

## Report of the Planning and Finance Committee

### **Faculty Workload Policy Proposal**

April 15, 2016

#### **Background**

The Task Force created to review and revise the UALR Faculty Workload policy has worked for more than a year to draft and prepare a policy to replace the existing faculty instructional load policy from 1994. During that time numerous issues have been considered in order to create a workable policy that is appropriate to faculty engagement and consistent with UALR policies 403.20 and 403.23, Roles and Rewards I and II. Following completion of the latest version, Task Force draft 11 was referred to the Faculty Senate Planning and Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Senate.

Members of the Planning and Finance Committee received the report on March 29, 2016, have reviewed the proposal independently, provided input through a shared document and met to discuss the document content for purposes of making recommendations to the Senate. Although the time available to the committee for review has been very limited, members have been aware of the development and evolution of the document for some time.

What follows are general observations, recommended changes and issues identified that remain to be addressed and incorporated.

#### **General observations**

The Planning and Finance Committee members have indicated general agreement that what the task force terms a hybrid approach that retains what it deems the best elements of the original policy while attempting to address ongoing inconsistencies is reasonable for a revised policy.

The recognition that research and service are integral to faculty performance and are not, therefore, to be considered reassignments or release from teaching is both valid and essential to connecting workload to the review and reward processes for faculty.

There is a widely held perception that the current instructional load policy is not applied consistently across units. This perception leads to concerns that for any new policy to be effective it must be utilized. Inasmuch as the recommended instructional load for tenure track faculty is 3 courses (9 instructional units) per semester, concerns have been expressed that the institution cannot afford to change to this model given limitations on existing resources. While it is reported to be possible for many units to implement this model within existing resources, it is not the case for every department.

Just as the report rightly recognizes the importance of relating faculty workload and faculty performance evaluation, it is equally important to assure that funding to departments for instruction allows full and equitable implementation of the recommended teaching load

distribution. An accurate analysis, therefore, of resources needed for equitable implementation and accurate, accessible, ongoing metrics is critical.

This policy lowers the expected teaching load of chairs by half. While this expectation may reflect the load of many current chairs, it does occasion concern that chairs are less and less connected to the instructional realities in their unit.

### **Recommended changes**

1. *Pg. 5. General principles. Delete phrase.*

Faculty members may request, ~~in rare circumstances~~, an exception to the distribution maximums or minimums. These requests will be contingent on institutional needs and resources as well as the relative contribution of anticipated outcomes to the mission of the University.

Justification: The model framework does little to address the many and varied ways that faculty are currently engaged in activities that benefit academic programs and the university as a whole in addition to teaching (e.g. ATLE, coordinating internships, serving as liaison with concurrent high school teachers). Many such responsibilities are categorized as release/reassignment in the current policy. While exceptions to the distribution model should not necessarily be considered routine, the statement that there are only rare circumstances that justify faculty engagement in these initiatives is unnecessarily limiting.

Similarly, significant research as a valuable justification for redistribution of load is devalued when it would only be possible in rare circumstances. In order to genuinely encourage research productivity it should not be considered rare for a faculty member to have fewer than 9 IUs in a given semester.

2. *Pg. 6. Model Framework, item 3. Remove the last 3 sentences from the footnote and add to the policy.*

A faculty member's full-time work may be distributed across an academic or fiscal year, but will not be banked for future years. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to extend the distribution period to two years to accommodate special projects or balance extra teaching loads. Faculty members will work with chairs to determine the most appropriate and equitable distribution plan.<sup>1</sup> *Chairs may distribute a faculty member's*

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<sup>1</sup> It is widely recognized that the banked hours system, while workable in theory, has not worked well in practice. What banking has a tendency to do is allow departments to borrow resources against a future that is not materially better off than the present. If there are not additional resources in future semesters, then the bank will fail. In other words, many faculty members *never* get an opportunity to cash in their banked IUs. Therefore, this policy proposes a more limited approach to banking resources. ~~Chairs may distribute a faculty member's workload across an academic or fiscal year, or if necessary as much as two years, but otherwise, the overload has to match the resources. If a chair needs a faculty member to teach an overload outside of these parameters, extra compensation must be paid to the faculty member. This encourages departments to maximize their resources through careful scheduling and enrollment analysis, and it protects faculty members from inadvertent exploitation.~~

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Justification: This statement currently in the footnote is important to the overall implementation of the policy and should not be located in a footnote.

3. Pg. 7 **Delete sentence.**

Faculty members with 10-month or 10.5-month appointments are usually taking on additional administrative (service) responsibilities and this should be figured into their annual workload distribution. ~~Chairs should set these distributions according to the specifics of the faculty member's assignment.~~ Chairs or unit heads are responsible for verifying the level of activity in each category.

Justification: There is a task force currently considering a range of issues relating to coordinators who comprise a significant portion of faculty with 10-month or 10.5-month appointment. The process for determining how the workload for these faculty is distributed should be among recommendations from this task force and subsequently incorporated into this policy.

4. Pg. 8 *Department Chair (12 month), Typical Workload Distribution.* **Modify description of service.**

<b>DEPARTMENT CHAIR (12-MONTH)</b>	
<b>Typical Workload Distribution</b>	
Teaching	20% (usually equivalent to 6 IUs/year)
Research	10% (chairs may negotiate for different percentage for research)
Service	20% 50% ( <i>administrative service</i> )

Justification: The definition of service utilized in this policy, adapted from *Faculty Roles and Rewards I*, does not reflect the administrative expectations for redistribution of load for department chairs. At a minimum, it should be clear that the category of service for purposes of defining workload expectations here and potentially in other models is broader than the *RR I* definition (pg. 5). See “*Issues remaining to be resolved*” pg. 6.

5. Pg. 8 *Instructional Workload Weights.* **Modify language to be more explicit.**

The default value ~~will be~~ **is** the lower value, but each college has the option of setting the higher value through a process of college-level review outlined in Item 1 under “Procedure”

(Page 11). Every effort should be made to ensure equitable weights for course types. ~~New course curriculum forms should include the~~ Instructional unit information must be included in new course proposals. ~~as part of the proposal.~~

6. *Pg. 9 definition of team-taught courses.* **Modification of language to reflect earlier understandings of team taught (interdisciplinary)**

Team taught (interdisciplinary) courses will fall into one of the course type categories in the Instructional Workload Table and will have the corresponding instructional unit value. ~~For purposes of assigning workloads to~~ Individual faculty members who are team teaching a course, ~~the chair(s) with the approval of the dean(s) may assign up to the full IU value to each member of the teaching team. should receive full credit for the course in his or her teaching load. The assignment of instructional units in these cases should be based on the time and effort contributed of each team member.~~

Justification: This recommendation utilizes language from the Core Council's statement on team teaching and more accurately reflects the understanding that team teaching requires more effort than solo teaching in that it requires close collaboration between the teachers on all aspects of the class from planning, to presentations, to grading.

7. *Pg. 9 Unusually large classes.* **Reword how such classes are identified.**

The instructional workload weights table includes a course type labeled "unusually large classes". Each department, with approval of the dean, and based on normative data, will establish discipline-specific norms for class sizes that are based on the instructional practices of the discipline and the needs of the students. Normative class size should not be based on the maximum occupancy of the classroom used. "Unusually large classes" are generally those that are ~~at least twice the size of the~~ *significantly larger than the* disciplinary norm by course type *and level* and that maintain the level of individual attention to students provided in classes of standard size.

Justification: Expecting a class to be double its normal size before additional weighting can be applied is inappropriate. "Significantly larger" provides guidance for additional weighting without specifying an absolute number.

8. *Pg. 11 Individualized Instruction Parameters and Limits.* **Modify wording**

Individualized instruction IUs are *normally* limited to 3 IUs per instructor per semester, but may be increased to a maximum of 6 IUs in certain circumstances with approval from the dean. This includes undergraduate individualized instruction, master level thesis/final project advising, and doctoral level research and dissertation advising. When a methodologist serves as a co-advisor on a master or doctoral level project, each co-advisor will receive .5 IU for that project instead of 1 IU. Students must be enrolled in thesis, dissertation, or research/dissertation hours for instructor to receive IU credit for advising. There is a limit of three semesters per student for receiving IU credit for masters level thesis advising, a limit of six semesters per student for receiving IU credit for doctoral level

dissertation advising, and a limit of eight semesters per student for receiving IU credit for doctoral research/dissertation advising in those units that combine these requirements into one course type. These courses are identified by the course title: Doctoral Research/Dissertation. Faculty members may request, in rare circumstances, an exception to the individualized instruction limits. These requests will be *approved* contingent on institutional needs and resources as well as the relative contribution of anticipated outcomes to the mission of the University.

Justification: Given that approval of the Dean is required, guiding language (*normally*) relating to allocating IUs for individualized instruction is more appropriate for this institutional policy since needs of students / programs and types of individualized instruction may vary over time.

**9. Pg. 11 Procedures 1. Interdisciplinary college committee. Assure faculty representation**

An Interdisciplinary college committee, *the majority of whom shall be full time tenure track faculty*, will review proposals for the higher value.

Justification: When determining “college-wide credit hour multipliers for discretionary course modalities consistent with the university-wide policy”, it is critical that college teaching faculty be significant participants in formulating and reviewing recommendations.

**10. Pg. 11 Procedures 2. Departmental plans for workload distribution. Report result of departmental plan to faculty.**

Annually, department chairs, in consultation with departmental faculty members and appropriate department committees, will draw up plans for the distribution of teaching, research, and service for the next academic year. Chairs are responsible for ensuring that these plans are consistent with resources, productivity expectations, student needs, institutional goals, and faculty members’ individual professional goals. Chairs will submit department plans to the deans for review and approval *and report results of the review and approval to the department faculty*.

Justification: Reporting results of the negotiated plan to the faculty who were participants in its development assures better understanding among faculty of instructional needs and availability of resources.

**11. Pg. 11 Procedures 3. Linking annual review and workload distribution. Assure consistency**

Each spring, department chairs will meet with departmental faculty members for the faculty member’s annual review. At this meeting, *an agreement* for the faculty member’s workload distribution of teaching, research and service for the next academic year will be established. These distributions will be included as part of the annual review process as well as of the promotion and tenure process. Any ~~assignment~~ changes in department needs

(e.g. sudden shift in enrollment, illness of colleague, etc.) following agreement on a faculty member's workload distribution for the academic year that would impact the workload distribution ~~made as a result of changed circumstances~~ will be noted *and* taken into consideration in the evaluation process.

Justification: The workload distribution is recognized as an agreement between faculty and chair that will inform the faculty member's allocation of effort throughout the year and be a part of the following year's annual review criteria. Changes that may be needed following the establishment of the agreement should also require some level of agreement and assurance that changes will be considered in the evaluation process.

12. Pg. 11 Procedures 4. *Workload distribution for chair.* Modify wording to assure that chair's workload expectations reflect both department and college

Each spring, as part of the annual review process *with the dean, an agreement for a department chair's workload distribution for the next academic year will be established informed by needs and expectations of the department faculty.* ~~negotiate their own workload distribution with their dean.~~

Justification: Given that "The department chair is fundamentally a member of the department faculty", it is important that the chair's workload distribution be informed by needs and expectations of the department faculty as well as by administrative expectations. This language is consonant with the linkage between the annual review and workload distribution plan for faculty established in procedure 3.

13. Pg. 12 Policy Review. **Modify wording**

The UALR Faculty Workload Policy will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee *and the Faculty Senate Planning and Finance Committee* every five years. The Provost and Faculty Senate President will collaborate to appoint the members of ~~this~~ *the ad hoc committee.*

Justification: While there may be need for an ad hoc group to review specific elements of the policy, the Faculty Senate Planning and Finance Committee has such issues already within its purview and should provide a broader awareness of institutional resource allocation realities in its review.

### **Issues remaining to be resolved**

- An expanded definition of service is needed in this policy since "service" is the category used to reflect administrative responsibilities of chairs, roles and responsibilities of coordinators and other responsibilities of faculty not captured by the *RRI* definition.
- There is significant concern that treating most course types and levels the same for the purposes of determining IUs while singling out a specific list of other courses and labs for distinctive weighting fails to value the many different types of courses

and realities of instructional quality. In addition to modification in the wording relating to “unusually large classes”, opportunities for additional variations in weighting are needed. One possible solution is to provide the list (pg. 10) as illustrative of current practice recognizing that the interdisciplinary college committee will create additional credit hour multipliers to reflect discipline-specific instructional needs. Such modifications will be approved by the dean and Provost and reviewed within the college every five years.

Justification: The Task Force draft recognizes the importance of “time and effort” in one area but fails to value it in others. (“The assignment of instructional units in these cases should be based on the time and effort contributed of each team member”). Although this report recommends removing the sentence cited in the context of team teaching, it is however relevant and informative to other types of teaching not weighted in the task force draft. (e.g. serving on senior project panels, Donaghey Scholar’s project committees, teaching writing intensive courses, certain graduate level courses, developing and delivering for the first time an online course, large numbers of students in certain online courses).

- In the description of the process for determining and potentially modifying a faculty member’s workload distribution (pg. 11. Procedures 3), there is no provision for the possibility of appeal should a faculty member believe the chair’s expectations are not appropriate. A statement indicating what recourse a faculty member may have in such circumstances is needed.

**Additional related concerns not specifically to be added to workload policy that must be addressed**

- Meaningful load reports generated by OIR or analogous unit are critical to the success and fairness of implementation of this policy. Departments must have accurate, timely knowledge of and access to how faculty resources are allocated at the institutional level. Such data should be shared with or accessible to faculty.
- Any metrics (e.g., for “dashboards” or similar data efforts used to evaluate faculty) must take into account the load distribution for individual faculty members as well as how faculty assignments meet departmental needs. Departments should not be evaluated by metrics that do not reflect accurately the approved workload distribution of its faculty.