

## Monitoring Faculty Teaching Workloads<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Growing out of findings and recommendations of the 1995 Legislative Study Commission on the Status of Education at the University of North Carolina, the 1995 Session of the General Assembly enacted House Bill 229, Section 15.9 entitled "Rewarding Faculty Teaching." The bill requires:

#### *Rewarding Faculty Teaching (HB 229)*

*Sec. 15.9. The Board of Governors shall design and implement a system to monitor faculty teaching workloads on the campuses of the constituent institutions.*

*The Board of Governors shall direct constituent institutions that teaching be given primary consideration in making faculty personnel decisions regarding tenure, teaching, and promotional decisions for those positions for which teaching is the primary responsibility. The Board shall assure itself that personnel policies reflect this direction.*

*The Board of Governors shall develop a plan for rewarding faculty who teach more than a standard academic load.*

*The Board of Governors shall review the procedures used by the constituent institutions to screen and employ graduate teaching assistants. The Board shall direct that adequate procedures be used by each constituent institution to ensure that all graduate teaching assistants have the ability to communicate and teach effectively in the classroom.*

*The Board of Governors shall report on the implementation of this section to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 15, 1996.*

### The Distinction Between Teaching Workload and Instructional Workload

It is important to distinguish between the portion of faculty time that is spent in direct contact with students in classrooms, laboratories, studios, clinics, etc. and the time spent on instructional activities generally. The distinction is important because activities involving direct contact with students account for only a fraction of the time spent on fulfilling instructional responsibilities. Selecting, reviewing and preparing course materials and course syllabi; constructing exams; grading and evaluating students' work; meeting with students outside the classroom; setting up laboratories and studios; responding to electronic mail from students; writing letters of recommendation for students; arranging field experiences; developing courseware; developing new courses or restructuring the curriculum; writing textbooks and reading to stay current in one's field are all instructional activities that consume significant amounts of faculty time outside the classroom. When done properly, they account for the majority of time devoted to instruction.

Faculty involved in graduate instruction, especially at the doctoral level, teach students about advanced topics that are the subjects of active research in their disciplines. The boundary between research and teaching at the doctoral level is therefore largely artificial, and faculty who teach doctoral students cannot succeed unless they are active researchers and productive scholars. Time spent

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<sup>1</sup>This policy was amended by the attached report on March 7, 2001. Because of the cumbersome nature of the UNC data collection system, the board approved the recommendation to use the Delaware Study, a more simple and accurate method.

supervising thesis and dissertation research, even though it is often measured in terms of student credit hours, is seldom captured by this measure alone. This is an important reason why the classroom teaching workloads of faculty at major research universities are lower than those of faculty at other institutions.

In addition, faculty spend time that is largely unmeasurable on efforts to improve their teaching. Extensive reading in their fields, involvement in research, practice of their professions, presentations at professional meetings, in-service training in centers to improve teaching, experimentation with new technologies and pedagogies, attendance at departmental and institutional workshops and seminars, and similar activities all attest to their quest for excellence as teachers and scholars in their fields.

Activities related to public service are even more difficult to measure because they are so case-specific. They include faculty responses to requests for information, advice, and technical assistance as well as instruction offered through continuing education. They include training and technology transfer for business and industry, assistance to public schools and units of government, and commentary and information for the press and the media.

Like lawyers, surgeons, architects, and other professionals, faculty workloads encompass more than the hours spent on their most easily measured work activity. Just as a lawyer's workload cannot be measured by time spent in the courtroom or a surgeon's workload measured by time spent in the operating room, a faculty member's workload—or even the instructional part of it—cannot be measured by time spent in the classroom alone.

The way in which these instruction-related activities are combined to define the individual faculty member's workload depends primarily on the mission of the institution. In major research institutions, faculty members spend relatively more time on graduate student teaching and research activities than on undergraduate student teaching, because the mission of the institution is to deliver that mix of services and faculty responsibilities reflect that obligation. By contrast, in baccalaureate institutions faculty members spend most of their time on undergraduate student teaching, because the mission of the institution is to deliver baccalaureate level courses and degrees. Between these two extremes are comprehensive institutions whose responsibilities for graduate level instruction and research vary from heavy to light and where classroom teaching responsibilities may show considerable variation. Although classroom teaching loads are rarely measured the same way in public institutions, data from the University of Wisconsin (1995), the University of Maryland at College Park (Miyares, 1994 & 1995) and Ohio State University (Ohio Board of Regents, 1993) suggest that teaching loads in these major research universities are approximately four courses per year. In these states, teaching loads range between six and seven courses per year in comprehensive institutions, depending on their responsibilities for graduate education and research. In baccalaureate institutions, teaching loads are usually eight courses per year.

It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that a system for monitoring teaching workloads at UNC institutions would generally show standard annual courseloads no lower than the following:

1. Research Universities I: 4
2. Doctoral Universities I: 5
3. Masters (Comprehensive) I: 6
4. Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) I: 8
5. Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) II: 8

Accreditation requirements or other considerations may result in lower courseloads in some departments, but such cases are probably rare. More common are institutions within these groups that will have departments with higher teaching loads than those shown above. It is the function of the proposed monitoring system to reveal the levels that currently exist and the variations among them.

## Proposed System for Monitoring Faculty Teaching Loads

The purpose of the board's system for monitoring teaching workloads is to provide information to campus academic administrators that will help them manage teaching workloads in an efficient and equitable manner. It is the board's belief that teaching loads are best managed at the department and school level, and not the system or state level. In order to promote improved management of teaching loads, it is proposed that a new system of monitoring teaching workloads be developed at the departmental level. It is expected that information from the new monitoring system, including departmental policies related to workloads, will be available to all department heads and faculty on the campus. It is also expected that departmental reports on teaching loads in the same discipline will be shared with department heads at peer UNC institutions when they are requested. In order to encourage this data sharing, the General Administration will prepare a roster of departments and department heads at each UNC institution.

In addition to this campus-level monitoring, the President will receive an annual report from the chancellor that will, among other things, identify the standard teaching load of each department on the campus and will explain those that are below the reference levels set forth above. The report will present data on faculty credit hour production by type of faculty and level of course and a count of faculty who taught more or less than the standard load for the department. For those teaching below the standard load, the reasons for the course reductions will be identified. The chancellor's report will summarize the departmental reports without reproducing them. This strategy is designed to underscore the responsibility of department heads and deans for managing faculty workloads in general and not just faculty teaching loads.

### Responsibility for Assigning Teaching Workloads

The assignment of faculty duties is a fundamental responsibility of department chairs and deans. They know the courses and sections that must be offered and the other duties that must be carried out. They know what faculty resources and instructional space are available to deliver these courses, and what competing demands on these resources exist. They know which faculty members need to be compensated for past course overloads and which ones need to be compensated for assuming institutional service responsibilities such as chairing a campus-wide task force, directing an institutional accreditation self-study, or coordinating a university honors program. They know which faculty members have time budgeted under research or other externally-funded grants or contracts and which have accepted responsibility to serve as an officer of a national professional society. They know which faculty members have been assigned responsibility for developing a new course or reviewing the curriculum in the department. In assigning faculty courseloads, therefore, the department head and dean must take account of the time needed to complete tasks other than those classroom teaching, research and service assignments that are routinely expected of all faculty in the department. When the demands of these activities warrant a reduction in teaching load, the department head or dean may authorize one.

### Standard Course Load Defined

In order to monitor faculty teaching loads, it is necessary to take account of non-teaching activities because in any given semester they can be a significant part of an individual faculty member's workload. Because these activities are wide-ranging and variable across disciplines, departments and institutions, they are generally grouped into broad categories for purposes of reporting and monitoring. A sampling of activities in each of the three areas of faculty responsibility will confirm the need for grouping activities in the monitoring system.

In the instructional area, activities may include: preparing and equipping new laboratories; restructuring the curriculum; developing materials for a new course; directing by students completing thesis and dissertation research; developing courseware or other materials for technology-based instruction; supervising teaching assistants, or directing the department's graduate studies program; funding and establishing field placement opportunities for interns and coop students; and directing

students in co-curricular activities such as plays and sponsored student groups. In the area of research, scholarship and creative expression, activities may include: editing a scholarly journal; writing grant proposals; supervising research staff; directing a center or institute; preparing art exhibits; or performing in a play, concert or musical recital. In the area of public service, activities may include: serving on a committee appointed by the local school board; service on a gubernatorial advisory committee or task force; or service on a statewide study commission or task force.

Not all such activities are so time-consuming or commendable that they justify a course reduction, but those which bring distinction to the institution or entail work efforts beyond the norm, often do. Department heads and deans are in the best position to make these judgments and account for them. When courseload reductions are made to compensate for these activities, they may be measured in terms of the credit hours that the faculty member is excused from teaching. The number of credit hours is determined on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to course reductions, faculty members receive credit hour equivalents for extra contact hours spent with students in courses involving studios, laboratories, clinics, independent study, thesis and dissertation, internships and related activities. These course equivalents are used to adjust partially for the difference between the contact hours required in the course and the credit hours attached to it. For example, at UNC Charlotte, a faculty member in nursing receives three credit hour equivalents for 12 clock hours of clinical instruction and two hours of clinical seminar weekly and a faculty member in education, who supervises 18 student teachers and graduate students involved in practice and internships, would receive nine credit hour equivalents.

Detailed criteria for granting and calculating course equivalents and course reductions are difficult to express in writing because, in the final analysis, they involve the department head's professional assessment of each faculty member's case. Nevertheless, there is typically a shared department-level understanding about the kinds of activities and commitments of time that should generate both, and this understanding is typically summarized in the faculty workload policy. In some institutions, a campus-wide policy exists.

For purposes of monitoring faculty teaching loads, criteria for course reductions will be grouped into the following reporting categories:

- a. Course/curriculum development
- b. Heavy load-academic advising
- c. Accreditation/program review
- d. Technology training for instruction
- e. Co-curricular activities
- f. Academic administration
- g. Externally-funded research
- h. Institutionally-supported research
- i. Institutional service
- j. Service to the public
- k. Service to the profession
- l. Off-campus scholarly assignment/on leave
- m. Other

The Board of Governors' system for monitoring teaching workloads will measure teaching workloads by adding courses and course equivalents and will account for course reductions by using the categories defined above. The "standard" academic load for faculty in a department will be defined as the annual number of credit hours and credit hour equivalents that a faculty member is expected to teach.

The attached table shell (Appendix A) illustrates the content and format of data to be collected at the department level. Departments lacking a faculty workload policy will be directed to adopt one in consultation with the dean and the chief academic officer and subject to the approval of the chancellor. It is understood that the standard load will vary among institutions, and among departments within institutions, based on: 1) the relative importance of research and service in the institution's mission; 2) constraints imposed by accreditation requirements; 3) the highest degree offered by the department; and 4) other factors that may be unique to the department's history and circumstances.

#### Faculty to be Included in the System to Monitor Teaching Loads

Faculty to be included in the monitoring system are all regular session instructional faculty paid in whole or in part from a state-funded teaching position, including teaching assistants and part-time faculty but excluding faculty in schools of medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. In addition, department heads—even if they have no teaching responsibilities during the academic year—and instructors who teach courses on a voluntary basis should be included. The categories of faculty to be reported are: tenured and tenure track faculty; department heads reported separately; full-time non-tenure track faculty; teaching assistants; and "other" faculty. Adjunct faculty who teach only during the summer or in off-campus programs that are not supported by state appropriations should not be included. Credit for teaching a course should be assigned to the instructor of record. Credit for team-teaching a course should be prorated accordingly.

#### Data to be Included in the Department Level Annual Monitoring Report

The annual departmental report will contain data on the standard teaching course load of faculty in the department and the number of credit hours and credit hour equivalents taught by faculty of each type. The report will also include a distribution of faculty with reduced teaching loads by reason for the reduction. It will contain a count of faculty and of faculty FTE and a count of student credit hours generated at each of five course levels: remedial; basic skills in English, mathematics and foreign languages; lower division; upper division; master's and doctoral—by each faculty type. (A sample table shell is included as Appendix A in order to illustrate the content and format of the data to be reported.)

#### Implementation Process and Submission Schedule

The annual report will be prepared at the department level approximately one month after the spring semester's drop/add date. It will cover faculty and courses from both the fall and spring semesters. The summary report to the President will be due to the General Administration by June 15 of each year. In the report to the President, the chancellor will review and assess the information in the departmental reports. At a minimum the report should contain:

1. a summary of the standard teaching load in each department and explanation for any that fall below the board's minimum guidelines (see Appendix C);
2. an institutional summary of the table entitled Annual Institutional Summary Report on Faculty Teaching Loads (see Appendix B);
3. a listing of inducements used by departments to encourage faculty to teach more than the standard load, i.e. an elaboration of line 9b, and an assessment of those that have proven to be most promising or successful;
4. comments concerning the involvement of teaching assistants and regular tenured and tenure-track faculty in the teaching of undergraduates.

#### Rewards for Faculty Who Teach More Than a Standard Load

The board's intent is that measures described in the previous section will lead to personnel policies and decisions that take due account of each faculty member's contribution to the undergraduate teaching mission of the institution. The President and the board are concerned that faculty be rewarded both for the quantity and even more for the quality of teaching. Concerning quality, the board notes the enthusiastic support from campuses and the public for its teaching awards. It takes pride in the standard for teaching excellence that is set by award recipients.

Faculty Teaching Workload Report  
1999-2000



**March 7, 2001**

## UNC Teaching Workload Report, 1999-2000 Highlights

- Between 1996-97 and 1999-2000, the teaching loads of UNC tenure stream faculty increased from 15.2 to 16.1 course hours per year. When measured in terms of course hours taught and course credit hour equivalents taught, the loads increased from 18.8 to 19.9. Course hour loads at NCSU increased from 13.7 to 13.8 while course hour loads at UNC-CH increased from 9.5 to 10.4.
- The weighted average standard teaching loads at the research universities, with course hour equivalents included, were 13.7 at NCSU and 11.8 at UNC-CH. At UNCG and ECU, the standard loads were 18.1 and 24.0, respectively. At the masters and baccalaureate institutions, the standard loads ranged from 17.6 to 24.0 hours per year. These loads correspond closely to the benchmarks set in the Board's policy and appear to be competitive with those of comparable
- Trends in the distribution of lower-division undergraduate student credit hours taught show a slight decrease in the percentage taught by graduate teaching assistants.
- A marked decrease in the percentage of lower division undergraduate student credit hours taught by tenure stream faculty is explained by a corresponding decrease in their numbers relative to those of off-track faculty, a trend that is under study by a University-wide task force staffed by the division of academic affairs.
- Teaching productivity, as measured by student credit hours taught per state-funded faculty FTE, has increased slightly between 1996-97 and 1999-2000 (from 405.3 to 409.4).
- In order to address major shortcomings in the current UNC Teaching Workload Reporting system, it is recommended that it be replaced by data from the Delaware Study, a national data exchange on teaching loads and instructional cost. These data would increase the level of standardization in the data collection, and more importantly, would offer national benchmark data for UNC institutions and their individual departments. It is recommended that participation in the Delaware Study begin with reports due for the 2000-01 academic year. Given the lag in reporting under that system, the next report on teaching workload would be available in the summer or fall of 2002.

## Introduction

Growing out of findings and recommendations of the 1995 Legislative Study Commission on the Status of Education at the University of North Carolina, the 1995 Session of the General Assembly enacted House Bill 229, Section 15.9 entitled “Rewarding Faculty Teaching.” Among other things, the bill required that:

“The Board of Governors shall design and implement a system to monitor faculty teaching workloads on the campuses of the constituent institutions... (and) shall report on the implementation of this section to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 15, 1996.”

In response to this legislation the Board of Governors *Plan for Rewarding Faculty Teaching* was adopted on April 12, 1996 and transmitted to the legislature on April 15, 1996. A copy of that report is available online at [www.ga.unc.edu/UNCGA/assessment/reward\\_teaching.html](http://www.ga.unc.edu/UNCGA/assessment/reward_teaching.html). On March 19, 1998, the first report to draw data from the new monitoring system was prepared on faculty employed during the 1996-97 year and was presented to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. Since then, no additional report on this topic has been requested by the committee, but annual data collection has been continued as required by the legislation. This report summarizes the findings of these data collections and recommends a modification of the system presently used by the University of North Carolina institutions to monitor teaching workloads.

## The Teaching Workload Database

The Board’s teaching workload monitoring system was designed to measure the standard and the actual teaching loads of UNC faculty, to determine the extent to which regular tenure stream faculty were teaching undergraduates (particularly freshmen and sophomores), and to track the teaching productivity of faculty overall. Its overarching purpose was to create a database that would be used by department heads and other academic administrators to establish and implement policies on teaching workloads. To accomplish this, the data were assembled at each UNC institution at the department level by the department head and made available to other department heads and academic administrators within the campus and among similar departments within the University system. The reporting system was designed to inform academic administrators and faculty about standard and actual teaching loads in order to assist them in managing loads at the departmental level. Institutions were encouraged to find innovative ways to reward faculty who taught more than the standard load and were specifically authorized to use salary stipends to reward overload teaching.

The chancellors were asked to submit an annual institutional summary of data for all departments taken as a group and to show the standard teaching load, measured in terms of three-hour courses and their equivalents, for each department. The summary report included a weighted average of these teaching loads that is referred to as the **standard load** for the institution. The standard load varies among departments due to differences in the graduate teaching and research loads of faculty, the load requirements imposed by specialized accrediting agencies, and other factors. The institutional summary also included a distribution of the student credit hours taught by five groups of faculty in six different course/degree levels. The data that are summarized in the UNC Teaching Workload Report are drawn from the chancellors’ annual summary reports. They cover the years 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

## Key Definitions and Reporting Protocols

**Faculty** are included in the monitoring system database if they are regular session instructional faculty paid in whole or in part from a state-funded teaching position, or if they are teaching assistants or part-time faculty. They are excluded if they teach in a school of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or pharmacy. In addition, department heads—even if they have no teaching responsibilities during the academic year—and instructors who teach courses on a voluntary basis are included. The categories of faculty are: tenure stream faculty (those on the tenure track and those already tenured); department heads reported separately; full-time non-tenure stream faculty; teaching assistants; and “other” faculty including part-time faculty. Adjunct faculty who teach only during the summer or non-State-supported

courses are not included. Faculty who teach degree-credit extension courses are included only if their course loads are administered by the academic department.

In this report faculty counts are in **FTEs**. One faculty FTE is defined in reference to a full-time faculty member on a nine-month appointment. Thus, a full-time instructor who teaches for one semester only, and an instructor hired for the entire year who teaches half-time, would both be counted as half of an FTE.

Teaching activities are measured in terms of **course hours**, **student credit hours**, and **credit hour equivalents**. **Course hours** count the credit hour value of courses taught. Thus, a faculty member who teaches four three-credit hour courses per semester has a 12-hour load in that semester and a 24-hour load for the year. **Student credit hours** are defined as the product of the number of students in a course and the number of credit hours assigned to the course. Thus an instructor who teaches a three-credit hour course with 25 students in it would produce 75 student credit hours. By extension, an instructor with four three-credit hour courses each having 25 students would generate 300 student credit hours. **Credit hour equivalents** are course hour credits given to instructors for instructional activities that are not accurately measured by course hours. Examples of such activities include: supervising graduate students' work on dissertations and theses; directing an honor's thesis or senior thesis; supervising student teachers; supervising student internships and coop assignments; teaching nurses and other health professionals in a clinical setting; and instructing students in studios, laboratories, and independent study courses. The combination of a faculty member's course hours and credit hour equivalents comprises his or her **teaching load**. The student credit hours generated by the faculty member measure his or her **teaching productivity**.

#### Trends in Teaching Loads, Student Credit Hour Distributions, and Teaching Productivity

**Table 1** presents trend data on teaching loads as measured by course hours per year and by the sum of course hours plus credit hour equivalents per year. The data show that, by both measures, the teaching loads of tenure stream faculty University-wide have increased slightly since 1996-97—rising from 18.8 to 19.9 when measured by course hours plus credit hour equivalents. It should be noted that in the first year of the data collection, departments were in many instances adopting new teaching load policies as required by the Board's policy. Thus it was not until the second year of data collection that many departments had settled on their teaching load policy and the convention they would follow in calculating credit hour equivalents. This means that data in the last three years are generally more comparable than data reported for 1996-97.

The data in the last column of Table 1 present the standard loads reported by all UNC institutions (except NC School of the Arts that does not have tenure) in their most recent reports. There are several reasons why a standard load may vary from an actual load. The actual load may exceed the standard load when faculty teach more than the standard load in response to institutional needs. Conversely, the actual load may fall short of the standard load when faculty are given course reductions that permit them to engage in research and service activities, or to engage in instructional activities not measured in terms of course hours or credit hour equivalents. Some differences are simply due to errors in reported data. Such errors may occur when new department heads are not adequately trained in how to complete the report, or when existing department heads interpret reporting instructions differently from one year to the next. The report of teaching workload is one of the most complex reports that department heads are asked to complete; variability in departmental reports has been identified as a problem by campus report coordinators (a topic to be addressed later in this report).

Despite possible errors in reporting, however, it seems safe to conclude that the teaching loads of tenure stream faculty in the University have increased since the Board adopted its policy to reward teaching and to monitor teaching workloads. Furthermore, it is clear that actual loads reflect differences in institutional mission and, although benchmarks for equivalent measures outside the UNC system are generally not available, the actual loads appear to be within competitive ranges.

**Table 2** presents data on the distribution of student credit hours in order to address the question of who teaches undergraduates in their lower division (freshman and sophomore year) courses. The data

reveal two distinct trends. First, the proportion of student credit hours taught to freshmen and sophomores by graduate teaching assistants has decreased slightly since 1996-97 at all UNC institutions taken together and at NCSU and UNC-CH. Second, the proportion of student credit hours taught to freshmen and sophomores by tenure stream faculty has dropped steadily over the past four years while the proportion taught to them by off-track faculty has increased. In understanding the causes of this second trend, it is worth asking whether it is due to a corresponding change in the proportions of teaching faculty in the two categories, or whether it is due to a change in the proportions of lower division student credit hours taught by faculty in the two categories. We turn first to the question of the number of faculty in the two categories. Data in **Table 2A** address these two questions.

The top section of the Table 2A presents data on the distribution of faculty FTEs and faculty headcounts University-wide over the last four years. By either means of counting faculty the numbers show a significant increase in the proportion of part-time and off-track faculty and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of full-time tenure stream faculty. In terms of percentage points the shift is similar in magnitude to the shift in the proportion of lower division undergraduate student credit hours delivered by both groups of faculty (Table 2). The lower section of Table 2A presents data on the percentage of the total student credit hours taught at the lower division undergraduate level, and at the undergraduate level, by each category of faculty. The data show that there is only a slight decrease in the lower division percentage and a slight increase in the overall undergraduate percentage for tenure stream faculty. **Taken together, the data in Table 2A suggest that all of the reduction in lower division student credit hours taught by tenure stream faculty is due to a reduction in their numbers and not to a reduction in the undergraduate proportion of their teaching load.**

It should be noted that the relative change in the numbers of tenure stream and off-track faculty suggested by the data in Table 2A tracks national trends. It is the subject of study for a new University-wide task force recently formed by the Academic Affairs division in the Office of the President. Underscoring the strength of the trend and the need for this study are data from this fall that show that only 35 percent of newly hired faculty last year were hired into tenure stream positions.

**Table 3** presents data on the teaching productivity of faculty as measured by the student credit hours per state-funded FTE. It shows that University-wide, there has been a slight increase in the teaching productivity of faculty over the past four years. The productivity of off-track faculty exceeds that of tenure stream faculty because the former are assigned limited responsibility for research and service and thus have higher teaching loads than the latter. For example, at NCSU where the standard teaching load for tenure stream faculty is 13.7 course hours per year, it is 20.3 course hours for off-track faculty. Similar differences in assigned loads exist at the other campuses. Because the use of teaching assistants on most campuses is limited, the data on their teaching productivity is variable and less reliable than those of tenure stream and off track faculty. Thus the increase in their productivity may be more apparent than real.

To some extent, the data in Table 3 measure the efficiency of the instructional process and are more meaningful than student/teacher ratios and course load statistics. They measure the output of faculty by using two fairly standardized measures: student credit hours and faculty FTE. Nevertheless, there are few benchmarks available for purposes of data comparison. Thus, we cannot know, for example, whether 409.4 student credit hours per state-funded faculty FTE—the University-wide average in 1999-2000—is high or low in comparison with peer institutions. This problem has been tackled by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and by the U.S. Department of Education, both of whom have attempted to establish comparative measures of teaching productivity. Unfortunately, the SREB data collection failed and was cancelled this year, and the USDOE efforts have been based on sample sizes that do not permit inter-institutional comparisons. Even though a number of states have their own measures, they follow local definitions of faculty and courses for inclusion and thus may not be comparable to the UNC study.

#### The Delaware Study

A major shortcoming of the UNC Teaching Workload Report is the lack of available benchmarks from other systems collecting comparable data. The system most like the UNC system is one that was

used for several years in Maryland, but it is no longer required for all Maryland institutions and many have ceased to participate. Thus, the current UNC system has no benchmarks for comparison other than data from UNC peers and data from prior years.

One data collection system that seems to offer a potential benchmarking process for teaching productivity is the **Delaware Study** of teaching loads and cost of instruction. This data collection is voluntary and is presently in its sixth year of operation. Originally funded by a FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education) grant, the purpose of the data collection is to collect data from institutions on matters related to teaching load, faculty productivity, and instructional cost. It shares its findings and summary data with the more than 160 four-year institutions that participate, and it is expecting to get a new FIPSE grant next year that will enable it to enhance its service and expand its operation. Last year, all UNC institutions were directed by the Office of the President to join the exchange in order to test this data collection system as an alternative source of data on teaching workload. Based on their experience with the new data collection, campus participants have recommended that the Delaware system **replace the current system** for collecting teaching workload data. Several points support this recommendation.

First, the Delaware system is similar in many respects to the UNC system. Both systems use the academic department as the basic unit of analysis. They use similar categories of faculty (regular tenure stream, other regular, supplemental and teaching assistants) and similar categories of student credit hours (lower division undergraduate, upper division undergraduate and graduate). Both are annual data collections. Both have high degrees of comparability across participating institutions. Although data in the Delaware study must work around differences in state accounting conventions and budgeting procedures, they are as comparable as any available elsewhere. Indeed, the prestigious Association of American Universities has decided to use Delaware Study data collection in lieu of starting one on its own and has encouraged all of its members to participate.

Second, the Delaware study has some clear advantages over the UNC system:

- It requires data that can be provided directly from the campus centralized database and does not rely on individual department heads, thus eliminating the primary source of **burden** and **error** in the UNC system;
- It is free of cost to its members, and its data summaries can be customized to give institutions, and departments within institutions, comparisons with as many of its peer institutions as participate each year. The director of the Delaware study has offered to work with staff from the Office of the President and from the campuses to develop customized data summaries that meet their needs;
- It does not attempt to capture data on standard teaching loads, credit hour equivalents and course reductions—the most problematic portion of the UNC data collection system. Instead, it chooses to focus on the two questions of greatest relevance to the issue of teaching workload: which categories of faculty are teaching undergraduates; and how productive are all categories of faculty as measured by their student credit hours taught.

Third, the Delaware system is philosophically consistent with the Board's commitment to place the management of teaching workload under the responsibility of the department head and dean, but to insist that their management decisions be informed by valid comparative data. Such a system will help assure that UNC faculty will demonstrate instructional productivity and a commitment to the teaching of undergraduates that are both responsible and competitive.

Given these advantages, it is recommended that the UNC Board of Governors switch from its current data collection system on teaching workload to the Delaware Study. This means that the 1999-2000 academic year would be the last year of the current UNC report, and 2000-01 would be the first year of the Delaware Study report. The Board would continue to monitor teaching workloads through this data collection as required by statute.