

Guidelines

College of the Liberal Arts

Tenure-line Faculty Teaching Expectations

(December 4, 2009)

Tenure line faculty are the key to the College's instructional program. Though fixed term faculty and graduate TAs also play an important role, without our tenure line faculty, our programs would lack the stature and stability they have. Yet, the presence of our tenure line faculty in our instructional program continues to decline. Less than 25% of our student credit hours are produced by tenure line faculty, and compared to even a decade ago, tenure line faculty are teaching far few credit hours even though the "teaching load" has stayed relatively constant.

To address these issues, we have created the following guidelines.

1. Tenure line faculty members with active and productive research programs are expected to carry a 2-2 course teaching load (typically 6 credits per semester), be effective instructors, work formally and informally with graduate students where there are graduate programs, counsel undergraduate students as appropriate in their unit (formal academic advising responsibilities rest with the College's professional advisors), take on independent studies students (as appropriate), and, as appropriate, supervise undergraduate projects, theses, or students working in their labs. Exceptions to the 2-2 teaching policy are holders of named and distinguished faculty positions, whose standard teaching responsibility is three courses per academic year, or in exceptional cases, those granted a different course load by contract (usually because of disciplinary norms or administrative responsibilities).
2. Each department should periodically examine the contribution of the tenure line faculty to its overall teaching program. The goal should be to rebalance some of the losses of tenure track instruction during the past few years. Heads should insure that tenure track faculty teaching loads include undergraduate as well as graduate classes and have teaching responsibilities that include some of the larger classes in the departmental portfolio.
3. By arrangement with the department head, faculty with a 2-2 assignment may occasionally teach an asymmetrical load (1-3, 3-1). These, and other similar arrangements, must be in the interests of the department as well as the individual.
4. Faculty may buy out teaching time through external grants and contracts or internal awards, both on the financial terms set by the College. Every faculty member is expected, however, to teach at least one course per year, except, of course, those on full-year sabbaticals or unpaid leaves. Exceptions may be granted by the dean. Faculty

holding administrative positions may also receive administrative released time when authorized by the Dean according to College guidelines.

5. Faculty who have asymmetrical teaching loads (i.e. 1-2 or 2-3) who take a one semester sabbatical must take it in the semester they have the lighter load.
6. Tenured faculty who do not have active and productive research programs resulting in regular publications in high quality journals or presses should teach at least 5 or 6 courses per year. In cases where there is a sustained resurgence of high quality publications, faculty with higher loads may return to a 2-2 load by mutual agreement with the head.
7. Courses taught should enroll at least the minimum number of students as stipulated by University policy (www.psu.edu/oue/aappm; generally 15 students at 0 to 399 level; 8 at 400 level; and 5 at 500 level). If a course does not attract a sufficient number of students, the course may or may not be offered but will not be counted as part of the faculty member's teaching load unless there are extenuating circumstances. (As an example of an extenuating circumstance, third semesters of certain less frequently taught languages will need to be offered to allow students to finish the sequence and thus will count as part of a normal teaching load.) Faculty who teach an underenrolled class should provide alternative teaching, as available during that semester, or may teach an additional course the following semester.
8. Courses with a history of being periodically under enrolled should be reviewed with an eye toward eliminating or restructuring. Each semester department heads should review the array of offerings to reduce excessive potential conflicts and duplications or overspecialization in advanced offerings, consistent with a commitment to high quality and meeting the legitimate needs of majors.
9. Special topics courses are more likely than other courses to have small enrollments. These courses are less visible to students and less likely to be clearly identified as fulfilling major or general education requirements. Thus, the College will continue to enforce its policy of allowing special topics courses to be offered only two times. Such courses should then either be dropped or made part of the regular curriculum.
10. Department heads will monitor compliance with these guidelines.

Note: Some of the language in this document has been taken from similar guidelines of the College of Education.