

Faculty and Graduate Student Perceptions of Teaching Importance With Respect to Faculty Rewards.

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Abstract

Many college administrators have adopted the view that teaching be given equal weight to research with respect to promotion and tenure. The purpose of this study was to determine if faculty and graduate students believe that teaching is being rewarded on an equal basis with research. Graduate students and faculty from the Department of Poultry Science at North Carolina State University were surveyed. The results show that although graduate and faculty instructors hold a high regard for the teaching aspect of their jobs, their perception is that teaching is still not rewarded on the same level as research during promotion and tenure. These findings suggest that administrators' opinions of what should be rewarded are different from staffs' perception of what is rewarded.

Introduction

Universities began as institutions for teaching. However, with the advent of experiment stations and research grants, emphasis has shifted toward research and obtaining grants. In a national survey conducted in 1989 by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Boyer, 1990), 42% of all faculty surveyed felt strongly that it would be difficult for a person to achieve tenure if they did not publish. Young professors today often hold the view that they must "publish or perish" (Tang and Chamberlain, 1993). Because of the importance of research, faculty members may choose research in favor of teaching when time is scarce, even though they may want to give equal time to both.

Recently, administrators in Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences have attempted to lessen the teaching versus research disparity. Administrators in agricultural colleges have verbally emphasized the importance of good teaching along with research as an important factor in promotion and tenure. As part of the commitment to reward faculty for good teaching a number of programs designed to improve and better evaluate teaching have been implemented. Some of these

programs include developing teaching improvement centers, implementing student and peer evaluations of teaching, as well as encouraging faculty to develop teaching portfolios.

Objectives

Quality teaching has received increased emphasis by Colleges of Agriculture, but do faculty believe they are rewarded for good teaching? The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of graduate students and faculty in the Department of Poultry Science at North Carolina State University regarding the importance of teaching.

Methodology

Graduate students and faculty in the Department of Poultry Science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) at NCSU were surveyed to determine their perceptions on the importance of teaching versus research with respect to the faculty reward system. An initial survey was done on November 31, 1994 and a second on December 5, 1994. Deadline for return of the surveys was December 9, 1994. Of 21 faculty and 23 graduate students surveyed in this department, 16 faculty and 11 graduate students responded, for a response rate of 76% for the faculty and 48% for the graduate students.

Data were collected for 15 items related to teaching and the reward system. A four-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), was used. Negatively worded statements reverse coded for analysis.

Findings

Both faculty and graduate students strongly agreed they enjoyed teaching undergraduates (M=3.6 and 3.7 respectively). Table 1. Research/teaching (M=3.6) and extension faculty (M=3.8) strongly agreed they would miss teaching if it were no longer part of their responsibility, and that teaching was an important part of their job (research/teaching Faculty: M=3.6; extension Faculty: M=3.7).

However, faculty do not believe teaching is valued highly by administration. All faculty disagreed (values less than 3.0) with four statements related to how teaching is valued: good teaching is valued (research/teaching faculty: M=2.8;

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extension faculty: $M=2.5$), good teaching is rewarded (research/teaching faculty: $M=2.7$; extension faculty: $M=1.8$), teaching is valued more than research (research/teaching faculty: $M=2.2$; extension faculty: $M=1.7$), and teaching is rewarded as much as research (research/teaching faculty: $M=2.4$; extension faculty: $M=1.2$).

Implications of the Results

It is evident from the results that both faculty and graduate students strongly agreed with the statements that they enjoy teaching and deem it as an important part of their job. It is also clear that faculty and graduate student perceptions indicate that persons in administration feel that teaching is less valuable than research.

At many institutions of higher learning there is a disproportionate emphasis placed upon research and publication with respect to attaining tenure and promotion. As Corbett (1992) stated, it is no wonder that the "competition for publication has contributed to the difficulty that professors have in finding an outlet for their manuscripts, not to mention the depletion of our forests". According to Begley (1991), 45% of the articles in the top 4500 science journals were not cited at all within five years after their initial publication. Begley (1991) and Corbett (1992), did not support depreciating research in favor of teaching, but suggested a more reasonable balance between the importance of research and teaching,

Emphasis on research has been suggested by some as a contributing factor in the decrease in quality of teaching. In recent years there have been many editorials in newspapers and magazines regarding the decline in undergraduate education. "Young professors are so preoccupied with the need to publish in order to prosper (or even to survive in academia) that they neglect the preparations necessary to conduct a fruitful class session" (Corbett, 1992). In the past 20 years, returns, in terms of salary increments and tenure, at large Ph.D. granting institutions have been nonexistent for teaching, even in cases of outstanding teaching (Boyes et al., 1984). The emphasis on research over teaching does not appear to change after tenure is obtained. Colbeck (1992) showed that in departments in which research is valued over teaching with respect to attaining tenure, tenured professors continued to value research over teaching. In contrast, if teaching is valued in the tenure process, the faculty tend to maintain teaching interests throughout their careers.

Tang and Chamberlain (1993) found differences between the perceptions of administrators and faculty on the importance of teaching. Administrators reported that both teaching and research were rewarded, were mutually supportive, and both were viewed as important when hiring faculty. Faculty members perceived research productivity as being rewarded and necessary for survival. They felt universities should hire faculty with strength in either teaching or research. These findings were consistent with the findings of this study. Al-

though administrators continue to extol the importance of teaching during the faculty reward process, the fact remains that faculty perceive that teaching is not rewarded equally with research. This is evident from the results of the present study.

In a review of 48 applications for tenure at The Ohio State University in 1993-94, "tenure panels gave particular scrutiny to the number of publications; the reputation of journals, presses and outside evaluators; and the amount of grant money received" (Lederman and Mooney, 1995). The philosophy of faculty remained that "a mediocre teacher with outstanding research is far more likely to get tenure than a terrific teacher with lackluster scholarship".

Summary

While administrators may say teaching is important, faculty and graduate students do not believe teaching is valued or rewarded to the same extent as research. As long as faculty believe this, they may place less effort in their teaching responsibilities. The result could be that students do not receive the quality of education they expect. Faculty will continue to believe that teaching is not valued as much as research until they see tangible evidence that shows otherwise. There must be more than rhetoric.

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Table 1. Attitudes in the Department of Poultry Science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University toward teaching and the importance of teaching versus research with respect to the faculty reward system.

Statement	Graduate Student Mean	Teaching/ Research Faculty Mean	Extension Faculty Mean
1. I enjoy teaching undergraduate students.	3.7	3.7	3.5
2. I enjoy teaching graduate students.	3.0	3.7	3.5
3. I enjoy extension related teaching.	3.8	3.3	3.8
4. I obtained (or am obtaining) my degree primarily so that I may teach at the University/College level.	2.8	2.5	2.8
5. I obtained (or am obtaining) my degree primarily so that I may conduct research at a University or in private industry or government.	3.2	3.3	2.8
6. I do not view teaching as a burden on my time.	3.6	3.4	3.7
7. I view teaching as one of the most important parts of my job.	3.2	3.6	3.7
8. If I never had to teach again, I would miss it very much.	3.1	3.6	3.8
9. I would not be more productive if I did not have to teach.	2.8	2.8	3.0
10. All faculty in the department should be expected to teach.	2.9	2.7	3.3
11. I view teaching as the most important contribution that the University makes.	3.3	3.1	3.3
12. Good teaching is valued at NCSU.	3.1	2.8	2.5
13. Good teaching is rewarded at NCSU.	2.5	2.7	1.8
14. Teaching is valued as much as research at NCSU.	2.1	2.2	1.7
15. Teaching is rewarded as much as research at NCSU.	2.0	2.4	1.2

Based on Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.