

Convincing Benefits

The following benefits can be used to convince faculty members across the curriculum to use communications for learning:

1. Students continue to increase their self-esteem as they gain confidence in themselves and reinforce skills learned in their communication courses. Self-esteem is an important component for enjoyment in learning and for success after school.

2. Technology related projects, written and oral,

make the course more relevant to the students. Writing and speaking become more important too. Another benefit is that students, in order to prepare projects, must spend time doing research, both in the library and through interviews, thereby reinforcing critical thinking skills.

Employers require communication skills in the work place.

Professors in all courses must help students attain those skills.

A COMMENT

Faculty Assignments at Non-Land Grant Universities

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Introduction

One of the most common decisions facing recent graduates with advanced degrees is whether to remain in academia or seek employment with private industry. Those who have had a pleasant teaching experience (and perhaps those who have not) during their graduate program, may wish to pursue a teaching, teaching-research, or teaching-extension appointment. A part of this choice is the dilemma of choosing between a land grant versus a non-land grant institution. Based upon several years of teaching experience, the authors offer some personal observations and viewpoints regarding some of the advantages and disadvantages of teaching at both types of institutions. Since most agricultural scientists holding the Ph.D. are products of the land grant system in the U.S., it is assumed that some degree of familiarity exists for most readers regarding the types of appointments within that system. Thus, the major focus of this manuscript is on teaching positions at non-land grant schools. It is hoped that discussion will lend insight as to which type of institution would best fit the personality, goals, and aspirations of an individual faced with such a choice. Comments and opinions of the authors are based on experiences while teaching at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Sam Houston State University, Oklahoma State University, and Texas A and M University.

System Description

In Texas, as in most states, agricultural programs are offered at the land grant university and several smaller non-land grant regional universities. The regional universities include four-year universities offering a degree in one or more areas of agriculture. The Agricultural Consortium of Texas includes nine such universities including: West Texas State University, Texas Tech University, Angelo State

University, Sul Ross State University, Southwest Texas State University, Texas A and I University, Sam Houston State University, Stephen F. Austin State University, and East Texas State University. Most of these universities offer degrees in agriculture with emphasis in areas such as Plant Science, Animal Science, Agricultural Mechanization, Agricultural Business, and Agricultural Education. In contrast the land grant university offers degrees in each of these areas including specialized options within each area. The land grant university's faculty hold appointments in teaching, research, and/or extension; whereas the faculty in the regional universities hold primarily teaching appointments.

Teaching Assignments

Since most of the regional colleges and universities offering agricultural programs are primarily teaching institutions, a faculty member utilizes professional time preparing lecture notes, laboratory exercises, and preparing and evaluating exams or class assignments. Other normal duties include student advisement, committee assignments, and perhaps some supervision of the university's farm and ranch activities. Teaching loads range from 12 to 15 credit hours per semester with 12 hours usually considered a full teaching load. This generally equates to four courses per semester. Since most undergraduate agricultural courses are accompanied by a laboratory, it is not uncommon to spend 14 to 18 contact hours per week in the classroom and/or lab.

Though four courses per semester is a normal assignment, rarely will the same instructor teach the same four courses each semester. It is not unusual in many agricultural departments to have only one or two professors in each emphasis area. So that some diversity in course offerings may be maintained, some instructors teach up to eleven or twelve different courses in a two year period and eight or nine courses in a given year. This of course, has advantages and

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disadvantages. First, it allows (or forces) the instructor to gain proficiency in many different areas. For example, an agronomist may be expected to teach introductory plant science, forage crop management, and crop physiology one semester and teach three different upper level courses the next. Obviously, one must be willing to learn. It is not possible to emerge from a Ph.D. program as an expert in ten or twelve different subject areas. Continuing study enables one to increase proficiency in each subject matter area each time a course is taught. Some find this subject matter diversity to be stimulating on one hand while exhausting on the other.

The number of classes can be overwhelming for the beginning instructor considering the hours of preparation often necessary. This is especially true when lab preparations are required in addition to lectures. Educational, interesting, and thought provoking labs take as much or more time to develop as lectures occupying the same amount of time. At the regional universities, the availability of graduate assistants to aid in teaching labs, grading papers, or other essential activities is minimal at best or non-existent at worst. In contrast, graduate assistants are commonly employed to teach labs, with supervision, for the introductory courses at the land grant universities.

An individual often has his/her own ideas about how a course should be taught and what the content of the course should be. Unfortunately, with a heavy course load, it may take years before one feels that he/she has reached the point of feeling well prepared for each lecture and/or lab presentation. It is helpful to attend seminars, field days, shortcourses, or other educational offerings to augment the areas in need of improvement. The trade magazines are filled with tidbits of information that can be incorporated into class lecture notes to add interest to lectures. Attendance at professional meetings keeps the mind stimulated and helps one stay abreast of new developments. Unfortunately, these are often difficult to attend on a restricted travel budget. Further difficulty arises in making arrangements to cover classes and labs in the absence of the instructor.

Research

Research can be a dilemma for faculty at the regional universities. In contrast to the land grant universities where many faculty hold integrated research and teaching appointments, the regional universities' faculty generally hold 100 percent teaching appointments. However, promotions and merit pay increases may be in part a function of the faculty members' research activities. With a clear incentive for research, there must be a concern for potential funding. Sources of funding include private grants and university research funds from a line item in state appropriations. Federal funds from the Hatch Act do not pertain to the regional universities. Whereas

research activities are part of the job description for land grant faculty, similar activities are often in addition to the job description for non-land grant faculty. A result of the teaching load is the absence of the publish or perish pressure associated with the research oriented universities. However, even administrators at the teaching institutions realize research activities promote academic recognition and respect and perhaps aid in attracting high quality students and faculty. A faculty member's research activities and publications are often given consideration for promotion and merit. Unfortunately, the funding and facilities available for quality research in agriculture (and many other disciplines) are difficult to obtain at the regional institutions with a primary focus on teaching. Most have very limited in-house funds available for research purposes and those funds available are generally only "seed" monies to help faculty members get started in conducting research. It is hoped that with a demonstrated commitment from the university, faculty will be able to obtain additional funds through other sources. Sharing equipment among departments or colleges within the university (such as agriculture and chemistry), aid in establishing credible research programs. Cooperative research projects with colleagues at the large institutions and/or experiment stations make it possible to remain active in research.

In many cases, release time is not available for faculty research at the regional schools, making it difficult to devote a large amount of time to research. However, writing proposals, reviewing literature, and attending and participating in professional meetings undoubtedly stimulates the mind and assists the faculty member in keeping current. Effectiveness in the classroom is likely to be improved by such activities.

Students

Another concern of prospective faculty members is that of student quality. In general, the larger land-grant universities have higher entrance requirements than other state universities. Some state governments insist that higher education be made available to anyone, with entrance scores not being considered as important as grades attained after admission. With declining enrollment in many of the nation's colleges and universities, it is possible that admission requirements may become less strict. Regardless, there are many talented, intelligent, and enterprising students attending land grant and non-land grant universities. It appears to us that the regional schools must deal with a student body possessing a greater range of academic skills. Thus the job of teaching becomes even more challenging.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest rewards of teaching is having some impact on a student's life. The somewhat more informal setting and more intimate student-teacher interaction found at the regional universities allows the opportunity for more personal contact with students. It is not uncommon for

graduates to have formed close relationships with several faculty in a small department. Since most faculty at the regional schools also serve as advisor or sponsor of at least one student organization, a bond between students and faculty often develops that simply is not possible when contact is made via the classroom only. The gratification from watching and playing a part in the scholarly and cultural development of a young adult cannot be matched.

One of the greatest advantages offered to those teaching at the smaller universities is that of smaller class size; thus providing the potential for more individual student attention. Assuredly, there are many students at those institutions for that reason alone. An entering freshman at a large university may feel insignificant in classes of 100 or 200 students and perhaps even larger. However, it is conceded that entry level courses generally contain more students than the upper level courses, no matter the size of the university. Unfortunately, it is difficult to provide extra

assistance to a student that doesn't come forward and request it. Smaller class sizes do however make it easier to approach individual students regarding academic or other problems and to provide assistance when requested.

Conclusion

Admittedly, the authors have not been exposed to all possible situations, thus lack the ability to describe all possible advantages and disadvantages of appointment at non-land grant institutions. For example, Texas Tech University and Southern Illinois University are non-land grant universities, yet each obtains considerable funding for agricultural research and has student populations larger than some land-grants. Our experiences do not include such institutions.

Perhaps this discussion will draw attention to the issues of appointment at regional universities with agricultural programs. Innovative teaching, research, and service will be better achieved through an understanding of the institutions involved.

Changes in Student Enrollment In Faculties of Agriculture in Canada

G. M. Jenkinson

Enrollment data has been collected on a regular basis since 1978 at the undergraduate level and since 1980 at the graduate level for the faculties of agriculture in Canada. A complete statistical picture is provided in the accompanying tables which illustrate both total enrollment and the number of graduates on an annual basis. Previous enrollment reports in the NACTA Journal presented annual data during the period 1979 through 1987. This report summarizes the data for the past decade and provides annual data for the three most recent years.

An overview summary of enrollment data and the number of graduates from faculties of agriculture in Canada is provided in Tables 1 and 2. Undergraduate enrollment declined substantially during the ten year period under review and is now 29% lower than it was in 1980. A similar but less pronounced trend was observed regarding the number of graduates at the bachelors level which declined 14% during the same period. Graduate student enrollment and the number of graduates at the MSc and PhD level increased substantially and have, in large measure, offset the enrollment decline at the undergraduate level. This is particularly true with the total number of graduates (Table 2) which was actually higher in 1989 than it was in 1980 when graduates from all programs (graduate and undergraduate) are considered.

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Table 1. Enrollment Summary Faculties of Agriculture in Canada, 1980-1989.

	NUMBER OF FULL TIME STUDENTS							
	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Change
Undergraduate	5768	4895	4775	4766	4374	4221	4090	-29%
M.Sc.	980	1182	1288	1272	1315	1329	1341	+37%
Ph.D.	350	488	504	535	572	642	629	+80%
	7098	6565	6567	6573	6261	6192	6060	-15%

Table 2. Number of Graduates From Faculties of Agriculture in Canada, 1980-1989.

	NUMBER OF FULL TIME STUDENTS							
	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Change
Undergraduate	1230	1076	1156	1136	1055	1078	1052	-14%
M.Sc.	249	285	310	362	403	359	380	+53%
Ph.D.	58	55	74	125	124	109	122	+110%
	1537	1416	1540	1623	1582	1546	1554	+1%

Table 3. Undergraduate Enrollment in Faculties of Agriculture in Canada, 1978-1989.

University	NUMBER OF FULL TIME STUDENTS					
	1978	1981	1984	1987	1988	1989
U.B.C.	398	393	379	345	328	325
Alberta	533	340	503	500	469	453
Saskatchewan	488	511	590	549	555	559
Manitoba	688	560	585	506	475	447
Guelph (Agr)	1534	1394	1171	880	828	790
Macdonald (Agr)	493	532	578	400	417	390
Laval	968	803	775	888	853	788
N.S.A.C.	197	181	314	306	296	288
Total	5299	4714	4895	4374	4221	4090
% Female	25%	36%	40%	40%	41%	44%

Notes: Enrollment declined 23% from 1978 to 1989 in Canada. The major decline is at Guelph where there were 49% fewer students in 1989 as compared to 1978. The increase at N.S.A.C. in 1984 reflects the development of the third and fourth year curriculum.