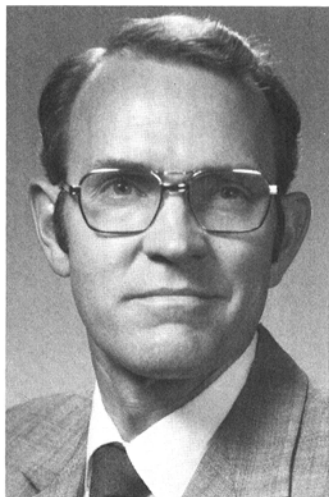


## Career Development and Split Appointments

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Regardless of appointment, a faculty member is an intellectual and moral representative of his or her institution. At most universities, the philosophy is understood, if not expressed, that regardless of appointment type a faculty member should willingly perform a variety of public services in teaching, research, extension, international, and committee work. These activities are related. This editorial is based in part on responses from 37 plant pathology department heads to my questionnaire on split appointments.

At the entry level, opportunities for recognition of productivity seem greater for scientists doing research. At land-grant universities, the norm provides for at least half of a scientist's appointment in research, with the remainder in extension, teaching, or international work. The exact nature of all appointments depends heavily on the political/educational/research/extension philosophy of each institution and where certain boundaries within which one must work are fixed. The fact that many split appointments are between colleges creates an extra administrative burden. Physical separation of research and extension, particularly under separate deans, causes the most common problems.

The sharp administrator matches personalities with job appointments. Regardless of how the appointment is split, much of an individual's satisfaction in a position depends on attitude, drive, dedication, interest, ability, and energy level. Faculty often make their own decisions regarding proportions of time to allot to each duty. Administrative demands on each scientist seem to increase with length of service. Administrators should adjust appointments every 3-5 years to best utilize an individual's talents as he or she grows in the profession and as departmental requirements change. The wealth of experience of senior professors may be best utilized by assigning more extension/teaching responsibilities late in their careers. Some department heads use formulas to calculate percentage teaching time. Fewer problems arise if the faculty member reports to a single administrator for all appointment segments.

Although joint/adjunct appointments with the USDA or a state agency usually are highly beneficial to both parties, many respondents to my questionnaire believe such appointments are best delayed until the individual is an associate professor, to allow time to specialize and become established.

An academic-year or 9-month appointment is the exception in most colleges of agriculture at land-grant universities, the logic being that plant pathologists must be there during the summer growing season to do research. Economic pressures may be changing this, however.

Rarely does one find 100% teaching or extension appointments in plant pathology at a land-grant university. Some 100% extension or research appointments exist in the Cooperative Extension Service or at experiment stations physically separated from the university. Occasionally, 100% extension appointments carry an understanding that a certain small but significant percentage of time be spent on research.

The duties and objectives of split appointments must be

clearly enunciated for percentage time commitment. On the con side, each section generally requires more than the stated percentage share of the individual's time. My perception is that the individual concerned is the primary source of this pressure. Administrators do not have time to count hours, days, weeks for each person. The demands of heavy course time interfere with research. Universities appear not to recognize and adequately reward efforts spent on teaching. Often, the extension expectation remains at 100% even though the official appointment is somewhat less. People gravitate to the job they like best, making the minor component of the split more difficult to satisfy.

On the pro side, split appointments prevent a scientist from becoming too narrow, broaden contacts with other disciplines, and stimulate faculty to find novel solutions. Split appointments make people better managers of their time and maximize the opportunities for faculty to participate fully in departmental affairs. Exposure to new ideas while preparing lectures stimulates new research directions. Being active in research conveys enthusiasm to help graduate students develop as researchers. A research split appointment helps extension professors make talks credible, personal, and more persuasive.

The consensus among the respondents to my questionnaire is clearly that the pros of two-way split appointments outweigh the cons. Nearly all agree the percentage should not be 50-50. Most prefer 25-75 or 80-20, and some say that less than 30% research means no good research at all. The minor appointment must complement the major one. Department heads should conduct research, teach, and be involved in extension, but this must be handled carefully because of the danger of scientists perceiving the head to be competing for resources. An extension specialist with a joint research appointment performs extension duties better because a synergistic relationship between extension and research creates maximum efficiency in delivering the product, knowledge. The tendency for a 75-25 extension/research appointment is to focus on applied rather than basic research. Extension/teaching splits are difficult because of scheduling conflicts but work for excellent time managers and are probably better suited for professors than for assistant professors.

The strongest feelings and greatest divergence of opinion are expressed about three-way appointments, e.g., they "can and have worked with sensible percentages assigned to each component"; they are "invitations to disaster"; "one can't serve too many masters"; they are "almost doomed to failure in one of the areas"; they are "always bad and to be avoided at all costs." Yet one person with such an appointment found it "delightful, fulfilling, [imparting an] immediate sense of value, [a] real closeness to agriculture," and claimed that "all department members would be better plant pathologists if they experienced a three-way appointment."

Unfortunately, the perception is common that time spent on extension or teaching is unrewarded in promotions, e.g., "it remains a publish or perish world," "it is difficult to excel in the eyes of administrators."

Often, split appointments lead logically to team efforts. Administrators should state clearly the policies of joint research efforts and should provide incentives for outstanding teamwork. The willingness to join research teams is often guided by how junior authorships are perceived on a team publication. In summary, any type of appointment will work with a clear set of expectations agreed on by the individual and those at all administrative levels. The best approach is to decide the most effective way for a faculty member to spend his or her time, then reflect that position as accurately as possible on the appointment paper.