

CURRICULAR STUDY TASK FORCE
DEPARTMENT CHAIR & FULL FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS
April 12, 2010

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent weeks the CS Task Force has conducted two surveys to gauge the feasibility of curricular change (the inherently related issues of faculty and student courseload) and to develop a sense of where departments, the faculty as a whole, and each faculty rank stand on the many considerations which surround the issue. In preparation for the upcoming forum on this topic on April 20th, we feel it is important to first present the faculty with summaries of the results of these surveys so that you may examine for yourselves some of the feedback we hope to present in the forum. Several relevant resources are also available on our moodle site for consultation.

II. SURVEY OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

After extensive data collection, both internal and external, on the topics of student load, high-impact teaching, faculty courseload and curricular models used at peer institutions, the CS Task Force found that there was a common route toward adjustments in teaching load. In the models for load change at other institutions, departments were asked to develop their own plans, rather than having an administration plan an attempt to create a single model for change. The CS Task Force recognized the value of each department designing its own path to a new teaching load and thus sent a brief online survey to department/program chairs. This survey asked them to consider the possibility of redistribution of faculty responsibilities, particularly the idea of altering the current teaching load from a standard of 7 courses per year to 6 courses per year. Departments were asked to consider just how they might reconfigure load so as to meet a new model and to assess the difficulty of such a redistribution of faculty resources.

RESPONSES

- A. We were gratified to receive a response rate of almost 90%, with each division represented by several departments.

- B. When asked to gauge the difficulty of a transition, there was a range of responses, with the largest group reporting minimal difficulty (38%), followed by the group that could not envision the change functioning for their program (28%). The breakdown is visible in Image #1 on the next page.

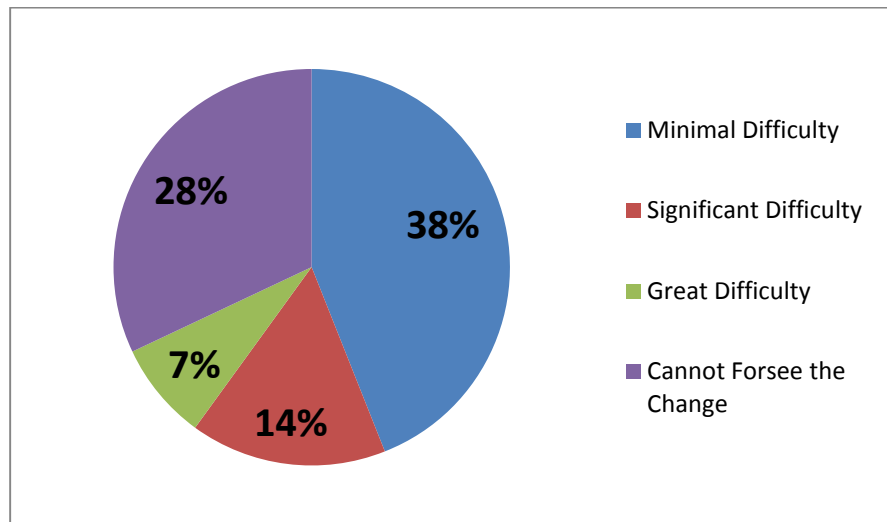
- C. A combined 52% reported difficulty at the lowest two levels, however with 8 departments reporting at the highest difficulty level, there is concern that any change would impact departments quite differently. Follow-up discussions with task-force

members were held with those departments that reported great difficulty, which led to several factors brought forward as roadblocks. These include:

- Small department size leading to difficulty covering program needs.
- Need to cover content to meet external guidelines or accreditation.
- Difficulty in staffing of necessary three-trimester sequences.
- Programs with frequent overloads at present would be strained further

D. Obvious splits occurred on the issue of General Education offerings and the effect of a reduced Gen Ed program on load. Departments with heavy commitments to LSFY or the LP program were more likely to view reductions of Gen Ed teaching as a means towards reduction of faculty load, while departments which offer few LP courses or few LSFY sections (Pre-Professional programs, Science programs) were less likely to see course load impacts from reduced Gen Ed requirements.

IMAGE 1:
**Department Chair Responses: Level of Difficulty
for a Switch to a 6-Course Standard Load**



III. SURVEY OF FACULTY

The faculty survey was designed to measure the pulse of the faculty on a variety of issues pertaining to faculty teaching load, student graduation requirements and load, possible calendar models and other topics of this inherently multi-faceted discussion within the CS Task Force. We represent the full results back to you first and then add some comments from the CSTF.

For the sake of simplification, we have merged the responses in the Agree and Strongly Agree categories as well as Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

RESPONSES: To date we have 151 responses to the survey, broken down into the following ranks: 48 Professors, 22 Associate Professors, 48 Assistant Professors, 11 Instructors and 6 librarians and other eligible participants.

FACULTY LOAD QUESTIONS

| | AGREE | NEUTRAL | DISAGREE |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| I believe the quality of my teaching in a "heavy" term (3 courses or equivalent) is different from in a "light" term. | 68% | 7% | 25% |
| I believe that Augustana's teaching load being greater than that of peer or aspirant schools is a negative for the college. | 62% | 16% | 22% |
| I believe that a 6 course load would alter my teaching or my commitment to scholarship and service. | 60% | 6% | 34% |
| I believe my current teaching load has a negative effect on the quality of my teaching, my availability to students, my research or my ability to engage in campus service. | 59% | 16% | 25% |
| A reduction in faculty load would likely lead to more effective teaching. | 58% | 21% | 21% |
| I alter my teaching strategies when I am teaching in my "heavy" term to save time and workload for any one course. | 57% | 8% | 35% |
| If the faculty voted to reduce student courseload from 41 courses to 35, I would expect my department to have to alter its major and minor programs significantly. | 57% | 16% | 27% |
| Reduction of faculty teaching load should be a top priority at Augustana. | 57% | 17% | 26% |
| My current teaching and evaluation methods require more time than those I used 5 years ago. | 54% | 18% | 28% |
| In either the time I have been at Augustana or in the past 5 years (whichever is shorter) I have noticed a significant increase in the out-of-classroom work necessary for me to prepare my classes. | 49% | 22% | 28% |
| I can picture a scenario where our department, at current staffing levels, could reduce faculty load to a standard of 6. | 48% | 17% | 35% |

STUDENT LOAD QUESTIONS

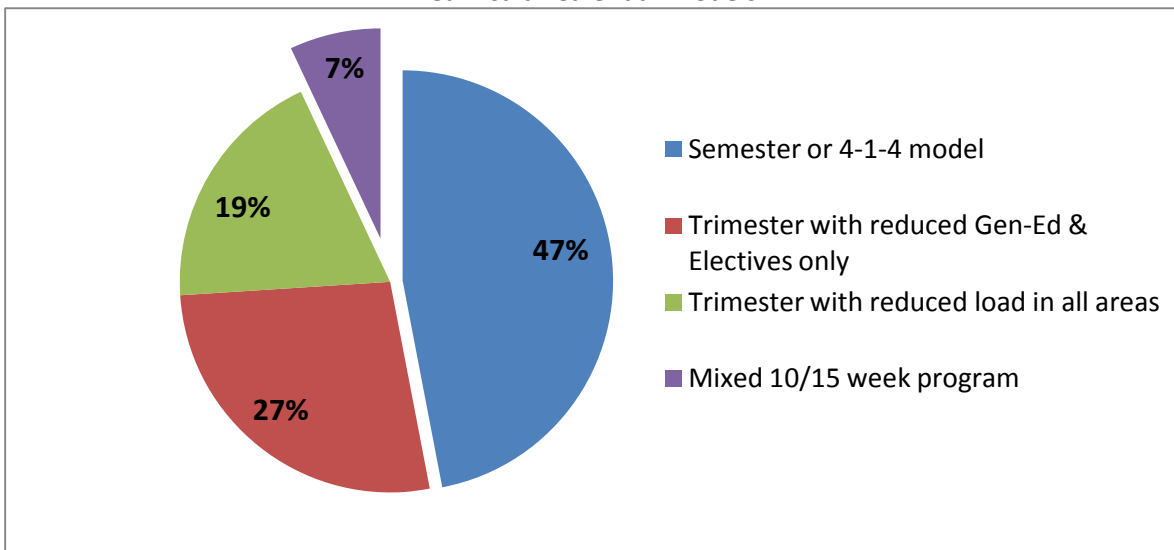
| | AGREE | NEUTRAL | DISAGREE |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| Students at Augustana College do not spend adequate time on academic tasks outside of class. | 83% | 9% | 8% |
| Most student workload issues are due to poor time management or overcommitment to social or co-curricular opportunities. | 71% | 17% | 11% |
| I feel that students have more difficulty in my courses when they carry a 4 course load. | 58% | 31% | 11% |
| A reduction of student courseload from a 10-11 course average per year to an 8-9 course load per year could lead to greater depth of study for the courses taken. | 58% | 19% | 23% |
| There is no evidence to indicate that requiring more courses than peer or aspirant institutions enhances student learning. | 56% | 37% | 7% |
| I am troubled to find that Augustana requires significantly more coursework in its graduation requirements than peer or aspirant schools. | 51% | 15% | 34% |
| It would be appropriate for Augustana to limit students to a two facet major/minor program (major and minor or double major), especially if total courseload is reduced. | 51% | 18% | 31% |
| If student load were reduced exclusively through reductions of Gen Ed and electives I would expect a faculty course reduction as well. | 50% | 24% | 26% |
| If I was confident that no student in my class had a 4 course term I would be more likely to challenge the students to do more outside reading, writing, reflection or analysis. | 45% | 15% | 40% |
| The current model we use for student courseload represents a strength our peer schools do not share. | 33% | 20% | 47% |
| For the sake of course reduction, I would approve of a system where some courses were scheduled over 15 weeks while many remained on a 10 week trimester schedule. | 29% | 27% | 44% |

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| I believe the benefits of reducing student load are worth the effort, even if faculty load is not reduced. | 27% | 20% | 53% |
| I believe the disparity between Augustana and peer schools in contact hours could best be remedied not by course reductions, but by shortened class periods. | 14% | 23% | 63% |

CALENDAR MODELS

| | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| I believe teaching a 3-3 semester load or a 2-1-3 load with 2 semesters and a January term would be superior to teaching the current 2-2-3 load. | 46% | 18% | 36% |
| My department would more easily be able to realign its offerings if load reductions were paired with a switch to a semester or 4-1-4 system (semester with January term). | 41% | 31% | 28% |
| I believe that a faculty load model which alternates 6 and 7 course years (6-7-6-7 or 6-6-7-6-6-7) would be worth the necessary changes to our curriculum. | 25% | 23% | 52% |

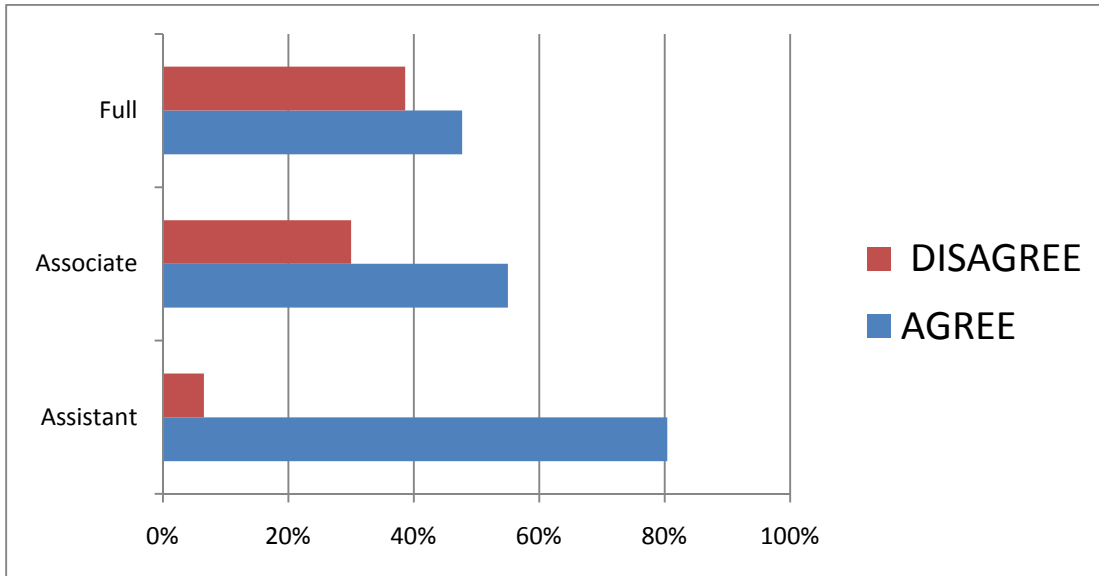
**IMAGE #2:
Curricular Calendar models**



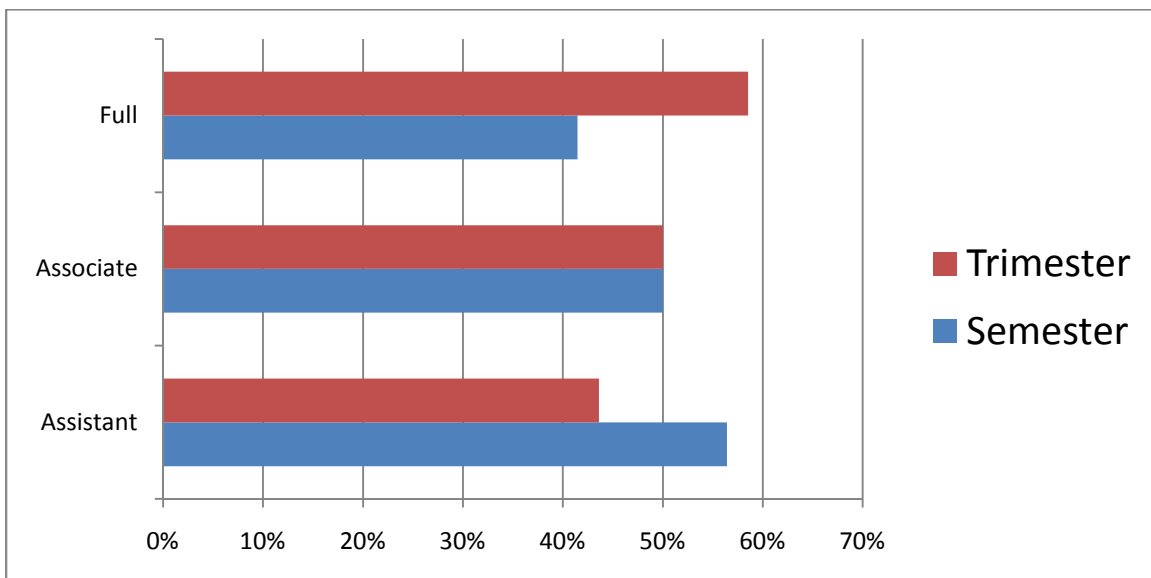
SOME DISTINCTIVE IMPRESSIONS BY RANK:

IMAGE #3

“Reduction of faculty load should be a top priority at Augustana.”



Semester / Trimester Preference



“A 3-3 (semester) teaching load would be worse than the current 2-2-3 load”

