

Teaching faculty calumniated

by Dr. Evan Blythin

National reports suggest that the teaching faculty in U.S. public universities have become third-class citizens. The problems and their solutions can be seen in local situations. At UNLV, for instance, the teaching faculty is poorly rewarded and little honored—they do, indeed, have third-class status.

Here is the situation. There are three general functions at the big U: research, service and teaching. A person is generally presumed to be satisfactory in all functions and superior in one in order to be rewarded or awarded. The way it works is everyone recognizes that in a world of specialization, a person cannot excel in every area. And so the players in the system tend to filter into one area of emphasis: some people administering and servicing the university and the larger community; some people engaged in the day-to-day transmission of knowledge, i.e., teachers.

The system works as long as everyone in the system takes care of business and as long as everyone in the system is an equal with

everyone else in the system. At the moment, the system is not working; teachers are poorly rewarded and poorly honored in the university environment.

The reward structure at the university is clear. Administrators are at the top; their time is three to 10 times the worth of a teacher's time. A good researcher can easily double or triple a teacher's salary. The salary structure reveals the status of teachers.

Merit allocations further illustrate the poor reward structure for teaching faculty. In the 1990 merit allocations for the largest college at UNLV, the College of Liberal Arts, 71 out of the 146 faculty received merit. On the face of it, the rewards seem common enough. Closer scrutiny reveals discrimination against the teaching faculty. Only 13 of the 146 faculty received merit without notable research, but 28 received merit without notable teaching. Teaching at UNLV is clearly not the first priority.

Poor compensation for teaching can be seen in the all-too-common increase of the teaching load without an increase in teacher

compensation. This year, for instance, the state's college population grew 10 percent in one year, which cost the system "about \$4.3 million in lost funding." (Review-Journal, Friday, Nov. 23, 1990, p. 2B). There were more students than had been funded for but the cost was not to the system. The

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faculty ended up taking on the extra students, extra text orders, extra papers to read, extra tests to grade, etc. The teaching faculty gets flattered for such burden but one does not hear proposals of a bonus.

Teachers at UNLV are commonly asked to take on extra assignments. For example, independent studies and graduate thesis credits are counted in the state dollars given to the institution, but the faculty members do

not receive compensation for the extra class work. Administrators tend to speak of these extras as the "givens" of teaching. Things like extra students, extra teaching assignments, thesis committees, student advising, independent studies, letters of recommendation, registration duty, sponsorship and advisement of student organizations, and incomplete studies that extend a teacher's obligations, are by and large, givens for the teaching faculty at UNLV.

There are faculty members at UNLV who have served on 25 to 30 master's degree committees. Graduate teaching faculty cannot receive verification of such service because the information is not coded for retrieval. If each bit of work on a thesis were, instead, a book review or part of an article, it would not be a given but acknowledged and rewarded. The teaching function is not acknowledged, not rewarded and not awarded.

Insofar as one attends to the givens of teaching a full load, there is little time left for research and the vanity of one's publications. Nor can a researcher or administrator excel while dealing

with all the givens of teaching. The faculty does double or triple duty by accounting for the students not covered by the researching and administering faculty. It seems clear that if administrators and researchers are rewarded for the qualities of their particular tasks, teaching faculty, too, should be so rewarded.

In general, the teaching faculty at America's state universities are a poorly paid lot. Even when there are rewards for the givens of teaching, there are few honorifics. For example, in the past five years, two of the larger colleges at UNLV gave 21 teaching awards. There are 232 people in the two colleges, which means that there was one award for every 52 members. That seems an incredibly low figure for a university that prides itself on quality teaching.

Dr. Blythin has served as chair of his department, the University Ethics Committee, and the Graduate College Curriculum Committee. He is the author of numerous books and articles in his field of study and has been a faculty member at UNLV for 21 years.

Letters to the Editor

American bullies

Dear editor,

Saddam Hussein is no angel. He used foreign children as human shields, gassed his own people, and invaded Kuwait. He has been involved in terrorist activity.

However, the American military response of several thousand bombing raids

one day after the January 15 deadline can be seen as the act of a bully. The dictionary defines a bully as "a person who is habitually cruel to smaller, or weaker, people."

If UNLV, the nation's number one basketball team, were

to aggressively play the women of a local church choir, this would be seen as an act of a bully. Analogously, the number one military power in the world

is being excessively aggressive to a poor country with less people than California.

How is Iraq likely to respond to the actions of a bully? Iraq is

likely to respond with terrorism. Hence, the American cessation of working economic sanctions and massive bombing is likely to lead to terrorism.

Sandy Campbell



illustration by Michael VannoZZi



Wanted: Pen-pals and profit

Dear editor,

I attended UNLV from 1986 to 1988, and the skills I obtained have aided me in starting my own business. I'm seeking correspondence from students for friendship as well as potential employees in a rewarding advertising business.

I am serving a two year sentence for tax purposes due to an incompetent tax consultant. I have countless connections all over the United States in all types of businesses.

I am willing to share this information to aid students in job seeking and corporate placement.

I am currently operating a business that will potentially generate \$75,000 annually despite my current location and circumstances. Anyone can do this with

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In addition, I enjoy meeting new people who will be tomorrow's corporate entrepreneurs. As they say, good friendships are hard to find.

**Roy S. Sip
Po Box B-80270
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85232**

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The Yellin' Rebel wants your opinions.

Letters should be approximately 300 words, and have name, address, phone number, major and year in school. Send to:

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