

***Community College Faculty Instructional
Load/Overload Issue and 2010 Legislation***

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***Iowa Department of Education
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Bureau of Community Colleges and Career and Technical Education Services***

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Community College Faculty Instructional Load/Overload Issue and 2010 Legislation

Community college faculty instructional load/overload limits have been in Iowa Code since the establishment of the 15 community colleges in the late 1960s. There have been issues over the years concerning the stated maximum overload hours of 18 credit hours per semester or its equivalent. In the 2010 Iowa General Assembly Session, legislation was offered concerning the community college arts and sciences faculty academic load/overload issue. The first proposed legislation (in 2010) passed the Iowa House, but the Iowa Senate did not concur. To address the issue, the Iowa Department of Education was directed by the legislature to do the following:

*Sec. 312. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACCREDITATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS STUDY.*

The department of education shall convene a working group, whose members shall include at a minimum the members of the community college accreditation advisory committee and the community college faculty advisory committee. The working group shall solicit comments from each of the community college quality faculty committees. The working group shall study the maximum academic credit hour per school term workload appropriate for an instructor beyond the standard workload. The working group shall submit its findings and recommendations to the state board of education and the general assembly on or before December 31, 2010.

Background to the Load History: A Brief History

When the original arts and sciences load language was put in the Iowa Code (260C.48) in the 1960s, faculty and many of the colleges had just emerged from a lengthy debate over collective bargaining. The results of the local bargaining processes were still unclear. Adversarial attitudes between faculty and administration prevailed at most of the area (community) colleges of the time. The part of the struggle viewed as one of the toughest matters to face centered on defining a “normal load” for arts and science faculty. Part of the context for this debate/question used national community college literature of the 1960s and 1970s which had 15 credit hours as the standard. The North Central Accrediting Association, now the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, also used 15 credit hours as the standard work load. The community college faculty leadership of Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) used 15 credit hours because it proved straightforward and fit national norms. While most of the community colleges had predominantly three-credit-hour courses, the faculty and administrations of the colleges had to deal immediately with lab science courses which, in many cases, consisted of four to five credit hours each.

While there was not a lot of debate by either faculty or the college administrations on that part of the load issue, the colleges did agree on how to handle the lab science courses. Over the years, a great deal has changed in the world of community colleges because of technology and other factors. These factors have brought faculty and the college administrations to the current circumstances of revisiting the overload question.

Process and Expected Outcomes: Beginning the Discussion

During a prior discussion (in March and April 2010) with the Community College Accreditation Committee and the Community College Faculty Advisory Committee, department staff explained the task the legislature charged the combined committees. Both committees suggested that, with more than 30 individuals on the full committee, it might be better to start with a much smaller subcommittee to begin to discuss the issue and draft recommendations for approval of the full group. Both committees agreed to a subcommittee consisting of seven representatives from the Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee and seven from the Community College Faculty Advisory Committee. Both committees also stipulated that an additional member be included to represent online instruction. The combined group met by teleconference and formally agreed to the work plan. The goals of the subcommittee were to:

- keep the work focused;
- limit the scope to arts and sciences, and not career and technical because of the need to keep the task workable;
- look at overload only, not the standard load;
- craft a draft proposal for faculty, the Community College Quality Faculty Plan Committee at each of the community colleges, and others to discuss; and
- meet the legislature's deadline.

The subcommittee held its first meeting July 12, 2010, on the Ankeny campus of Des Moines Area Community College. The subcommittee agreed with the goals of the larger group. Discussion during the meeting centered on the following items:

- quality of instruction;
- concern over faculty teaching too many classes;
- number of students taught;
- concern over faculty being "forced" to take overloads;
- concern of faculty teaching at other colleges to acquire additional teaching hours;
- concern by administration of holding the line when faculty wanted to teach more hours than state law allows;
- difficulty finding qualified faculty, particularly in times of record enrollment;
- difficulty finding qualified faculty at the last minute or when a faculty member becomes ill after the start of a semester; and

- addressing the issue of lab science courses which do not fit well into the current overload number.

After much discussion, a recommendation on amending Iowa Code was crafted by the subcommittee and was forwarded to the membership of the Community College Accreditation and Community College Faculty Advisory Committees, faculty, institutional Quality Faculty Plan committees, college administrators, and Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) leadership. Written communication concerning the recommendation was received and compiled during July and August 2010.

Joint Meeting of the Community College Accreditation and Faculty Advisory Committees to Discuss the Community College Faculty Instructional Load/Overload Issue and the 2010 Legislative Report—Wednesday, September 22, 2010—Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny Campus

The joint committee of the Community College Accreditation and Faculty Advisory Committees met to discuss the recommendation from the subcommittee. A review of legislation and the purpose of the meeting were given to the joint committee as well as a brief review of how the subcommittee and draft proposal developed. The committee members then had the opportunity to discuss the recommendation from their perspectives. Comments received from each Quality Faculty Plan Committee were shared and discussed (see page 5, Attachment 1). There was also information shared with the committee from the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) Higher Education Executive Committee which had recently discussed the subcommittee recommendation. Discussion during the meeting mirrored those topics which the subcommittee had discussed:

- quality of instruction;
- concern over faculty teaching too many classes;
- number of students taught;
- concern over faculty being “forced” to take overloads;
- concern of faculty teaching at other colleges to acquire additional teaching hours;
- concern by administration of holding the line when faculty wanted to teach more hours than state law allows;
- difficulty finding qualified faculty, particularly in times of record enrollment;
- difficulty finding qualified faculty at the last minute or when a faculty member becomes ill after the start of a semester; and
- the issue of lab science and other courses which do not fit well into the current overload number.

Full Committee Recommendation

After much discussion, the full committee crafted for consideration by the Iowa State Board of Education and the legislature a recommendation on amending Iowa Code.

Original/Current Wording from Iowa Code (260C.48)

Standards developed shall include a provision that the standard academic workload for an instructor in arts and science courses shall be fifteen credit hours per school term, and the maximum academic workload for any instructor shall be sixteen credit hours per school term, for classes taught during the normal school day. In addition thereto, any faculty member may teach a course or courses at times other than the regular school week, involving total class instruction time equivalent to not more than a three-credit hour course. The total workload for such instructors shall not exceed the equivalent of eighteen credit hours per school term.

Recommendation from the Full Committee

On a 20 to 5 affirmative vote, the full committee approved the following recommendation for consideration by the State Board of Education and by the legislature.

Standards developed shall include a provision that the full-time teaching load of an instructor in arts and sciences courses shall be 15 credit hours per semester or equivalent and the maximum academic workload shall be 16 credit hours per semester or equivalent. An instructor may also have an additional teaching assignment, provided the instructor and the administration mutually consent to this additional assignment and that the total teaching load does not exceed 22 credit hours per semester or the equivalent.

ATTACHMENT 1

Quality Faculty Plan (QFP) Committee Responses to Community College Faculty Instructional Load/Overload Subcommittee Recommendations—October 7, 2010

Community College		Comments (Summarized)
I	NICC	Supports recommendation.
II	NIACC	Supports recommendation.
III	ILCC	Local control / Remove cap <i>[Strike everything in recommended language after ‘additional assignment’; quality issues are best addressed at the local level, not state level.]</i>
IV	NCC	Supports recommendation. <i>[22 hours is a heavy instructional load and not the practice at NCC, but the committee supports the recommendation to accommodate other institutions.]</i>
V	ICCC	Supports recommendation. <i>[Minor grammar edits submitted]</i>
VI	IVCCD	Iowa Code 260C.48 should be left unchanged. <i>[Recommendation does not fit with college’s mission statement which emphasizes quality learning experiences and ensures student success.]</i>
VII	HCC	Supports recommendation. <i>[“Mutual consent” language included in the recommendation is essential.]</i>
IX	EICCD	Supports recommendation.
X	KCC	Set overload limit at 20 credit hours instead of 22 hours. <i>[To provide flexibility to those with four and five credit hour courses and be fair to all involved. One course above standard load wouldn’t be fair because some teach one and two credit hour courses. Also add language stating that the teaching load includes online teaching.]</i>
XI	DMACC	Supports recommendation.
XII	WITCC	Set overload limit at 21 credit hours instead of 22.
XIII	IWCC	Supports recommendation.
XIV	SWCC	Supports recommendation.
XV	IHCC	Supports recommendation.
XVI	SCC	Supports recommendation.