

Professor's a little too diverse

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Tzvee Zahavy says he never missed an office hour in 17 years as a university professor.

If that sounds impressive, consider this: For the last three months of that span, Zahavy held two full-time jobs — at the University of Minnesota and the University of North Carolina-Charlotte — with annual salaries totaling more than \$146,000.

That revelation proved to be a bit too much for the two universities; in January, they asked the scholar in Jewish studies to resign his posts.

But his case raises some interesting questions. How could a professor have time to hold down two full-time jobs at universities more than 1,100 miles apart?

And who, if anyone, keeps track of how professors are spending their working time?

"It's a perfect example of unprofessional behavior that results because you're not in the classroom," said Robert V. Iosue, former president of York College of Pennsylvania. "Many faculty are taking advantage of the system and benefiting from very privileged conditions where absolutely no one is accounting for their teaching."

Many professors chafe at such comments, insisting they've become scapegoats as colleges and universities face budget crises brought on in part by government belt-tightening.

And they scoff at the idea that professors should punch a clock, either figuratively or literally.

"A university is not a factory. The two things are not comparable," said Edward Griffin, an English professor at the University of Minnesota. "Faculty members by and large are very responsible people who take their jobs very seriously. Many of us resent the implication that we aren't."

That may be true, say Iosue and others, but it's nearly impossible to verify.

Last year, at least 22 states took the extreme step of slashing higher education appropriations in the middle of the school year, according to Bob Sweeney, a policy analyst with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. The money crunch has produced overcrowded classrooms, double-digit tuition increases and reduced library hours and other services.

Meanwhile, studies suggest that professors are

spending much less time in the classroom than they once did.

A congressional investigation of about 100 institutions revealed last year that the teaching load of professors dropped from the traditional 15 hours per semester to as little as six hours to allow more time for research.

But more than half of professors devoted fewer than five hours a week to research, and some said they do none at all, the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families found.

Several states, including Minnesota, Arizona, Mississippi and Virginia, have investigated whether taxpayers are getting their money's worth from college professors.

A report released in January found that University of Minnesota professors average about 9.9 hours a week in the classroom. The professors said other duties, such as research and service, boost their total to about 57 hours.

For most of the university's more than 3,000 professors, there are no formal rules on how much work they must do, the report said. Instead, the university assumes that administrators and

teachers understand what they're being paid to do — and that they do it.

State Sen. Leroy Stumpf, who headed the committee that commissioned the study, said professors' workloads are a legitimate concern.

"But you have to realize that the university is a very large institution with thousands of faculty," he said. "Accountability gets to be an extremely complicated problem."

"They'll mislead you and tell you they're very busy," Iosue said. "You'll find that the thinking they do at home, they count as work. They count the time they spend driving to and from the office while thinking as work."

For his part, Zahavy filed a lawsuit March 1 to rescind his resignation from the University of Minnesota, claiming the university reneged on several conditions that were part of an agreement under which he offered to resign. And students in his classes at the university have petitioned that he be spared.

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— Robert V. Iosue, former president of York College

Georgia flag to remain unchanged

ATLANTA (AP) — Gov. Zell Miller gave up his fight Tuesday to remove the Confederate battle emblem from Georgia's flag, blaming extremists on both sides for the lack of support in the Legislature.

"I have given this issue my best and strongest effort," he said in a letter to the House rules committee chairman. "I still strongly believe that changing the flag is the right thing to do."

However, extremists from both sides have complicated this issue beyond any immediate solution.

The governor didn't say whether he will ask the Legislature to consider his proposal next year, but he told the committee's chairman, Bill Lee, not to bring the bill up for a vote now.

"I realize the votes are simply not there to pass my bill. In fact, it is not even close," Miller wrote in the letter, distributed to reporters after the Legislature adjourned Tuesday.

Miller said the battle emblem should be removed because it was offensive to blacks.

The governor said he could not support an alternative proposal, to put the issue to the voters.

"A referendum may be unconstitutional, would cost more than a million dollars and could prove more divisive than a vote in the Legislature," he said.



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