

## Action Project One: Development of a Human Resource Assessment Plan to Proactively Meet Student Needs

**I. Data that led to the selection of this project:** The topic rose out of Conversation Day as the top priority for faculty. The reason for the selection as stated in the Team Charter was the “growth in student population and non-traditional student programs over the past five years” (i.e. degree completion and graduate programs) along with “increased technology, progressive change, and new systems and programs” that led to “shifting of workloads.” When loads shift, often imbalances occur. However, it also seemed logical to analyze the method of calculating workload by credit hours, a system known to reveal only part of a professor’s workload.

**II. Project Scope:** The Team task, after negotiation with the Steering Team, was to complete six components within the charter: (1) develop processes and procedures to measure current workload levels, (2) measure workload levels, (3) gather data regarding workload levels from institutions similar to Evangel, (4) identify and recommend a plan to eliminate duplication of efforts and inequities in workloads including proactive measures, (5) design an implementation plan, and (6) design an assessment plan. As part of the project, the Team was to establish timelines for each phase, design measuring instruments, and identify opportunities for improvement.

**III. Customer Requirements:** The charter states that the University has the responsibility “to assure [that] all community members have and maintain manageable, equitable workloads” in order to “maintain a positive work environment and to enable employees to perform their duties in an effective and efficient manner leading to increased pride and satisfaction in work.” Beyond this, it is important to note that the name of Action Project One includes the purpose of meeting student needs. Thus, although assuring manageable and equitable workloads for faculty satisfaction is a goal of this project, an outcome of almost equal importance in the new plan recommended is meeting *student* needs.

**IV. Brief History of Major Accomplishments:** The Team followed the steps outlined in the project scope. Three types of data were collected:

A: Analysis of official work loads as filed in the Academic Dean’s office (This analysis will be discussed in detail in the final report.)

B: Faculty anonymous opinion survey (answered by 65 teachers) asking for three responses:

(1) “In one sentence, why do you believe the workload issue was a top issue at Conversation Day?”

Two responses can summarize the prevalence of opinions received (italics added

- “Faculty feel that workloads are *unevenly distributed across campus* to an extent that the inequity is unfair.”
- “People feel their *workload is constantly being increased [by university demands]*, that in addition to teaching classes. There seems to be an *inequity among individual an[d] department workloads*. Teaching hours are not the only things that should be considered.”

(See attached complete response list.)

(2) “Overall, I feel that my workload is (circle one) *very light, light, reasonable, heavy, very heavy*”

Those feeling overworked (heavy, very heavy) = 46 or 68%.

Those feeling the load is manageable (reasonable or light) = 21 or 31%.

(3) “How many hours per week do you spend on University work?”

Below 20 = 1

20 – 30 = 2

30 – 40 = 11

40 – 50 = 29

50 – 60 = 12

60 – 70 = 7

70 – 80 = 3

C: Faculty work records: (This will be detailed in the complete report, but the average number of hours worked weekly as reported in the records was 47.9, a figure showing that perception was not far from reality for some teachers.)

The Team chose a method that selected different faculty randomly and equitably within departments every two weeks until all had been called to keep track of time in 15-minute segments. The project spanned a period of eight weeks. We recognize that in any other given eight-week period of reporting, different totals would emerge. However, it seems logical that we received a fairly accurate “slice of work-life” at Evangel. The Team recognizes that self-reporting can never be entirely accurate but accepts the fact that no other method is feasible. Also, given the religious culture of Evangel University and the high value placed on truth (that word even appearing as a central focus in the school seal), we believe that the work records submitted are as accurate as could be expected from faculty of any school.

#### **V. Desired and expected workload at Evangel:**

After realizing that the average number of hours now worked each week is 47.9, the team had a lively debate to consider whether this average—almost one day more than the expected American forty-hour week—should be considered acceptable. Some felt it a little heavy and, thus, not acceptable as the norm just because is it *status quo*. Others felt that professors are professionals comparable with those in the world of business in which it is not uncommon to work 50-60 hours a week. The fact that professors also have the advantage of vacations and summer time off was mentioned, though many faculty do use summers for academic growth, and some pursue writing or research.

The Team decided that although 40 hours would be considered the ideal, up to 50 hours a week should be considered normal; however, more than 50 hours on a regular basis is unacceptable because the University leadership values employees as whole persons with responsibilities to families, churches, and community. On the other side, it is reasonable to expect those working fewer than 40 hours per week on a regular basis to pick up more of the department and University load.

Before the Workload Team could determine improvements needed in the current workload situation of Evangel faculty, it needed to determine the expectations

of the University, look at the current average workload experience of the faculty, and determine whether or not a gap exists between the two (a discrepancy).

The information below is a compilation of **average** University expectations under the present system each determined by one of the following methods:

- The Faculty Handbook
  - An interview with Dr. Glenn Bernet
  - General knowledge among faculty and administrators
- (Note: The following does not apply to department heads, as they work under special arrangements for credit hours and compensation.)*

**Required by the University (general averages)**

1. Credit hours per semester: 12 \*(Under the new plan, the term “credit hours” will be replaced with “workload points.”)

2. Committees and clubs: Expected number

**Intensive activity team member or chair of any committee** 1  
(requiring significant work between meetings)

OR

**Light activity** 2

- **Committee member**  
(requires little or no work between monthly meetings)
- **Student club sponsor**

3. Advisees: 20

4. Departmental duties:

- shouldering an equal time commitment with other department members

5. Faculty meetings:

- attendance each month

6. Spiritual-life participation:

- University activities— attendance twice a week on average
- local church— membership and regular attendance

7. The scholarship of teaching:

- keeping current in one’s field (as a generalist with focus on courses taught)
- keeping fresh in classroom methods and technology by attending professional development seminars offered each semester

8. Number of students in class per semester: total limited only by course caps

*This number comes from the student population divided by the number of teaching faculty. It does not take into consideration the music faculty load or education faculty’s supervision of students in the field. Those must be figured separately.*

**Expected by the University** (under certain circumstances such as for those seeking tenure and/or promotion)

- publications (journal articles or books)
- community service
- serving as major committee and/or department chairs

**Total number of hours per week required**

- Office hours (including some time for preparation) 10

• Hours in classroom	12-14
• Average for meetings, chapel, advising	<u>5</u>
<b>Total “locked in” hours on campus</b>	<b>27-29</b>

**Remaining hours (UNDER 45) for the following:** **16-18**  
(Some of these can be off campus)

- Committees/clubs
- Departmental work
- Paper grading, planning
- Student organizations
- Personal scholarship/research/writing
- Community service projects

**VI. Gaps between the desired/expected and actual workload**  
(Hours per week = HPW)

A. number of faculty <u>perceiving</u> an intense workload or lack of balance among colleagues (67 reporting)	44 or 67%
B. number of faculty completing 2 weeks of records:	43
C. number of individuals <u>reporting</u> more than 50 HPW	17 or 39%
D. number of faculty <u>reporting</u> 40 – 50: HPW	14 or 32%
E. number of faculty <u>reporting</u> fewer than 40 HPW:	12 or 27%
D. highest HPW reported:	77
E. lowest HPW reported:	29

**VII. Conclusions from the data:** The Team deduced from faculty attitudes and opinions, from perceived workload, from records in the dean’s office, from the “ideal” and expected load, and from actual work hours reported that unequal workload at Evangel does exist. Probably most people consider hours beyond the norm of 40 as intense; thus, the percent who *feel* overworked (67%) is almost equal to the number actually working beyond the “norm” (71%). Almost 40% are working over 50, and more than a quarter are not reaching 40 hours. Thus, it seems that a plan to evaluate and equalize the weight of work among faculty at Evangel University is needed.

**VIII. Perceived root causes of the inequities in workload:** Any new plan must take into consideration the root causes of the problem uncovered. Although the following reasons for unequal workload seem plausible, no specific instances or faculty were discussed among the Team. Furthermore, not all of these are pertinent to every department at Evangel University.

1. **Lack of uniform work ethic.** In any given community the size of Evangel’s faculty, the intrinsic work ethic will vary from person to person. Some of the hours given to University tasks result from an inner drive to go far beyond what is expected by department heads, administrators, or students. “Workaholics” exist everywhere as do those who do the least possible to get by.

2. **Lack of accurate measuring instrument.** The “workload card” currently used provides an inaccurate picture of load: it does not take into consideration size of

classes, number of preparations, teaching methods, numbers of committees and advisees, or special departmental projects. Because department heads have no tool for comparing their faculty by number of hours spent, they may inadvertently assign unequal loads. One team member, in fact, reported that interviews with department heads indicated their sense of fair load distribution. The faculty, however, reported the opposite perception. Also, because the academic dean and other administrators lack solid information of individuals' time commitments, they may inadvertently overload particular people with university committees.

3. **Lack of uniformity in expectations campus wide.** Although most departments have a 12-credit-hour "ceiling" on load, not all do. Also, no overload pay is given for carrying 15 hours. As another example, though the handbook calls for 10 office hours, some department chairs interpret all hours to be posted with faculty in the office while others allow faculty to post only 5, with the other 5 to be "floating." Additionally, some sense of privilege for seniority may exist within certain departments.

4. **Lack of workload information among faculty.** Faculty members probably do not have an accurate sense of the time colleagues are putting into their assignments. Inequities might be somewhat self-correcting if those with lighter loads actually knew the weight their colleagues are carrying.

5. **Lack of progressive leaders.** Some leaders may not seek to uncover inequities already understood by many or to correct those imbalances which are apparent.

6. **Lack of cooperative followers.** Some people have carved out their academic niches and will not easily move outside their areas. Others may be unwilling to accept extra department assignments; thus, their colleagues feel forced to pick up the duties.

7. **Lack of knowledge concerning expectations or best practices for optimum student learning.** Because most Christians understand the concept of accountability to God for their best efforts, it can be assumed that some on the lower end of the hours reported may not understand where they are falling short or even that they are, as many department heads are not regularly conducting faculty evaluations. Also, teachers may not know the value to students of certain time-consuming pedagogical techniques; thus, they avoid them.

8. **Lack of adequate faculty in a department.** Some faculty members believe their departments lack enough full-time professors. In some cases, the problem is temporary, caused by resignations and reassignments. However, at times the shortage may remain ongoing through the years.

9. **Misperceptions of efficiency.** Some people can get more done in a given time period than others and can achieve the same quality results. Thus, it may seem as though such professors are carrying a lighter load, when in reality they are not.

**IX. Requirements of a flexible formula for balancing workload to replace the current credit-hour measurement:** Such a plan—while focusing on as many root causes as possible—should meet several other criteria:

1. It must not reach the goal mainly by increasing faculty; however, it may reveal situations in which hiring of extra faculty is recommended.
2. It must allow departments to be autonomous—within certain normative boundaries—in constructing their own specific plan details.
3. It must allow faculty some latitude within the plan in order to maximize individual strengths and preferences.
4. It should maintain through cooperation any existing collegiality and increase the same in some cases where perceived inequity may have proven divisive.
5. It must take into consideration grading time required, work-study help, student load, advisee numbers, committees, clubs, and service to the community.
6. It should increase student learning for all courses taught by more than one teacher through establishing a common syllabus incorporating only those practices considered best by the teaching team.
7. It must provide a way to help equalize loads.

Briefly stated, a workable flexible formula for balancing load would...

1. accurately convert into numbers student load, hours in class, and time spent on teaching, advising, committees, and community service.
2. fairly determine a load category level of *light*, *average*, *heavy* (and maybe *intense*) for the previous semester.
3. consider and balance one's load over a period of two or three years instead of the current yearly credit-hour plan.
4. be determined mainly by the department head and approved by the dean.
5. seek to lessen heavy loads and increase light loads rather than to compensate financially for overloads or to reduce pay

## **X. The proposed Flexible Formula:**

This task was undertaken slowly and with much discussion, the team members constantly evaluating the pros and cons of innumerable suggestions coming from members themselves, from the guest consultant, from the few other models obtained, and from our understanding of the ethos and financial situation of Evangel.

### **Philosophical Background**

Whereas Conversation Day revealed the topic “workload” to be the number one concern of Evangel faculty and because a later poll of faculty indicated that many perceive unremunerated inequities in workload as currently figured, the faculty AQIP Team has constructed for consideration a plan that replaces the current “credit hour load” with “workload points.” The purpose of the new plan is to **increase student learning and faculty satisfaction** through (1) assuring manageable loads for all faculty (including adjunct) leading to increased time for academic preparation and student contact; (2) giving more opportunity for professional growth; (3) enhancing

student learning and equalizing faculty effort through peer-reviewed courses in which assessment devices and learning projects are “normed” to assure quality control.

### **Overarching principle of the Flexible Formula:**

Inspired by Dr. Howard Altman’s explanation of the “flexible workload” concept, this plan will consider workload an unstable entity that may alternate in weight over a three-year period with no change in salary. Using a well-designed and tested formula, professors will evaluate their previous semester’s workload. Then after consultation with the department head, that semester will be labeled “light,” “average,” “heavy” or, in rare cases, “intensive.” Faculty will be expected/allowed to equalize semesters over the course of each three-year period so that each heavy semester is balanced with a compensatory light one, and *vice versa*. Because the department load must be carried each semester, obviously not everyone can be approved for a light load at the same time. It is to be expected that most faculty will carry average loads most of the time; however, the flexible plan allows for variations and also serves to evaluate on record the total departmental load so that a case may be made for additional faculty when funds become available. (It is also possible that faculty members who, for whatever reason including approaching retirement, do not wish to carry workload points equaling an “average” load could be allowed to work three-quarter time for reduced salary.)

### **Specific details of the plan**

#### 1. Student load

The expected “average” student load will be considered 80 students (20 for each 3-hour class-- formulated by dividing the number of full-time teaching faculty into the full-time equivalency [FTE] enrollment). Thus, a load of 75 – 85 students would be considered “normal.” Student load will be calculated on the basis of the mid-term grade sheet. Not every semester will provide a “normal” student load, but other components of the formula will bring balance.

#### 2. Semester load (no longer to be discussed in terms of “credit hours”)

- The expected load of all full-time faculty will be between 720 and 900 workload points, with overload compensation beginning at some yet-to-be determined point value, provided the total student load is at least 90 students (or whatever the administration agrees upon). A professor receiving extra compensation for non-traditional programs (i.e. degree completion or graduate studies) may not count the extra, compensated course in the formula for a heavy or intensive semester. However, that professor may choose to teach the extra course without remuneration in order to log a heavier than average semester.
- The expected class size **of adjunct faculty** is 35 [AGTS has 10] for a lecture course and 25 for a writing/project-intensive course. Class size will be figured by the number on the mid-term roster, and faculty with overloaded classes will be compensated per student [\$35 per student at AGTS] before the end of the semester. (*Note: Adjunct faculty must be considered because their load affects student learning. Overloaded faculty already carrying full-time jobs elsewhere do not make effective teachers.*)

3. Methods of lightening a semester's load for compensatory balance:
  - reducing the number of courses taught
  - reducing the student load
  - reducing department responsibilities
  - reducing University committee assignments with approval of the academic dean
  
4. Reasons for requesting a "light" semester
  - a scholarly project that did not receive (or would not qualify for) sabbatical approval but one important to the department or school
  - a self-improvement semester (related to courses) involving travel and study
  - an approved department project (A University project should be supported by adjunct faculty so that the department weight is not spread to others.)
  - a personal family situation that necessitates excessive attention for a semester
  - a personal illness that makes an "average" load difficult or impossible
  - a heavy or intensive semester within the previous 2 semesters
  - a previously agreed-upon "trade" with another professor, approved by the department head (The trade could be an entire course or a specific number of students.)
  - a "banked" number of independent study courses taught in previous semesters
  
5. Methods of establishing the levels of load intensity throughout the University
  - A basic formula has been established by the faculty Workload Team and will be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
  - After the plan has been explained to each department head and the questions or suggestions taken to the Team for "tweaking" of the plan, each department will set aside a "Conversation Day" during spring of 2007 to allow discussion of workload issues, thus bringing into the open concerns about load within the department. One goal is that through discussion the departments can correct workload issues extraneous to the Flexible Formula. Departments will mold the basic formula to their specific needs not addressed in the plan. *(It might be possible to allow departments to remain with the current credit-hour plan by 2/3 or 3/4 vote of the members after trying the plan for one year if the administration agrees. However, the majority of the Team is not in favor of side-by-side plans.)*
  - Departments will present their individualized plans to an evaluative team (probably some members of the current Team) that will make sure all flexible formulae for workload intensity mesh appropriately in weight throughout the University.
  
6. Reassigned-time contracts
 

All current reassigned-time load agreements/contracts will be reevaluated by a committee to determine workload point equivalents under the new formula. This might be accomplished by asking anyone with reassigned time to keep accurate records for one semester.

7. Available records

In order to foster a culture of openness, the workload records of each teacher should be available to everyone in the department so faculty are assured that all are “playing by the same rules.”

8. Common syllabi for multiple sections with more than one teacher

So that the same credit is given for each course, all courses taught by more than one faculty member will have a common syllabus designed by the faculty involved in conjunction with the department head (or entire department if that seems best). Thus, peer reviewed and designed general education courses (and many courses for majors) will be the norm. The models for these courses are English 102 and 111 as well as Bible 111. Faculty may be able to select their own texts, methods, and projects as long as the numbers and types of projects and tests require equivalent scope and faculty effort. **This component of the plan will become the main method of improving student learning.** No longer will students be able to choose “easy” sections of the same course or experience almost completely different content from that of learners in a different section. No longer will some sections require papers and projects while others include only two tests. Courses designed by a team of experts will naturally retain the best practices and omit ineffective components.

9. Methods of focusing on individual preferences and skills

Teachers may negotiate with department heads and colleagues to lighten or eliminate certain activities and substitute others more to their liking or in their strength areas. For example some faculty could substitute a major club activity for committee work or advising. (See point values under “Service Work”) Others might prefer to teach an extra course in order to give all advisees to someone who enjoys that service and is good at it. (Or a person known to be an ineffective advisor might be assigned other comparable department duties.)

10. Department chair remuneration

Because department heads will bear a greater burden than what is now required in reviewing individual faculty situations and will be the keys in balancing their faculties’ loads, it seems appropriate that an additional stipend be in their contracts. A private conference with each teacher would be required each semester with individuals to establish the intensity of the previous semester. Although it seems reasonable that time should be spent in face-to-face evaluations once a year even without the plan, the new system will require chair support and extra effort if it is to work.