One-Size-Fits-All Role of Research Faculty

In his review of Stuart Rojstaczer's book *Gone for Good: Tales of University Life After the Golden Age* (Oxford University Press, 1999) (*Science*'s Compass, 24 Sept., p. 2073), Leo M. Chalupa does not mention one obvious way to address the problem of "develop[ing] the full capabilities of students while staying at the cutting-edge of scholarship" in research universities. It is unstated, but the implication in his review seems to be that each faculty member carries out a balancing act to receive a proper reward from a system that operates on the basis of "one size fits all" in terms of expectations of faculty performance.

One problem with teaching load versus research time is the courses with large enrollments. They generate large numbers of credit hours (a benefit at budget review time), but commonly enroll a high proportion of students who are unskilled in or not interested in science. Teaching these students well is desirable from the standpoint of producing a scientifically literate public and arousing interest in science as a career in some students, but it is difficult and time-consuming to do.

Most research universities hire faculty with a teaching obligation, but with little or no reward for doing it well. People who are outstanding at both teaching and research are rare. If universities were to hire an appropriate-size group of faculty who would be expected to be excellent teachers, and be rewarded as much for being so as faculty are for being excellent researchers, then the researchers could focus on upper-level and graduate teaching, which interferes less with research time. The one-size-fits-all reward system assumes an unrealistic expectation of the majority of faculty—why must it be the standard approach at research universities?

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Response

The solution put forth by Boohar is one that has been proposed by others. This approach, however, does not deal effectively with the problem discussed in my review because it is unrealistic for the teaching faculty to be compensated at a level equivalent to that of the research faculty. For instance, faculty on 9-month appointments with research grants can charge as much as one-third of their summer salary to their grant. In contrast, faculty who elect to teach throughout the summer months usually get a set amount corresponding, in most cases, to less than 10% of their total salary for their efforts. The underlying basis for this discrepancy is that research faculty bring in overhead money to their institutions, whereas tuition charges cover only a fraction of the cost associated with teaching students. Under this system, no institution can afford to raise the compensation of the teaching faculty to the level of the research faculty. Finally, many faculty do excel in both research and teaching. Indeed, some of the best teachers are often the best researchers.

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Nutraceuticals

Steven H. Zeisel's Policy Forum "Regulation of 'nutraceuticals'" (*Science*'s Compass, 17 Sept., p. 1853) raises questions about the efficacy and safety of "nutraceuticals" (also called vitamins, dietary supplements, functional foods, phytochemicals, biochemopreventatives, and designer foods). Few would disagree that