



**NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.**

For Release on Thursday, February 18, 1993.
May be broadcast Thursday A.M. and appear
in Thursday A.M. and P.M. papers.

For more information, call
Kim Otten at the Center at
(919) 832-2839.

**UNC SYSTEM NEEDS TO IMPROVE EFFORTS TO EVALUATE AND REWARD
GOOD TEACHING, N.C. CENTER SAYS**

Universities in the 16-campus University of North Carolina system should evaluate the quality of teaching more thoroughly and offer stronger rewards for good teaching, the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research says in a 450-page report released today. While many universities in the system are making some effort to promote and ensure good teaching on their campuses, all need to step up the methods by which they assess undergraduate instruction.

"In general, the universities are not doing as much as they could to evaluate and reward good teaching," says Kim Kebschull Otten, Center policy analyst and author of the report. "Universities across the country are coming under fire for ignoring undergraduate education. Paying attention to teaching -- evaluating it, improving it, and rewarding it -- could really make a difference in public support for higher education in North Carolina."

Findings

Major findings in the Center's study include:

- * North Carolina's public universities lag far behind their national counterparts in efforts to evaluate the quality of teaching. Academic departments in N.C. institutions typically conduct student course evaluations but only 30% use any form of peer evaluation or self-evaluation -- tools used by a majority of other four-year universities in the United States.

- * The quality of teaching is not given enough emphasis in tenure and promotion decisions. The Center recommended that teaching count for at least one-third of the weight in tenure decisions at research universities and more at other institutions.

- * The current rewards system heavily favors research over teaching. For example, the Kenan endowed chairs at UNC-Chapel Hill are given primarily for exemplary research, pay a generous salary stipend, and are held for life; the best awards for teaching at Chapel Hill -- the Bowman and Gordon Gray chairs -- are one-time positions held only for three years with a \$5,000 bonus.

- * Only 9% of all departments in the UNC system give awards for excellent teaching.

- * Only half of the departments that use graduate students as teaching assistants (TAs) have any form of training procedure or program for preparing the TAs to teach undergraduates.

While pointing out these shortcomings, the Center's report contains praise for a variety of efforts underway. Specifically, the Center praises the efforts of UNC-Wilmington Chancellor James Leutze for his efforts to put undergraduate teaching "first in terms of time, commitment, focus, and value." The Center also praises the three centers for teaching enhancement and faculty development at Western Carolina University, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Appalachian State University, as well as specific departments, such as the UNC-Greensboro Biology, UNC-Charlotte English, and Appalachian State Psychology departments.

"The UNC system should replace the familiar academic motto of 'Publish or perish' with a new standard of 'Teach well or no tenure,'" says the Center's Otten. "It's not a question of teaching vs. research. The public deserves both."

Recommendations

The Center makes 10 recommendations designed to improve efforts to identify and reward good teaching. These include:

- * The UNC Board of Governors should require all departments to conduct at least two methods of evaluating teaching performance for every course taught and then use those teaching evaluations in tenure and promotion decisions.

- * The Board of Governors should require that teaching ability and effectiveness count for at least one-third of the weight in tenure and promotion decisions as part of faculty members' overall performance -- which usually includes teaching, research, and service to the university and public.

- * All departments within the UNC system should establish some method for recognizing or supporting excellent teaching, and each university should establish endowed chairs for teaching.

- * The Board of Governors should ensure that no graduate student teaches an undergraduate course without extensive training, monitoring, and evaluation.

Over the past three years, the Center has studied teaching in the UNC system -- its importance within the overall scope of the universities' missions, the amount of attention it receives at each university, how universities and their component departments and divisions evaluate teaching, and how good teaching is promoted and rewarded. As part of the study, the Center sent a survey questionnaire to the chair of **each** department, the dean of **each** school or college, and the vice chancellor for academic affairs at **each** university within the system -- a total of 492 surveys. The overall response rate was **78 percent**, which gives a very complete picture of teaching at each university. Center staff visited **every school in the 16-campus UNC system** except the N.C. School of the Arts, which was excluded from the study because it does not have a primarily academic course of study, and its faculty are hired on a contract basis. Center staff also conducted extensive interviews with UNC system administrators, chancellors, deans, department chairs, faculty members, and students to learn their perceptions of what is being done to promote and reward good teaching at the universities. Although the universities in the UNC system have different missions, all have the teaching of undergraduate students as their primary task.

Evaluating Teaching

Evaluating teaching, both in order to improve it and to identify which professors should be promoted and tenured, takes many forms in today's universities. The Center's study looked at some of the more popular methods used in UNC system schools, including (1) student course evaluations; (2) self-evaluations by faculty; and (3) evaluations by fellow professors of a faculty member's knowledge, presentation, and organization of classes (known as peer review).

Although 99% of all departments in the UNC system conduct **student course evaluations**, only about 30% of all departments use a system of **peer review** of faculty teaching, as compared with 54% of all departments in four-year colleges across the United States. Furthermore, only 45% of UNC departments require faculty **self-evaluation**, as compared with 60% nationwide.

* The N.C. Center recommends that the UNC Board of Governors require that teaching evaluation procedures in all departments consist of student evaluations of each section of every course as well as at least one other objective method of evaluation, preferably some form of peer review. Although the use of student course evaluations at UNC system schools is widespread, departments at some universities evaluate classes less frequently than the N.C. Center recommends -- only once a year rather than every semester, or for only one class rather than all the classes taught by a faculty member. Student evaluations have been found to be valid indicators of instructors' teaching abilities, says the Committee on Teaching of the College of Arts and Sciences at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Tenure and Promotion

"More than any other element, tenure and promotion guidelines show how universities and their divisions really view the overall work of faculty members," says Otten of the Center. "Universities may talk about the importance of good teaching, but if they ignore it in tenure and promotion decisions, the talk really doesn't mean much." Decisions on tenure usually are made in a faculty member's sixth or seventh year.

* The Center recommends that the results of teaching evaluations be linked to tenure and promotion decisions. "Though many departments use the results of teaching evaluations in making merit pay increase decisions, there has been some hesitancy to use them in tenure and promotion decisions," says Otten. "When student course questionnaires are the only evaluations conducted, faculty question their legitimacy and avoid giving them much weight in decisions. If universities required additional forms of evaluation, such as peer review, university leaders would be able to persuade faculty that using such evaluations in personnel decisions is appropriate," she says.

* While recognizing that UNC system universities have different missions, the N.C. Center recommends that the Board of Governors strongly encourage that teaching ability and effectiveness count for at least one-third of the weight in a faculty member's overall performance (which includes teaching, research, and service). The weighting given to teaching will vary according to the individual missions of departments and universities, but good teaching should be important enough to the overall goals of the university system that it count for a significant proportion of

the weight in tenure and promotion decisions at **all universities**, including **Research** (North Carolina State and UNC-Chapel Hill) and **Doctoral** institutions (UNC-Greensboro). **Teaching should count for at least 40% of the weight at Comprehensive I universities** (Appalachian State, East Carolina, Fayetteville State, North Carolina A&T, North Carolina Central, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Wilmington, and Western Carolina), and it should count for **as much as 50% at Comprehensive II** (Elizabeth City State, Pembroke State, and Winston-Salem State) and **Liberal Arts universities** (UNC-Asheville).

No faculty members who are expected to teach classes regularly should be given tenure if their teaching performances are consistently poor, says the Center.

Teaching Awards

Only 9% of all **departments** give awards for excellent teaching, according to the the Center's survey. About half (55%) of all **schools or colleges** within universities give teaching awards. In some cases, the awards are in the form of recognition only; in others, they carry a significant salary supplement, though even the best teaching awards pale in comparison with those given for research.

Of the teaching awards made by **departments**, most are some sort of recognition. Often the recipient's name is added to a plaque of departmental award winners. Recognition for good teaching by **schools and colleges**, in contrast, is more likely to be a monetary award. **University-wide** teaching awards are almost all monetary, ranging from \$500 to \$5,000.

Interestingly, some of the UNC system universities that are most vocal about the importance of good teaching give the fewest teaching awards. For example, although some of the **colleges** at Appalachian State give monetary teaching awards (such as the College of Business, which makes one Outstanding Teaching Award annually, for \$2,000), the four university-wide awards are plaques. Pembroke State, UNC-Charlotte, and Western Carolina all have very few departmental or college-based awards and make only one university-wide teaching award annually (all at \$1,000). Elizabeth City State has no award at all.

* **The Center recommends that all universities in the system, and their schools and departments, consider establishing some method for recognizing or supporting excellent teaching.** Though teaching awards do not cause faculty members to teach well, they do show that a university or department believes that teaching is important. Recognizing excellence could help establish a supportive culture for teaching.

* **The universities also should seriously consider establishing endowed chairs for teaching.** These lifetime positions would recognize outstanding achievement in teaching, similar to those recognizing research accomplishments. Currently, there is a discrepancy in endowed chairs at UNC system universities. Research chairs, such as the Kenan Professorships at UNC-Chapel Hill, are held for life and carry a \$4,000 salary stipend and a \$4,500 research grant annually. Chairs for teaching excellence, such as the Bowman and Gordon Gray chairs at UNC-Chapel Hill, are one-time positions that are held only for three years and carry a \$5,000 annual stipend. Currently, there are about 30 Kenan Professors at UNC-Chapel Hill; five Bowman and Gordon Gray Professors are appointed annually. According to UNC-Wilmington

Chancellor Leutze, this discrepancy between research and teaching chairs "sends a very powerful message about what's really valued." Endowed teaching chairs could help universities in the UNC system attract and build a reputation for outstanding teaching, says the Center, just as endowed chairs for research enable universities to attract and keep faculty members with excellent reputations as researchers.

Training Teaching Assistants to Teach Undergraduates

The Center's study also examined the preparation and training efforts of the 147 departments -- 47 percent of the total surveyed -- in the 10 universities that have both graduate programs and graduate students teaching undergraduate classes. The 10 universities are Appalachian State, East Carolina, North Carolina A&T State, North Carolina Central, North Carolina State, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Greensboro, UNC-Wilmington, and Western Carolina.

Among the 147 departments, only half (71, or 48%) reported having at least some form of **training procedure or program**. Some of the departments offer their own; others rely on a university-run training course that all TAs are required to attend.

Although all of the departments do not provide formal training programs for their teaching assistants, more than 70% have procedures in place for **monitoring and/or evaluating them**.

* The Center recommends that the Board of Governors ensure that no graduate student teaches an undergraduate course without extensive training, monitoring, and evaluation.

Center's Report Follows Other Criticisms

The Center's recommendations are designed to help universities in the UNC system improve their teaching internally and to bolster their image with the public. Nationally, universities are suffering from a lack of public confidence in their ability to fulfill their primary mission -- educating students. Pollster Louis Harris found that in 1992 the percentage of the public that had great confidence in people running institutions of higher education had dropped to an all-time low of 25% -- a 59% decrease from the level in 1966. A national study of more than 4,000 faculty members by James Fairweather, a senior research associate at the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Pennsylvania State University, found that: 1) the more time spent on teaching, the less the compensation; 2) the more hours in class per week, the lower the pay; and 3) the greater the time spent on research, the higher the compensation.

Questions about the value placed on teaching arose again in late 1992 when two faculty members at Chapel Hill -- Paul Ferguson and Kevin Stewart -- were denied tenure even though both had won university-wide teaching awards and had reputations for being outstanding teachers. Inadequate research and publication were given as the reasons for the tenure denials.

"In order to restore public confidence, universities in the UNC system need to continue stressing the importance of undergraduate education, as well as inform the public about what they are doing to improve it," says Otten.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation created to study public policy issues facing North Carolina and to evaluate state government programs. This report was supported by grants from five N.C. foundations -- the Broyhill Family Foundation, The Cannon Foundation, Inc., the John Wesley and Anna Hodgkin Hanes Foundation, the Hillsdale Fund, Inc., and The Janirve Foundation. The Center also receives general operating support from the Z. Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundations, 108 corporate contributors, and about 800 individual and organizational members. In addition to publishing *How Do Universities in the UNC System Identify and Reward Excellent Teaching?*, the Center has conducted recent studies on disparities in funding between rich and poor school districts in North Carolina, ways to increase voter participation, and state regulation of nursing homes. The Center also publishes a citizen's guide to the legislature, rankings of legislators' effectiveness, and rankings of the most influential lobbyists. The Center's quarterly magazine is *North Carolina Insight*.

* * *

Copies of the 450-page report on *How Do Universities in the UNC System Identify and Reward Excellent Teaching?* are available for \$31.80 plus \$3.50 for postage and handling. To order, call (919) 832-2839, or write the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602.

For more information, call Kim Otten at the Center at (919) 832-2839.

Table 1: Examples of Evaluations Used in UNC System Schools

	Within the UNC System	At Four-Year Univs. Nationally
1) Student course evaluation surveys:	99% of UNC departments	98% nationally
2) Self-evaluation by faculty members:	45% of UNC departments	60% nationally
3) Peer review by faculty colleagues:	30% of UNC departments	54% nationally
4) Review of syllabi, assignments, and tests:	26% of UNC departments	
5) Videotaping of faculty members' classes:	9% of UNC departments	
6) Exit interviews with senior departmental majors:	UNC-A History department	
7) Comparison with national peers:	UNC-G Biology department, using the IDEA* system	
8) Reviews of classes and faculty published by students:	UNC-CH Carolina Course Review	

Source: N.C. Center survey data, 1990.

* A national course evaluation service that uses data from student evaluations to determine how faculty compare with their national peers.

Table 3: Teaching Awards Made by Departments

Number of departments in UNC system schools giving teaching awards: 28 (9%)

Form of teaching awards (multiple response):

a. Recognition:	21 departments, 75.0%
b. Monetary awards:	13 departments, 46.4%
c. Other:	5 departments, 17.9%
d. Funds for professional development:	4 departments, 14.3%
e. Reduced administrative load:	1 department, 3.6%
f. Leave time for research:	1 department, 3.6%

Source: N.C. Center survey data, 1990