

University College Faculty Council
Report on Faculty Review of the
College Workload Policy for Full-time Faculty

Introduction

The University Faculty Senate requested that the University College (UC) provide one document explaining our college workload policy that applies across all nine disciplinary divisions. A single document will bring the UC policy statement into alignment with the single policy statements used by all of the other Penn State colleges, including UP and Commonwealth Campus colleges. As one of the few members on the UC Faculty Council who participated in the process of developing the workload policies in the former Commonwealth College, Robert Loeb (representative from DuBois) volunteered to draft the Workload Policy document based on the common workload guidelines language in the existing division guidelines. Specifically, the document “Workload Policy Full-time Faculty University College March 2012” (see appendix) was developed from the principles in Part I of the existing workload policy (available at http://www.campuses.psu.edu/Faculty_Workload_Policy-Part_I.pdf) and was combined to the extent possible with the information included in the Introductions in each division policy to write Section I Purpose of Workload Policy. Next, the common language in the nine division workload policies (available at <http://www.campuses.psu.edu/48.htm>) was used for the rest of the document which explains teaching, research, and service workloads. Minor editorial changes were made for readability. Note that the former division guidelines will continue to be used in conjunction with the UC Workload Policy since they provide guidance in setting workloads which reflect unique features of disciplines.

The review process involved e-mailing the draft document and a historical background statement to the UC Faculty Council members for transmittal to the faculty of each UC location. The cover e-mail message specifically requested that responses to the draft document be sent to Robert Loeb; however some of the responses came through UC Faculty Council members. The first e-mail requesting that the draft be circulated was sent March 14, 2012 with reminder e-mails being sent March 21, 2012 and April 6, 2012.

Analysis of Responses to Draft Policy Statement

There were a total of sixteen (16) e-mail messages sent with responses to the draft policy statement. The campuses represented in the e-mails were Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, Worthington Scranton, and York. The responses can be divided into five categories:

(1) Questions concerning current specific applications of two segments of the policy (11 responses):

“Instructors and senior instructors teach a 4-4 load or equivalent in contact hours (12 credits each semester for a total of 24 credits each academic year).

Tenure-track and tenured faculty members teach a 3-3 load or equivalent in contact hours (9 credits each semester for a total of 18 credits each academic year).”;

(2) Stated the limitations of campus support for conducting research and professional activities, especially in regard to obtaining funding (2 responses);

(3) Specific editorial changes (2 responses);

(4) Support for the policy (2 responses);

(5) Opposition to being assigned teaching in the evening (1 response).

Note the total of responses by category (18) does not equal the total responses (16) because the text provided by two (2) respondents fit more than one category.

In general, most of the responses were personal in nature and indicated the experience of an individual faculty member with the application of the current workload policy (the source of the new college policy under review). It is important to note up-front that none of the faculty opposed the proposed policy as written. Rather, they expressed their experience or concern with how the respective campus administration, in their view, did not or in the future might or might not apply the workload policy.

The responses in **Category 1** focused on the how equivalency between contact hours and credits hours is formulated. The majority of these responses focused on the contact hours required for laboratories and field work which they argued exceeded the work for lectures with the similar credit/contact hours assigned. The responsibility for the assignment of this differential was squarely placed on the campus administration. Some of the responses pointed out how this differential was problematic for accredited programs such Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistance, and engineering-related programs.

The respondents for **Category 2** are active in research and professional organizations, which requires significant time and funding. The policy element being addressed is the “Scholarship of Research and Creative Accomplishments: Expectations,” but neither faculty member recommended against the policy. Instead both look to the campus administration to better support their work and not to interpret the policy without understanding the limitations of their campus setting and budget for support of research and involvement in professional organizations.

The specific textual changes suggested by the two respondents in **Category 3** are not grammatical or factual errors. The changes are instead either stylistic changes or reflect how these faculty members have interacted with the respective campus administrations. Both faculty members shared the changes from their point of view, but neither indicated that making the changes was essential. There are no commonalities in the changes between the two faculty members. I do not see any of the changes serving to improve the text of the policy.

The two faculty members in **Category 4** supported the policy as written. The single faculty member who expressed concern about being assigned evening classes (**Category 5**) observed that such assignments were not traditional at any campus location, but did not indicate evening assignments were expected at the campus. Clearly, a campus could experience such deep economic problems as to make evening assignments to full-time faculty, but such a change should be signaled far in advance so that a faculty member could prepare for the transition.

In summary, the UC Workload Policy draft was supported without changes. The concerns expressed in the responses are matters to be considered and addressed as appropriate by the College and campus administrations.

Motion

The draft University College Workload Policy should be forwarded as written to the VPCC and Dean Madlyn L. Hanes.

Submitted By

Robert Loeb

April 17, 2012

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Workload Policy for Full-Time Faculty Members

I. Purpose of Workload Policy

To support its own mission and that of The Pennsylvania State University, University College established equitable workloads for its full-time faculty members across the fourteen campuses that comprise the college. Workload assignments must support the high-quality performance expected for all faculty members regardless of type of appointment. Assignments should be made with attention to ensuring balance across the mission for teaching, research, scholarship and creative accomplishments, and service activities within the campus and the College.

Faculty workloads consist of three components: (1) the instructional workload; (2) expectations appropriate for the type of appointment for research and scholarship and staying current in the discipline being taught, creative accomplishments and improvement of instructional skills; and (3) service activities. The assigned workload may differ when necessary across faculty and across campuses due to appropriate customization. These variations may occur because of differences in such factors as disciplinary requirements, class size, availability of staff to assist faculty members (e.g., the presence or absence of a lab technician to prepare science labs), levels of responsibility for the supervision of internships required for a degree program, and career stage. Consideration also may be given to special situations, such as ensuring adequate time for a tenure-track faculty member to develop a research agenda or for a faculty member to develop an online course or significant teaching innovation.

Faculty workload assignments also must reflect a balance among a variety of campus-specific factors, including but not limited to budget and enrollment considerations and the needs of students, as well as the career interests of faculty members. It is the responsibility of the campus Director of Academic Affairs (DAA), delegated by the Chancellor, to make the workload assignment in consultation with each faculty member following the policy in this document. In fulfilling this responsibility, the DAA also will consult with the appropriate disciplinary faculty to help ensure workload equity.

The Dean of University College will ensure that the faculty workload policies are reviewed every five years.

II. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Teaching Assignment Policy

The normal teaching course load by type of appointment is:

- ❑ Instructors and senior instructors teach a 4-4 load or equivalent in contact hours (12 credits each semester for a total of 24 credits each academic year).
- ❑ Tenure-track and tenured faculty members teach a 3-3 load or equivalent in contact hours (9 credits each semester for a total of 18 credits each academic year).
- ❑ Teaching online courses is considered equivalent to teaching courses face-to-face or in a hybrid delivery mode.
- ❑ In line with University policy, any teaching, course development, or other work for a separate Penn State unit (including Outreach or World Campus) must be approved in advance by the DAA.
- ❑ All full-time faculty members may be expected to teach courses periodically outside the normal workweek (i.e., to teach evening or weekend courses).
- ❑ All full-time faculty members are expected to advise students as assigned.

III. The Scholarship of Research and Creative Accomplishments: Expectations

- ❑ Instructors and senior instructors are expected to remain current in the discipline(s) they teach. Illustrative activities are provided in the document “Statement of Scholarship Expectations for Faculty not in the Tenure System” (<http://www.campuses.psu.edu/84.htm>).
- ❑ Tenure-track faculty members are expected to attend disciplinary conferences, give conference papers, and publish in appropriate refereed venues. Tenure-track faculty members also are encouraged to seek internal and external funding for their research or creative projects and to participate in outreach that makes significant use of their disciplinary expertise.
- ❑ Tenured faculty members are expected to continue to develop their agenda of research, creative accomplishments, or both through conference presentations and refereed publications in their area(s) of expertise, as well as relevant grant-seeking and outreach that make significant use of their disciplinary expertise.

IV. Service and the Scholarship of Service to the University, Society, and the Professions: Expectations

- ❑ Instructors and senior instructors are expected to contribute significant service, usually at the campus, community, or both levels. At the campus level, service may involve participating on committees, advising student groups, student recruitment activities, or taking a role in campus governance bodies. In the community, service may involve speaking in one's area of expertise to civic groups or consulting in one's area of expertise with these groups. Senior instructors are expected to assume positions of leadership occasionally in service on the campus and in the community. Leadership also may involve working on the University College Faculty Council, the University Faculty Senate or administrative support work.
- ❑ Tenure-track faculty members are expected to contribute important service at the campus, community, or both levels (see examples above), and to be involved with service to the profession. The latter might involve taking an office in a scholarly organization, reviewing submissions for a scholarly journal, assisting with the editing of a scholarly newsletter, or helping with the organization of a scholarly conference. However, major leadership in service is not expected.
- ❑ Tenured faculty members are expected to contribute service at the campus, community, college, and university levels (see examples above), sometimes assuming a leadership role. They also are expected to offer service to their profession, whether with a scholarly organization, publication, or conference, sometimes taking a leadership role. Tenured faculty members also may be asked to assess applications to major granting institutions or manuscript submissions to scholarly journals and university presses, and may be involved with promotion and tenure committees and with University Faculty Senate or committee work at the college or university level.

V. Adjustments

Although all full-time faculty members have responsibilities in teaching; research, scholarship, or creative accomplishment; and service, their assignments may warrant adjustment within these categories. Reasonable flexibility is desirable for the mutual benefit of the university, college, campus, and faculty member. Any adjustment would be made by the Director of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the faculty member on an individual, case-by-case basis. No modification of an assigned course load, whether an increase or a decrease, is automatic or guaranteed.

- ❑ Generally workload adjustments may be made yearly, and faculty members will not have their normal course load increased during the academic year. However, a *bona fide* campus emergency (such as a colleague's hospitalization) might warrant an adjustment midyear.

- ❑ Instructors and senior instructors will have their normal course load increased during the academic year only if they are accepting an approved overload assignment for extra compensation. On the other hand, a reduction in the course load may be fitting if the instructor or senior instructor is accepting an unusually substantial responsibility.
- ❑ Courses taught for extra compensation may be negotiated by the faculty member and his or her DAA. However, regular course loads higher than 4-4 during the academic year are discouraged. Tenure-track faculty members are discouraged from teaching overloads during the academic year or summer courses to permit adequate time to develop their research or creative accomplishment.
- ❑ Consideration for a course release from teaching for service will be rare, except for a substantial service commitment (e.g., Director of Honors Program, Chair of the University Faculty Senate, Assistant DAA, leader of the development of a new four-year degree program).
- ❑ In light of the obligation in research or creative accomplishment of tenure-track faculty members, a course load reduction might be appropriate. A tenure-track faculty member may warrant a course release for a major scholarly or creative project or in response to the receipt of a significant grant or fellowship. Alternatively, 4-2 or 2-4 course load may be considered by the DAA if requested by the faculty member to permit accelerated progress on a research or creative project during the lighter semester.
- ❑ In light of the continuing obligation of tenured faculty members in research or creative accomplishment a course load reduction may occasionally be fitting. A time-intensive scholarly or creative project or a significant grant, a fellowship, a substantial programmatic innovation or major service commitment might warrant such a reduction. Alternatively, a 4-2 or 2-4 course load may be considered if requested by the faculty member to facilitate greater progress on a project in teaching, research and creative accomplishment, or service.
- ❑ For faculty projects involving only modest time demands, a reduction in service load, rather than course load, may be appropriate.
- ❑ A tenured faculty member who does not have a significant involvement with an agenda in research or creative accomplishment and does not wish to be evaluated with the usual weight given to research or creative accomplishment may wish to discuss with his or her DAA increased responsibilities in teaching, service, or both. A DAA also may initiate a discussion on this topic. The goal is a reasonable adjustment that is mutually reached. An adjustment also may be considered during a post-tenure review. If, in a future year, the faculty member becomes significantly re-engaged in research or creative accomplishment, this adjustment may be reversed with mutual consent.

Approved by the University College Faculty Council on 4/17/ 2012.

Approved by the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses and Dean, University College on 4/28/12.