

Office of the University Vice President for Academic Affairs**Rutgers University****November 1999*****Report to the Executive Committee of the University Senate******Balance of Full-time & Part-time Faculty Teaching at Rutgers University***

The balance between full-time and part-time faculty teaching responsibilities at a public research university is a complex issue, one that begs an easy solution but merits serious discussion. The ways in which the University responds to the many demands placed upon it—as a provider of education, as an institution with a strong mission in research and service, and as an essential partner in the welfare of the citizens of the State—affect the quality of both graduate and undergraduate education, the morale and productivity of the University community, and the perception of the University by the citizens of the state, by its students, and by its teaching colleagues.

The faculty at Rutgers is a large, diverse, and talented group. The majority of teachers in the classroom are full-time faculty members, either tenured or tenure-track professors. Of the other classroom instructors, the largest groups are Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Part-Time Lecturers (PTLs).

TAs, who teach a wide range and level of courses, are, first and foremost, graduate students. Assistantships offer graduate students a means of support and an opportunity to gain undergraduate teaching experience while making progress toward an advanced degree.

PTLs are a diverse group, with widely different motivations for teaching on a part-time basis. Some are advanced graduate students who teach as PTLs to support themselves through the last stages of dissertation writing. Others, no longer students, choose to teach as PTLs to take advantage of the flexible schedule; many have full-time careers outside of the University but are sought for their special skills in fine arts, creative writing, law, business, engineering, or in other professional fields. Counted among this last group are nurses, federal judges, business executives, and freelance writers.

For some others, as a result of a constrained job market in some academic fields and their own strong desire to teach at the university level, the position has become their primary source of income. PTLs in this last category often have completed their doctorate. They are highly capable and experienced teachers. Hired on a course by course basis, they staff a range of courses, not only introductory undergraduate classes but also more specialized upper level ones. PTLs do not have all the responsibilities of a full-time faculty member, i.e., they are not required to do research, serve on committees, or participate in department or academic unit governance, which frees their time but also restricts their participation in the life of the University community. Because PTLs in this group often contract to teach courses at two or more institutions, their campus involvement is limited by their need to travel from one teaching job to another.

The exact size of the University's part-time teaching staff fluctuates by semester, based on course demand, faculty leaves, and student population. At Rutgers, as at most major public research universities, the number of TAs and the number of PTLs are inversely related, that is, universities with a relatively high number of TAs have a relatively low number of PTLs, those with fewer TAs have more PTLs.

One way to measure the profile of the two groups is to compare their share of instructional units (IUs), a measure used by the University for reporting teaching performed by each faculty rank. In general, three IUs represent one course although there are slight variations in the calculations depending on the mode of teaching (lecture, lab, recitation). According to the most recent available figures (Fall semester, 1997), the division of teaching responsibilities throughout the University are as shown in

Table 1.

Table 1: IU Distribution-University-wide

Fall 1997 Distribution of Institutional Units (IUs) by Type of Instructor

Instructor Type	no.	% IUs
<i>Full-time</i>		
Faculty (tenured & tenure track professors)	10,952.06	51.13%
Assistant instructor/lecturer	798.00	3.73%
<i>Part-time</i>		
PTLs	5,264.41	24.57%
TAs	2,903.18	13.55%
Other	1,504.61	7.02%
Total	21,422.26	100%

As Table 1 indicates, in Fall 1997, university-wide, full-time faculty taught approximately 55% of the instructional units; PTLs taught approximately 25% of the instructional units; and TAs taught 13.5%. The "other" category represents visiting professors or full-time professors at other institutions who are involved in joint degree programs.

The distribution varies among the campuses, as can be seen in Tables 2, 3, and 4, where the division of teaching responsibilities on the New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark campuses are provided.

Table 2: IU Distribution-New Brunswick

Fall 1997 Distribution of Institutional Units (IUs) by Type of Instructor

Instructor Type	no.	%IUs
<i>Full-time</i>		
Faculty (tenured & tenure track professors)	7280.28	49.21%
Assistant instructor/lecturer	665.94	4.20%
<i>Part-time</i>		
PTLs	3375.95	22.82%
TAs	2476.90	16.74%
Other	996.98	6.74%
Total	14,796.05	100%

Table 3: IU Distribution-Camden

Fall 1997 Distribution of Institutional Units (IUs) by Type of Instructor

Instructor Type	no.	%IUs
<i>Full-time</i>		
Faculty (tenured & tenure track professors)	1257.29	58.1
Assistant instructor/lecturer	84.08	3.88
<i>Part-time</i>		
PTLs	545.35	25.20%
TAs	89.54	4.14
Other	187.66	8.67
Total	2163.92	100%

Table 4: IU Distribution-Newark**Fall 1997 Distribution of Institutional Units (IUs) by Type of Instructor**

Instructor Type	no.	%IUs
<i>Full-time</i>		
Faculty (tenured & tenure track professors)	2414.53	53.57%
Assistant instructor/lecturer	95.69	2.12%
<i>Part-time</i>		
PTLs	1340.14	29.73%
TAs	336.76	7.47%
Other	319.97	7.10%
Total	4507.09	100%

Since most of the TAs in the University are located in New Brunswick, this campus has the highest percentage of IUs taught by TAs (16.7%) and a lowest percentage by PTLs (22.8%). The higher percentage of IUs taught by PTLs on the Camden (25.2%) and Newark (29.7%) campuses reflects the lower percentage of TA lines and, to some degree, the staffing needs of their professional schools (i.e., business, law) where PTLs from these professions are recruited to teach specialized classes.

Table 5 indicates that University-wide the figures have changed somewhat over the years, with a decline in the percentage of IUs taught by full-time faculty recorded during and following the years when the University was subjected to severe budget cuts.

Table 5: IUs University-wide, 1987-1997

Rank	Fall 1987		Fall 1992		Fall 1997	
	no.	% IUs	no.	%IUs	no.	%IUs
Faculty (tenured & tenure track professors)	12,686.55	61.57	11421.19	55.38	10952.06	51.13
Assistant instructor/lecturer	163.48	.79	858.78	4.16	798	3.73
<i>Part-time</i>						
PTLs	4,199.25	20.38	4330.69	21.00	5264.41	24.57
TAs	2,620.74	12.72	2709.79	13.14	2903.18	13.55
Other	932.84	4.53	1302.31	6.31	1504.61	7.02
Total	20,602.86	100	20622.76	100	21422.26	100

In evaluating part-time instruction, it is useful to look at the ratio of TAs to PTLs at the University and compare Rutgers' data to equivalent public universities. Table 6 presents the most recent available data from 1995-1997 IPEDs Fall Staff Surveys. In comparison to the ratio of PTLs to TAs at 31 other public AAUs (.164), the ratio of PTLs to TAs at Rutgers is high (.616).

Table 6: Peer Institutions/Rutgers PTL to TA Ratio

Comparative PTL/TA Data			
AAU Public Universities (31)		Rutgers University	
Average # PTLs employed	454.9	# PTLs employed	1008
Average # TAs employed	2777.17	# TAs employed	1636*
The ratio of PTLs to TAs across all 31 public AAU institutions combined.	.164	Ratio of PTLs to TAs at Rutgers	.616

*(NB: Graduate Assistants, who rarely teach, are included in this number; the actual number of TAs at Rutgers University is actually closer to 900.)
Source: IPEDS 1995/1997 Fall Staff Surveys.

DISCUSSION:

Because there are so many determining variables, the balance of part-time and full-time faculty cannot be analyzed with precision or result in obvious conclusions and outcomes. The summary below focuses on certain issues related to the comparative data.

- Increases in undergraduate enrollment lead to an increase in the number of labor-intensive service courses, such as expository writing or pre-calculus, so a larger teaching staff is required. PTLs are frequently added to staff these classes. This has occurred on the New Brunswick campus where undergraduate enrollment has increased over the last ten years (22,810 full-time undergraduate enrollment in 1988; 24,434 in 1997) while the number of full-time faculty, after the budget reductions of the early 1990s, is only now returning to 1988 levels (1,827 full-time faculty in 1988; 1,824 in 1997).
- PTLs play an essential role in many of the professional degree programs. Courses taught by

skilled and experienced professionals actively involved in the field on an everyday level offer students an important preparation for the workforce. Further, hiring professionals for a single course makes it possible for the University to expand the range of courses available to undergraduate and graduate students, by supplementing the knowledge and experience of the full-time faculty and providing more flexibility in offering courses in highly specialized or newly emerging professional areas.

- The undergraduate student body has become more diverse and the needs of the individual students vary widely. For many students, the introductory courses (Expository Writing/Pre-Calculus, etc.) are necessary to improve certain critical basic skills and may call for extra remedial help. In the case of first-year students especially, more individual attention, not less, is required. Accordingly, increasing the number of students permitted to enroll in a class as a means of controlling the number of sections that must be staffed is not an option, practically or pedagogically. For full-time faculty members, any increase in the number of students in courses could reduce their ability to perform other necessary duties: mentoring, advising, research, service on committees and to the department, curriculum development, etc.
- The use of electronic and instructional technology to reach more students increases the ability for a smaller number of faculty members to deliver classes to larger numbers of students and to do so in a manner that enhances teaching and learning. The changes that are forthcoming as a result of the increased use of instructional technology suggest that either TAs or PTLs may be needed to work with the participants on a more individual basis.
- In some disciplines, where the courses traditionally staffed by TAs are extremely labor intensive, the course loads of TAs have been reduced from three courses a year to two. Absent an increase in the number of TA lines available, such reductions in TA teaching responsibilities may lead to an increase in the number of PTLs.
- During the severe budget cuts of the early 1990s, when faculty lines were broken into smaller units to increase teaching output and salary dollars had to be returned to the State, the number of PTLs increased. (For example, as seen in Table 2: in 1987, PTLs taught 20.38% of IUs; by 1992, 21.0%; by 1997, 24.57%). On the surface, the obvious way to reduce the number of PTLs is to hire more faculty and, indeed, this is being done. In each of the past two years, the number of new faculty appointments has exceeded 100, and net new positions have been provided as well as the upgrading of existing lines in order to hire permanent, full-time faculty. The hiring of new faculty, however, is not a total solution. Because Rutgers is a Research I university, its faculty members are expected to continue as active researchers in addition to carrying out their teaching responsibilities. As more and more of our departments and units reach the highest tier of excellence, the faculty members they recruit will continue to be first-rate. New faculty members are appointed with the clear and explicit expectation that teaching will be an important component of their responsibilities, but their teaching load is competitive with other peer institutions so that they may also do their research and service at a highly productive level.
- Most AAUs have a significantly higher number of TAs than Rutgers does. One of the University's longstanding priorities is the need for more TA positions, as University self-studies and the Middle States Report made clear. Some PTLs are advanced graduate students who are no longer being funded as a TA by their graduate program. If more TA lines were available, the number of PTLs would decrease. This would shift the numbers in some categories (i.e., as advanced graduate student PTLs became TAs) and reduce the number of non-student PTLs. The University is working to increase fundraising efforts to create more graduate fellowships, providing a competitiveness pool to increase the amount of TAs stipends, and continuing Reinvest in Rutgers graduate student support targeted at key disciplines of the Strategic Plan.
- TAs are by definition a temporary workforce. Their primary purpose at the university is to make timely progress to complete the work for their degree and enter the profession. They benefit significantly from the teaching assistantship financially, experientially, and academically. Undergraduates gain by having the opportunity to work closely with someone who, although often new to teaching, has an enthusiasm for the subject and, often, a fresh take on it. TAs work closely with faculty members in the department and are given support and training through the campus Teaching Assistant Projects on the New Brunswick and Newark campuses and through

discipline-specific training.

CONCLUSION:

The goal of the University is to have the flexibility to respond to the changing and diverse needs of the undergraduate and graduate school populations. This will be accomplished by employing a skilled, highly effective, and engaged pool of teachers. The University will continue its efforts to make more new full-time faculty hires, to find creative methods to expand the number of TA positions and enhance existing ones, and to supplement the skills of both of these groups with the talents of qualified PTLs as needed.