

Is the Undergraduate Student Workload in the COE Balanced? A Relative Newcomer's

Perspective

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Evidence from 3 prior institutions

- Princeton University
 - Graduation credits for a BSE, 112
 - 12-week semesters
- Penn State University
 - Graduation credits for a BS, 134
 - 15-week semesters
- Cornell University
 - Graduation credits in Sibley School, 126
 - 14-week semesters



More Evidence

- Student stress levels
- Personal anecdotal evidence
 - Tough grading policies
 - Frequency of student warnings and disciplinary action
 - Unforgiving schedules



Recommendation: Reduce required credits

- Advantages
 - Increased flexibility. Broader experience. (Students can take advantage of all the campus has to offer)
 - Fewer courses will allow faculty to cover material at greater depth
 - Take advantage of the excellent student body at Cornell
 - Happier student body (increased loyalty)
 - More attractive to non-traditional students
 - Free up faculty time (increased focus on research)



Reduce required credits (cont)

- Risks

- Students graduate with a weaker (watered down) technical background
- Graduate schools and industry find our students less desirable



Summary

- Optimization of undergraduate curriculum based on
 - Quality of student body
 - The breadth of the Cornell campus (possibly unsurpassed anywhere)
 - Offer a smaller number of required courses that go deeper
 - Prepare students for career paths that are not traditional engineering careers
 - Increased appreciation of Cornell by students
 - Free up faculty time for research