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20 percent of UT professors instruct most students

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Updated: 9:46 a.m. Monday, May 23, 2011
Published: 8:06 a.m. Monday, May 23, 2011

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AUSTIN, TEXAS — About 20 percent of the University of Texas at Austin professors instruct most of the school's students and money could be saved by increasing faculty teaching loads, according to an analysis of data provided by the UT System.

The analysis by Richard Vedder, director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, also found that 10 percent of the faculty bring in 90 percent of its research grants at UT's flagship campus.

Vedder, an economics professor and a senior fellow at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, looked at UT System documents released this month on salaries, course loads, research grants and student evaluations.

UT-Austin could save millions of dollars by also getting rid of under-performing instructors, according to preliminary results from Vedder, who also found that the least-productive fifth of the faculty carry only 2 percent of the university's teaching load.

The foundation, an Austin-based think tank, has close ties to Gov. Rick Perry and is at the center of an ongoing debate about research, teaching, faculty productivity and the rising price of tuition, the Austin American-Statesman reported Monday.

Vedder analyzed faculty productivity based strictly on the number of student credit hours each professor taught. He calculated that the most-productive fifth of UT's faculty — about 840 instructors — taught an average of 318 students, and 896 credit hours, per year. That comes out to 57 percent of the campus's total student credit hours taught.

The remaining 80 percent of the faculty, by comparison, each taught an average of 63 students over the year, or 167 student credit hours, the analysis found. It also calculated that "77 percent of all faculty at the Austin campus receive no external research grants."

Faculty question the analysis.

The UT System's original spreadsheet of salaries and course loads used a weighted system to count credit hours that assumed upper- and graduate-level courses required more teacher time per student.

"Usually a graduate course is considered more intense, more of a load than an undergrad course," said John Curtis, director of research for the American Association of University Professors.

The college affordability center's analysis, by comparison, counts credit hours in an introductory survey course the same as a graduate seminar.

Faculty also questioned using the dollar total of grants as a measure of research productivity.

"Many faculty are involved in research that doesn't bring in money," said Janet Staiger, a communications professor and past chairwoman of the UT faculty council. "Or I might get money for a research project that takes five or six years, but get the money in a lump sum one year."

Information from: Austin American-Statesman, <http://www.statesman.com>

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Micho Rizo Score: 1


12:33 PM on May 23, 2011 Report Abuse

This article is meant to cause OUTRAGE and build support for the plan.

Short on insight on how things are at UT or any major university, slanted to get a certain reaction.

Never before has the political propaganda been so rife! Conservatives have always accused the other side of this tactic, but historically it has been conservatives. Their aim is to recoup their losses from the current economic strife they themselves created at the expense of anything investors don't make money on. **THEY HOLD NOTHING SACRED** and are even willing to sacrifice the education of our children.

WAKE UP TEXAS!



Micho Rizo Score: 1

12:31 PM on May 23, 2011 Report Abuse

Yeah. We cannot let the market dictate how education is run. A good university has a strong foundation in research, some of which takes more time than teaching a class every semester will allow. For this reason Professors who conduct major research, complete with labs, research assistants and many more responsibilities are required to teach only so many classes in a year. This gives credibility to the university, brings in research grants, and gives a good educational foundation from which to teach from.

Letting the market dictate how education is structured and conducted means letting education fall to the whims of Big Biz, the rick and Wall Street. They have screwed us enough in bringing the current economic strife, so let's not let them degrade other areas of our society so they can make up for their (most ours) monetary loss. This makes one reexamine the claim conservatives make when they say Dems want all the wealth you have --- this is a lie. It is Big Biz and the rich who want everything you have. They want it so badly in fact that they hold nothing sacred (save themselves) in looking for

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places to bleed money from.

Wake up America!

	<p>redhoffer Score: 1 11:10 AM on May 23, 2011</p>	<p>Report Abuse</p>
<p>I am surprised the Statesman posted this trash. You don't need to be a research genius to see that these findings by Perry's little buddy are worthless. Some professors teach all intro courses in lecture halls filled with a couple hundred students, others teach only smaller PhD level courses. Some professors work in areas with high potential for lucrative grants (i.e. medical research) while other work in disciplines that will never attract oney like that (i.e. fine arts). What a waste. I can only assume there is some end-goal that this trash would even be put out there since it is so blatantly pointless. This Vedder guy is essentially comparing apples to scotch tape to rainbow trout.</p>		
	<p>whoa Score: 0 8:31 AM on May 23, 2011</p>	<p>Report Abuse</p>
<p>How does that stack up to other universities? This blurb seems to be nothing more than slash and burn journalism. Without context, how are we to draw a conclusion?</p>		
	<p>evan14 Score: 0 8:28 AM on May 23, 2011</p>	<p>Report Abuse</p>
<p>20% of UT professors teaching most of the students, while only 10% are bringing in research grant funding? That's horribly inefficient. Given that tuition has doubled in the last 10 years, students are getting the raw end of the deal. Shouldn't students be the priority in a University?</p>		



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