

**FACULTY SENATE**  
**A Motion Related to Interdisciplinary and Team Teaching**

*Whereas:* There is ample evidence that interdisciplinary and team taught classes are professionally rewarding for faculty who participate in them and academically stimulating and rewarding for students who take such classes; and

*Whereas:* The Office of the Provost indicated support for increasing interdisciplinary and team teaching at EKU by appointing the Interdisciplinary and Team Teaching Task Force in the Spring of 2002 to develop “*appropriate, functional guidelines for supporting and rewarding interdisciplinary and team teaching at Eastern Kentucky University*”; and

*Whereas:* the Interdisciplinary and Team Teaching Task Force (the full report of which is attached for reference) has identified the University’s practice of assigning student credit hour production to the department or unit identified in the course prefix rather than having credit hours follow faculty as the single greatest disincentive to interdisciplinary or team teaching; and

*Whereas:* the Associate Vice President of Planning and Assessment is currently developing a reporting format for tracking credit hour production by both (a) course designation; and (b) by faculty member; and

*Whereas:* the Interdisciplinary and Team Teaching Task Force determined that faculty workload assignments must reflect the fact that the effort required to teach a fully-integrated team taught course can be equal to an independently taught course on the part of all faculty involved; and

*Whereas:* the Associate Vice President of Planning and Assessment has confirmed that there is no limitation to the Banner system for a single course generating a full in-load faculty workload assignment for more than one faculty;

Be it therefore moved that a new section be added to *Part V: Instruction/ Academic Policies and Procedures* of the *Faculty Handbook* immediately after the section on Foundation Professorships (pg. 93) as follows:

**INTERDISCIPLINARY AND TEAM TEACHING**

“Team Teaching” is defined as a collaborative activity in which content is integrated and all participating faculty are involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the course. It is specifically distinguished from “multidisciplinary teaching” in which faculty may divide course content into separate units that are planned and delivered independently.

In the case of team-taught courses, the responsibility for determining student credit hour division and faculty workload assignments rests with the department(s) of the participating faculty. Student credit hours shall be divided equally among participating faculty unless all participating faculty mutually agree upon an alternate arrangement for credit hour distribution. Such agreements shall be spelled out in a memo for approval by the appropriate dean(s) signed by all faculty who teach the course and their chairs. Higher minimum enrollments may be necessary to sustain certain team-taught courses. Any adjustment in minimum enrollments to justify a team teaching model should be roughly proportional to normal faculty load expectations for viable courses.

**Interdisciplinary and Team Teaching Task Force**  
**Final Report**  
Submitted July 31, 2002

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*Members: Thomas Fisher (Occupational Therapy), Carole Garrison (Criminal Justice and Police Studies), Douglas Robertson (Teaching & Learning Center), Judith Spain (Management, Marketing & Administrative Communication), Deborah Whitehouse (Nursing), Frank Williams (Philosophy & Religion), and Alice Jones (Geography), chair.*

**CHARGE issued by Provost Michael Marsden March 12, 2002:**

The Interdisciplinary and Team Teaching Task Force is directed to survey best practices at comparable universities with regard to appropriate, functional guidelines for supporting and rewarding interdisciplinary and team teaching at Eastern Kentucky University. The formulated guidelines are to be prepared for consideration by the Faculty Senate and the administration in a timely fashion."

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### **Rationale**

Interdisciplinary and team teaching can be stimulating and enriching for faculty and students alike. Students and faculty benefit from cross-disciplinary discussions that deepen and broaden their own perspectives on a subject, and gain a better understanding of how their own disciplinary expertise fits within the broader realm of knowledge. Additional benefits to faculty include the opportunity to reflect upon and improve their own teaching by observing and sharing a classroom with a colleague, and advancing research interests by interacting with faculty with similar interests from other disciplines. The differing values and conflicting viewpoints of an interdisciplinary classroom more closely reflect the increasingly multicultural world our students will enter, and the experience can help them begin viewing their college education as a whole rather than a series of disjointed required courses. And, as one Pace University faculty member noted, "students seem to take over more responsibility for the learning when they see teachers learning from each other."<sup>1</sup>

### **Summary of Survey of Benchmark Institutions**

We conducted telephone interviews with academic administrators at 17 of ECU's 18 benchmark institutions during March and April of 2002. Our findings indicate that the majority conceptually support interdisciplinary and team teaching, but only one has a formal policy. All of our benchmark institutions indicated that they are accommodating limited interdisciplinary and team-teaching on an ad-hoc basis, but would like to see more. There was also general agreement that the major administrative difficulties lie in the areas of:

- a) crediting faculty workloads in a manner that recognizes that the amount of effort involved for a truly integrated team-taught course can be equal to an independently taught course on the part of all faculty involved;
- b) appropriately distributing student credit hours produced in team-taught courses to the home academic units of the participating faculty, and
- c) creating what one provost called "an institutional environment of trust" between faculty, chairs, deans, and upper administration in which faculty (and chairs, and deans) feel they will be rewarded for experimenting with innovative teaching pedagogies rather than penalized for them because of perceived potential "losses" in FTE production in a given semester or a given course.

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer, Jeanine. Pedagogical Pattern #4: Team Teaching Pattern. *The Pedagogical Patterns Project*.  
<http://www-lifia.info.unlp.edu.ar/ppp/>.

## Recommendations

We determined that the single greatest disincentive to interdisciplinary or team teaching at ECU is the University's practice of assigning student credit hour production to the department or unit identified in the course prefix rather than having credit hours follow faculty. Therefore, our recommendations are as follows:

1. **Student credit hours should follow the faculty who actually teach a course (team taught or not), regardless of the departmental or other prefix attached to the course number (with the exception of courses offered through the Honors Program<sup>2</sup>.)** Higher minimum enrollments may be necessary to sustain certain team-taught courses. Any adjustment in minimum enrollments to justify a team teaching model should be proportional to normal faculty load expectations for viable courses.
2. **In the case of team-taught courses, the responsibility for determining student credit hour division rests jointly with the departments of the participating faculty.** Student credit hours shall be divided equally among the home departments of the participating faculty unless an alternate arrangement for credit hour distribution is mutually agreed upon by the home departments of all participating faculty. Such agreements shall be spelled out in a memo to the appropriate dean(s) signed by all faculty who teach the course and their chairs.

## Suggestions for Future Consideration

In addition to the recommendations above, the Task Force explored several additional policies that have been used at other institutions to encourage team teaching and may be worthy of implementation at ECU some time in the future.

1. Formalize a faculty workload banking system at the department level to keep track of faculty workloads generated from team taught courses in order to facilitate appropriate reassigned time [e.g. "released" time] decisions.
2. Provide administrative support for the development of team-taught courses, through the creation and funding of a University Summer Stipend program. We envision a competitive program that provides a minimum of \$1,000 per faculty member for three weeks of work devoted to development of a team-taught course.
3. *Encourage fully integrated interdisciplinary teaching*—namely courses where all faculty are engaged from beginning to end during all class periods; and *discourage disjointed interdisciplinary teaching*—which can amount to little more than "baton-passing" among several disconnected mini-courses on a particular topic. This might be accomplished by adjusting faculty workloads to reflect the level of collaborative effort required, based on Davis's<sup>3</sup> four criteria of planning, content integration, teaching, and testing and evaluation (see Appendix).

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<sup>2</sup> Faculty who team-teach in the honors program are reassigned to the Honors Program, and the student credit hours are attributed to said program.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, James R. (1995). *Interdisciplinary Courses and Team Teaching: New Arrangements for Learning*. Series on Higher Education, American Council on Education. Phoenix: Oryx Press.

## Appendix

**Excerpts from** Davis, James R. (1995). Interdisciplinary Courses and Team Teaching: New Arrangements for Learning. Series on Higher Education, American Council on Education. Phoenix: Oryx Press.

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Davis concludes that team teaching comes in many forms and that the best way to approach it is in terms of the degree of collaboration involved: "The question to ask about team teaching, therefore, is not: Is this team teaching? The more important question is: If this is team teaching, what is the type and level of collaboration among the team members" (p. 8)? Davis delineates four criteria for determining the degree of collaboration: (a) planning, (b) content integration, (c) teaching, and (d) testing and evaluation.

### Planning:

"What is the involvement of the faculty in planning this course? Are all members of the team involved in planning or do some members of the team play a more important role in planning the course than others? Does the leader of the course (its coordinator) have more responsibility and more authority for planning the course than other team members? To what extent does the team use collaborative decision-making (democratic) processes in planning the course? How much time and effort have gone into planning the course? How well have the goals of the course been elaborated and to what extent do the goals of the course reflect the views of all the participants" (p. 8)?

### Content integration:

"In what ways, and to what extent, have the multiple disciplinary perspectives of the faculty been represented? Are the differing perspectives seen as contradictory or complementary? Do the various disciplines provide different lenses for viewing the same phenomena, or do the disciplines examine different phenomena? Are the perspectives distinct and related in some logical way, such as serial or chronological order, or have the perspectives been integrated to produce some new way of thinking about the substance of the course? Is some unifying principle, theory, or set of questions used to provide unity and coherence to the course" (pp.8-9)?

### Teaching:

"Who will do the teaching and how will it be done? Do all team members participate more or less equally in the delivery of the course? Is there a core of key faculty who teach regularly but are supplemented by less frequent guests? Are there assistants or consultants who play roles that are different from faculty roles? Are teaching responsibilities broken into identifiable time segments, such as a term or a unit of instruction, or do faculty intermingle their instruction day by day? Do faculty sometimes work together during a single class session? How are decisions made about what teaching strategies to employ and what readings and other materials to use" (p. 9)?

### Testing and evaluation:

"How is agreement reached about what kind of learning outcomes are to be measured and how they are to be measured? What kinds of tests, papers, and other devices are used to measure student achievement? How are the various components of the testing and evaluation process weighted? Who writes and who grades the exams and papers? How do the course faculty involve themselves in this process? Who is included and who is left out? Who takes charge of this process and where is the highest court of authority when students challenge the process, including their grade? In addition, who decides what mechanisms will be used to get faculty feedback about the course, not only on what students appear to be learning, but on their satisfactions and concerns about the course" (p. 9).