

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES ON THE TEACHING LOAD REQUIREMENTS AND TLC SYSTEM, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

1. There were 33 responses. Although no signature was requested and no signature-line provided, 28 were signed. All ranks from AIs to full Professors were represented.
2. 2 responses approved the current system, but one of these urged modifications to encourage more team teaching and to allow TLC points for committee work. The other urged abolition of the English Department, with its responsibilities in composition, linguistics, and TESL delegated to other agencies, not identified.
3. 13 responses (or more, if tacit condemnations were counted) faulted the current system as counterproductive. The alleged bad effects: teaching beyond the minimum and activities not granted official TLC status have been discouraged; the hostility and suspicion implicit in the accounting system has bred faculty hostility and suspicion in return; service--especially student advising and committee service--is ignored or notably slighted; not only scholarly publication but the habits of scholarship have been discouraged or made unnecessarily difficult; teaching and/or graduate study by AIs have/has suffered a loss in quality;*teachers responsibly assigning papers have been penalized, since no special attention is given to the amount of writing required in a course; small-enrollment courses, however important, are eliminated or converted perforce into conference courses where the allowed TLC bears little relation to the expenditure of time and energy actually required;*and, conversely, the TLC system may encourage the proliferation of conference courses with very little expenditure of time and energy.

[*The TLC plan itself does not really affect AIs, only faculty; the cause of the pain here is the 6/9 rule, which for years Max Westbrook and others have attacked without much success. Nor is the TLC system directly to blame for the conversion of small-enrollment classes to under-TLC'd conference classes; the direct cause here is the make-or-break minima of 10 students if undergraduate or 5 if graduate. But the TLC rules are of course part of a full-teaching policy and so affect even the AI's; and since heavy penalties are threatened if even a single faculty member is short of the required TLC, continuation of a marginal-size class between adds/drops and the 12th class day is made exceptionally risky for the whole institution.]

4. At least 8 responses called for "Banking" of excess points. None of these suggested that any points over 9 should be counted--perhaps only those over 12 would be "excess"--and several suggested limitations: e.g., excess points would be carried over only for two semesters; a maximum of 3.0 could be carried over; a maximum of 1.5. The general feeling was best expressed in the question: If a teacher has 19 TLC in one semester and only 8 in the next, surely there should be some overrun?" One person thought the excess points should be accumulable for a sabbatical or for research [a semester with reduced teaching?], and two persons suggested that the excess TLC be placed in a general departmental "account." One respondent pointed out that it could work the other way, too: a deficiency of TLC in one semester could be "made up" by a TLC above the requirement in the next semester.
5. At least 4 responses called for some TLC relief for really valuable and time-consuming work on committees (membership per se would not qualify). The EC was cited as an example; so was advising, with special emphasis on the heavy demands placed on the Graduate Adviser.
6. Specially victimized: AIs, "pool" Instructors, and tenure-track Assistant Professors, in that order, were identified as suffering the most. [As noted above, for AIs it was the 6/9 rule, which most would like to convert to a 6/6 rule--but not all; one AI thought this would slow progress to the degree too much. Another AI urged that the low salaries ought to be considered along with the heavy teaching demands, since both factors worked together to lower the quality of AI teaching and study.] "Pool" teachers called attention to the crushing weight of a 12-hour load involving lots of composition; suggested remedies included reduction to a 9-hour load or giving 4.5 TLC for any 3-hour composition course. The tenure-track Asst. Professors made a similar case, except that for them the need to publish was felt as the equivalent, or more than the equivalent, of the fourth course.

7. 6 persons urged that the Department use all legitimate forms of TLC relief in the current system in order to reduce the special strains experienced.
8. 2 replies pointed out the active discouragement or lack of positive encouragement of team-teaching arrangements.
9. Several pointed out that some Ph.D. committee members do actually work hard with the candidate; but the TLC system allows only the chairman any credit.
10. Several AIs and Instructors suggested that more TAs be assigned to help them with grading, record-keeping, and other chores. One suggested a "pool" of TAs for this purpose.

11. Miscellany:

- TLC relief should be provided for those with health problems thought not confined.
- All multisection courses should have TLC relief through "coordinators." [The Dean's office says they can, and that they can even be fractionalized: if 6 secs. = 1.0 TLC, then 3 sections = .5 TLC. But of course this credit should not go to an individual who in fact does no administrative work for such multisection courses.]
- TLC relief should be available in some measure for those nearing retirement.
- Departments should get "administrative (discretionary) points" according to the total number of students registered. [The departmental norm is 9; the Dean's Office has allowed English 15, the 6 extra presumably coming from the President's reserve.]
- As in some other departments, English Ph.D. candidates should be required to sign up for 999 courses.
- In spite of the institutional lip-service to improved undergraduate instruction, the TLC system heavily favors graduate instruction.
- Our abolition of the MA thesis hurts us, since we lose many supervisory TLC points here.
- The emphasis on supervision through more course "coordination" is unhealthy; teachers should be encouraged to do it their way.
- Few if any senior faculty get to teach two graduate courses at a time; this means that in such a semester they start from a 7.5 base, an awkward starting point for a 9.0 system.
- All freshman courses in the University should require some writing.
- (2 responses) There should certainly be some TLC relief for developing new courses.
- We should have smaller 314K sections; for the conscientious teachers, they are really composition courses as well as literature courses.
- We should have larger 314K sections, with large lecture meetings and periodic splitting into small discussion sections. [N.B., there would be a number of these, or only these large sections, each taught by a regular faculty member; AIs for discussion sections.] Another respondent suggested that a similar plan could be used also for 307.
- A final datum worth pondering: one faculty member teaching on 1/3 time reported a TLC of 13.8.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSES WELCOME: please put in Neill Megaw's mailroom space or office door-slot.