

UNPUBLISHED SUPPLEMENT

My Hourly Wage

The work log I kept during the fall 2013 semester indicates I was working at home or on campus 51.8 hours a week (including Thanksgiving week), and was on campus not working an additional 7.4 hours a week. Those 7.4 hours are not included as hours worked in the computation.

My wage for this ten week period is calculated as my annual salary (\$56,000) divided by the number of days in a year (365) multiplied by the number of days in ten weeks (70). Note also that the hours used to compute the \$20.74 amount do not include breaks, which are included in the Bureau of Labor Statistic's definition of "hours at work."¹

The obvious counter-argument is that professors do not work over the summer. There is some merit to this argument, but not much in my case. From May 13 to August 9, 2013, I worked an average of 37.0 hours a week (my log for the end of the summer was the only file that became corrupted when I switched computers, as it was on my desktop). If one assumes that there are 21 days off for winter break (I didn't leave town for Christmas), 89 days off in the summer, and that I worked at my summer rate for all those times, my hourly wage would only come to \$22.68 for the entire year. My Fall 2013 worklog is consistent with my general recollection—that I would do little research during the school year and make up for it by working all summer on research.

Time Spent on Various Activities as a Professor

Table 1 reports the number of hours I spent on a particular activity in my average week according to my work log. This does not include Thanksgiving week, which was spent mostly grading.

Table 1: Time Spent on Various Activities, Fall 2013

Activity	Category	Average Weekly Hours
Class	Teaching	6.77
Class Preparation	Teaching	11.87
Grading	Teaching	13.70
Student Email	Teaching	4.29
Meeting with Students Individually	Teaching	3.44
General Service	Service	3.96
Meeting with Colleagues Individually	Service	2.06
Meeting with Colleagues in Groups	Service	2.31
General Email	All	2.03
Research	Research	1.91
Unknown	All	0.45
Total		52.79

¹ <http://www.bls.gov/bls/glossary.htm>, accessed October 20, 2015.

I taught three courses a semester, which is 7.5 hours a week (50 minutes times 9). The smaller amount reported in Table 1 is caused by class exams, during which I worked in the back row while a graduate student helped proctor. Time spent on course preparation was driven up by having a new preparation and three separate courses, but also by creating my own course assignments, which I believe is the only way to significantly reduce the extensive plagiarism that occurs in universities. I spent a lot of time grading because I believe that intensive writing and projects done in stages are pedagogically essential.

Table 1 also reflects the fact that email has become the main form of communication between students and professors, which is a substantial time drain. The "General Email" category in Table 1 also includes undocumented correspondence between myself and students. "Grading" sounds like a noble activity, but part of grading involves keeping attendance records, which, although essential, is not exactly life affirming activity. My log indicates I spent a total of 9.93 hours over the course of the semester simply computing grades, and the files containing the grades from my three classes contain a total of 379 columns. We were urged by the administration to send students with high absenteeism alerts to that effect, which, just as two examples, took 35 minutes of my time on October 14, 2013 and another 37 minutes on October 27, 2013 for another class.

When I started applying for jobs as a professor, I had a vague idea about what "service" was, but had no inkling what I would really be doing. Some of the specific service projects that totaled eight hours of my work week were department meetings, work on a college committee where we evaluated curriculum changes, being a formal advisor to professors who went to grievance hearings, reading their materials, evaluating admissions to our Masters of Public Administration program, advising students on courses they should take, and writing reports about my productivity. Also that semester, I spent 13.0 hours on departmental personnel committee work, which partly involved writing reports on three class observations of adjuncts' classes, and evaluating sabbatical proposals. I spent another 6.5 hours writing a report on what our department would do to increase student retention.

Changes in Higher Education

Why universities have become more hierarchical is beyond the scope of this essay. Increased workload and pressure to relax standards are plausible drivers, in turn driven by the increased cost of education (Archibald and Feldman 2010). Or perhaps an overall ideological shift towards managerial models that depict people as "homo economicus" (Hacker 2006) is responsible.

Plagiarism / Academic Dishonesty

Consistent with the idea that people ignore unpleasant information, professors and administrators do not think about plagiarism too much, despite its widespread occurrence. More importantly, if a primary goal of administrators is to maximize the number of students in classes, then pursuing plagiarism will be discouraged, as it reduces "student satisfaction" and possibly even dismissal.

For one analysis, I examined 37 class papers for plagiarism. Thirteen of them (35.1%) were found to have been plagiarized. I had been careful to devote an entire class period on what plagiarism was.

In a timed online test, I caught seven out of 30 graduate students copy and pasting answers from Internet sources. I told them not to do it again or I'd report them, and then caught five more on the next test. The university administrator who was among the five didn't take it lightly. The time it took to process these cases was extensive and the interpersonal conflicts that went along with them were unpleasant. I accepted the fact I'd never be given credit for holding the line on this, but realistically, it probably made me less likely to go to such lengths in the future.

For another analysis of plagiarism, I looked up all of the sources for the 14 research papers by students in an upper division class, which revealed, in part, plagiarism that involved misrepresenting sources to meet requirements about sources in the assignment instructions. One requirement for peer-reviewed articles used for the assignment was that they were about the U.S. Congress and another topic area ("interest groups" for example). Two papers misrepresented articles about state interest groups as if they were about interest groups in Congress. Another misrepresented an article about the determinants of foreign aid for 18 industrial democracies as an article about foreign aid and the U.S. Congress. Three other papers were found to contain serious plagiarism. Six out of 14 papers with plagiarism is 43 percent.

A colleague at my institution conducted a survey of 494 students there. Fully 47.8 percent said that they helped a friend cheat on blackboard administered exams.

Mandatory Study Sessions

Implementing mandatory study sessions must be done at the university level. An individual professor requiring students to attend study sessions will result in students dropping their class and moving on to greener pastures. But university administrators will not require study sessions because this would dissuade students from enrolling or staying enrolled.

In contrast, athletic programs are able to require athletes to attend study sessions, at great benefit to learning outcomes. They are able to do this because athletic programs have a series of credible graduated threats they can carry out, starting at reducing the amount athletes play in games, to kicking them off the team for a period of time, to kicking them off the team permanently. Most importantly, administrators have weak preferences at best about how well university teams do in comparison to maximizing the number of students at the university—losing games does not hurt budget allocations from the state, and has at best a marginal impact on alumni contributions.

Unpublished Supplement Bibliography

Archibald, Robert B., and David H. Feldman. 2010. *Why Does College Cost so Much?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hacker, Jacob S. 2006. *The Great Risk Shift: The Assault on American Jobs, Families, Health Care and Retirement and How You Can Fight Back.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.