

## Too Busy<sup>1</sup>

Wednesdays are always tough days. Get the kids dressed and off to school, dash to campus, slog through the weather hauling twenty pounds of books and half-graded student essays and the laptop from the parking structure to the building, grab a cup of coffee, squeeze up the crowded escalators, dump coat and scarf, get to the classroom, focus my thoughts on the day's lesson, and smile at the students filing into their seats as if I had been waiting right there in that room patiently for them to return since class was dismissed on Monday.

So why did I stop to check my e-mail today of all days? But I did, and there's this message from the Chair telling us our tentative first draft teaching assignments for next semester. She gave me three different preparations. The senior seminar is fine. I've been waiting for that assignment for three years. We rotate that through the faculty and it was supposed to be my turn this semester. But the Chair asked if I would switch with Smith, since he had a research leave coming. And I did, so he's teaching it this semester, and going on leave next semester. Nice for him! But what that did is give me three different course preps this semester, because don't you know, "the students really like your teaching style." And there'll be three preps next semester.

Okay, so six courses is a hefty load. But I knew that when I came here. What gets me is that I have almost 40 students in each of my classes. So the senior seminar is going to be a break, because the enrollment is limited to 20. The Chair gave me two other courses, and both of those will have 40 enrolled too. A person might have thought that at least those other two would be just two sections of the same course; or that maybe one of them would be one of the three courses I'm doing right now. But no! This means that I will have six separate preps, with no repeats, in one year. I thought we had a department policy against that. Yes, I'm sure we do! So what is the Chair thinking? Doesn't she know that I can't keep doing this year in and year out? I don't think anyone else in the department consistently has as many preps as I have and nobody averages more than 200 students a year either. Can't be! Does she have it in for me? How can I get any research done if she keeps giving me these killer teaching assignments?

I have so much grading, and it's Little Joey's birthday tomorrow and I have to get ready for that. I promised him he could invite his school friends for a party. So, No! -- I don't have time to go down to the Chair's office and tell her this stupid schedule just won't work!

### Questions:

- 1. What going on here? What options does this faculty colleague have for resolving these challenges in a health and productive way?**
- 2. For purposes of equity within a department, should teaching loads be defined by numbers of sections taught, numbers of preps, numbers of new preps, numbers of students taught, number of advisees, number of independent studies students supervised, or what?**

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<sup>1</sup>All characters, situations, and stories described here are fictional. No reference to actual persons, events, or institutions is intended or assumed. Drs. Peter and Noreen Facione developed and refined these hypothetical cases based on the experiences gained through their many decades of service as faculty, administrators, workshop presenters, and leadership consultants to colleges and universities throughout the nation.