement of teaching," the report states.

The report also suggests that UNC grant permanent budget increases to the Center for Teaching and Learning, which helps instructors improve their technique. Center resources include workshops on teaching and publications designed to spread information about improving teaching.

Conover said extensive use of the center demonstrated faculty commitment to teaching. "I think the record at the Center for Teaching and Learning is evidence that faculty at all ranks can and do make the effort to learn about teaching," she said.

The University can also encourage good teaching by revising the faculty incentives system to better recognize and reward teaching outside the classroom, the report states. While many faculty and graduate students contribute large amounts of time to activities like the supervision of senior theses and the oversight

of student clubs, their efforts are often overlooked in calculating workloads. Awarding credit for such activities would encourage more instructors to devote time to them, the report says.

Conover said that increased incentives would probably be symbolic rather than substantive but that recognition would support faculty teaching efforts both inside and outside the classroom. "Giving appropriate recognition to the many things faculty do is one way of encouraging them."

The report also supports increasing salaries as a way of attracting and retaining top teachers at UNC.

White said that University salaries were already low compared to those at peer institutions and that Gov. Jim Hunt's proposed budget cuts would worsen the situation. Without sufficient funds, the University will lose skilled faculty, he said.

"We've got an excellent faculty, but it's a whole lot harder to build an excellent faculty than to lose one," White said. "It's a good school; we get good students; and it's a nice place to live. But after a point, money talks, and people will walk."

"You've gotta love Chapel Hill to take a \$25,000 bath just to stay here. You could end up after 20 years or so at a place like Clemson (a private school)."

Teaching With Style

While faculty have the common goal of effective teaching, the study found distinct differences in their teaching styles contingent on rank and gender.

Distinguished faculty are more likely to use substantive writing assignments, whereas more junior faculty tend to rely on unconventional methods like group projects, slides, oral presentations and computer use. The report states that because researchers have found nontraditional methods to be effective teaching tools, "senior faculty should be encouraged to explore new instructional techniques."

Conover said she thought senior faculty would be receptive to learning new teaching methods if they received proper instruction, incentives and rewards.

Faculty survey results also indicate that the gender of a professor is a strong determinant of skills emphasized in a course.

"Courses taught by women give considerably greater emphasis than do those taught by men to developing the basic skills of writing effectively, reading critically, speaking clearly and developing intellectual interests," the report says. Men tend to emphasize mathematics more than women, and the uneven distribution of women across disciplines does not fully account for these differences, the report states.

Women faculty also use instructional techniques like class discussion, group and individual projects, and oral presentations more than men.

Conover said the kind of teaching methods women tended to emphasize enhanced students' educational experiences by involving them more fully in class activities. "What professional educators are telling us now is that students learn better when they are actively engaged," she said.

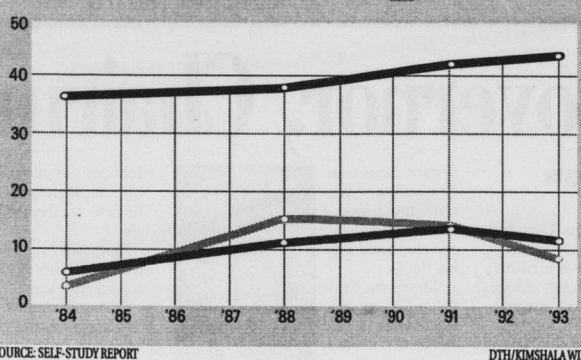
Conover said women and minority faculty also diversified curricular content by adding new viewpoints and exploring different issues from other faculty. "Having a more diverse faculty is a bonus — more women and minority faculty change the tenor of what we teach," she said. "Both women and minority faculty are more likely to introduce course content that broadens the classroom experience, specifically by looking at issues of diversity."

Minority and female faculty are also necessary as role models, Conover said. "You want the faces in front of the classrooms to look like those in the seats."

Classes Taught by TAs

Although the number of undergraduate courses taught by teaching assistants rose for several years, the self-study notes that it has stabilized in the last two years. A committee is studying the use of TAs, the self-study reports.

KEY:
 0-49 Level Courses
 50-99 Level Courses
 100-199 Level Courses



SOURCE: SELF-STUDY REPORT

DTH/KIMSHALA WILSON

Keeping up with other trends in higher education, surveyed faculty overwhelmingly reported that they supported the idea of research and teaching that combined the perspectives of various disciplines. According to the report, 75 percent said they devoted some or considerable effort to incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives into their courses.

Teaching with professors from other disciplines is the most effective approach to interdisciplinary teaching, the report states. "The best way to inject interdisciplinary material into disciplinary courses is to transform the disciplinary course into a truly interdisciplinary one."

Too Much Hassle for Their Tassel?

The self-study report states that faculty workloads at UNC seem to be heavy but not unreasonable. Yet 40 percent of surveyed faculty indicated that they thought institutional safeguards against detrimentally large workloads were inadequate. The report recommends that all departments and academic programs "establish and publish procedures for the assignment of faculty responsibilities" that reflect differences between the units.

Department chairmen and administrators should also try to eliminate unnecessary administrative demands on faculty time, the report states. According to the survey, 55 percent of faculty say their teaching and research is somewhat or substantially hindered by administrative duties such as photocopying and collecting data.

More administrative and staff support and the re-examination of current procedures and requirements would help instructors use their time more efficiently, the report states.

"Faculty are overworked," Conover said. And because faculty have more control over research than they do over teaching and administrative obligations, she said, research suffers most from time constraints.

Enough Faculty?

Even if faculty have sufficient time for teaching, are there enough of them? Statistics present a positive view of UNC's overall faculty-student ratio; it improved from 1-to-11 in 1986 to 1-to-9.7 in 1993. "UNC-Chapel Hill possesses a faculty of sufficient size for the performance of its educational mission," the faculty section concludes. And the ratio compares favorably with peer institutions, the report states.

But the 1993 ratio of 1-to-17.2 in the College of Arts and Sciences is significantly larger and has deteriorated slightly during the past decade — a situation the report calls "troubling."

"To have over 17 students per faculty member, and a deterio-

rating ratio, suggests serious problems for undergraduate education," the report states.

"With a ratio like this, team and interdisciplinary teaching and small undergraduate seminars are frequently not feasible," the report notes.

Class size is an inevitable strain on UNC teachers and "a one-to-one teacher-learner ratio is an impractical goal for all instruction at a large, publicly funded university." The study found that 34 percent of UNC administrators received at least one complaint about class size during the 1993-94 school year.

But the report also found that class sizes had not grown during the period from 1982 to 1993 and that moderately sized classes could and should be the norm. It is reasonable for UNC to try to limit the size of advanced undergraduate classes to about 30 students and to supplement large classes with smaller recitation or laboratory sessions, the report concludes.

Teaching TAs to Teach

Faculty are not the only people teaching UNC students — graduate teaching students play an important role in campus instruction, the report notes. In 1993, teaching assistants taught nearly half of introductory courses and 8.4 percent of advanced undergraduate courses, according to report data.

Although the report expresses concern that students might be taught by too many TAs, rather than professors, it found that UNC's use of TAs was comparable to that of peer schools. The percentage of students taught by TAs is stable and students cannot avoid contact with faculty, the report states. Graduate student teaching is, it says, a valuable part of educational programs but one on which the University should not be overly dependent.

White said that "self-starting" students with strong initiative to learn benefited more from faculty than from TAs but that TA instruction would meet the needs of less-motivated students. "If you look at teaching evaluations, we have not seen any systematic evidence that the quality of undergraduate education is being hurt by the use of TAs," he said.

At the same time, White said UNC students would benefit if more courses were taught by faculty. "My own feeling is that less (TAs) than we have at present would be ideal," he said. "Zero, no. Less, yes."

The report suggests that the University develop "institution-wide guidelines for the administration of graduate assistants as classroom instructors" to centralize oversight of TAs. Guidelines would pertain to faculty supervision of TAs, pay, teaching workshops, assignment of responsibilities and other issues related to graduate student teaching. Currently, most departments and programs have their own separate sets of guidelines, but some have either unspecified or unpublished guidelines.

Teaching Outside the Classroom

While the University can do much to improve teaching, students obviously play a significant role in determining the quality of their educations. The study says students should take better advantage of faculty both in and out of the classroom.

While 78 percent of graduates who responded to a recent survey said they had been satisfied with faculty accessibility, the report states that the amount of time professors made available to students varied.

The report suggests that UNC require all faculty to establish regular office hours and to encourage students to visit them.

Conover and White said students controlled the extent to which they took advantage of educational opportunities outside the classroom.

"One of the biggest problems here is that students don't exploit the faculty," White said. "If you could somehow get every undergraduate to spend an hour a month talking with a faculty member, I think that would add tremendously to the quality of education here."

Conover said students should make the most of their college years by welcoming challenging coursework and by taking advantage of community events like plays, speakers and art exhibits.

"The best thing you can do is to take seriously the opportunities you have in the classroom and outside it. You have an intellectual community that's teeming with educational opportunities."

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AMOUNT PER SERVING

	NONFAT	LOWFAT	NONFAT W/ NUTRASWEET®
Calories	92-110	90-110	60-88
Calories from Fat	0	15-20	0
Total Fat %DV*	0	2-3%	0
Total Fat g	0	1.5-2.0	0
Saturated Fat g	0	1.0-1.2	0
Cholesterol mg	0	5-10	0-4
Sodium mg	50-72	35-60	40-80
Total Carbohydrate g	21-22	15-22	11-17
Dietary Fiber %DV*	0-2%	0-1%	0%
Sugars g	16-18	14-17	3
Protein g	3-4	2-3	3-4

Vitamin A 0-4% Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 6-10% Iron 0-3%

* Percent Daily Values (%DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Total Fat	Calories	2,000	2,500
Saturated Fat	Less than	65	80
Cholesterol	Less than	20	25
Sodium	Less than	300	300
Total Carbohydrate	Less than	2,400	2,400
Dietary Fiber		300	375
		25	30

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