SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS

Report on Faculty Teaching Workloads

(Informational)

Introduction/Rationale

On January 26, 2010 in an Advisory and Consultative Report to the University Faculty Senate, on Faculty Workload Policy Development, the Committee on Faculty Affairs presented a report in which seven recommendations were proposed to guide development of "transparent workload policies," which were then approved by the President (http://www.psu.edu/dept/ufs/agenda/2009-2010/jan2010/appd.pdf). On December 4, 2012, a subsequent Faculty Affairs Informational Report, Unit Development of Faculty Workload Policies, reported to the extent to which the workload policies developed in each of the academic units complied with the recommendations (http://www.psu.edu/dept/ufs/agenda/2012-2013/dec2012/appi.pdf).

In 2014, the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs explored the content of the policies with a specific focus on teaching workload across colleges, campuses, and faculty appointment types for comparison purposes. The college workload policies served as the basis for this analysis and are hosted on the website of the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment (http://www.opia.psu.edu/progress/goal7/PerformanceMeasures/WorkloadPolicies).

Discussion

Our original goals were to: 1) summarize and document the teaching workloads specified in the college workload policies, and 2) provide ranges across academic units and categories of instructional personnel using comparable metrics, such as courses or credit hours for different categories of faculty (see Table 1).

Confounding Factors

We were able to extract teaching workload data from the college policies, but we also discovered a number of confounding factors that prevented comparison across academic units and faculty types. These factors include:

- Faculty Types
  Some teaching workload policies are reported only for tenure-line faculty. Others differentiate between "research active" or "low productivity" faculty and other faculty. Many units do not report any workload policies for full-time fixed-term faculty, while others differentiate the workloads of fixed-term 1 faculty from fixed-term multi-year faculty. Finally, some units hire fixed-term faculty that focus primarily on research, while others are primarily teaching faculty.

- Metrics
  The workload policies were highly variable in how they described teaching workloads. Various academic units and campuses use courses, contact hours, credit hours, and equations that define distinct units in their workload descriptions. Teaching workloads are also reported using varied time frames including: by the year, by the semester, and by fall and spring semesters.

The use and definitions of contact and credit hours differed across units. Some confusion surrounds the fact that credit hours reflect expectations of student workload rather than faculty workload (see Senate policy 42-20 Credit by Instruction).

- Course Exclusions and Inclusions
  Some units specifically exclude under-enrolled courses and independent studies courses from calculations of teaching workloads, while others do not mention them. Supervision of graduate students' research or teaching is often excluded as well.

- Additional Factors
  College teaching workload expectations also include a variety of factors including enrollment, availability/use of teaching assistants or learning assistants, whether courses were clinical, practicums, studio courses, or lectures. Other variables used to adjust teaching workloads include whether courses involve travel, site preparation, or engaged scholarship.

The committee attempted to obtain data comparing unit teaching workload policies with the reality of the courses taught (with the understanding that a unit's immediate needs can supersede posted policies). We were unable to compare teaching workloads across units because faculty members are not assigned to courses consistently across the university, nor even within a single college. For example, some units list many faculty for each course section, even though only one faculty member is responsible for a particular section. In other cases, one faculty member is listed, but the workload of the course is distributed across multiple instructors.

Conclusions

At present, due to the many differentials in the way teaching workload is reported, as described above, it is not possible to make accurate or meaningful comparisons regarding the expectations for and the assignments of teaching workloads across units/campuses. Such comparisons cannot be accomplished unless or until there is clarity and shared definitions (e.g regarding faculty and course types), as well as comparable metrics used to measure workloads across units/campuses.

Therefore, we conclude that the following recommendations from the January 26, 2010 Faculty Senate Report, that were approved by the President, have not been fully implemented, including:

- Recommendation #1: *"Academic units must develop clearly articulated and easily accessed policies regarding faculty assignments and expectations. A unit's policy must address faculty workload, including teaching, advising, research and creative activity, and service, and seek to ensure workload equity within the unit,* while recognizing that equity does not always imply identical responsibilities assigned to all faculty members."

- Recommendation #3: "*To ensure equity across academic units,* the Executive Vice-President and Provost shall review and approve all workload policies."

  It would seem that due to the variable ways that teaching workload policies are written, it is not possible for administrators or faculty to make comparisons across units in order to determine equity.

- Recommendation #6: "There should be an established process by which individual faculty members may appeal their expectations under the unit's workload policy."

Only two units identify an appeals process in the workload policies posted on-line. Such appeals processes need to be better described so that faculty members know where to take issues that could be dealt with more appropriately and beneficially than through Faculty Senate.

- Recommendation #7: "Faculty workload policies should be reviewed no less frequently than every five years."

Many of the workload policies posted on-line have no date identifying when they had been approved, whereas approval dates for the other policies range from November, 2002 to April, 2012. Therefore, the majority of workload policies are in need of review. Since Recommendation #2 states "…the faculty of each academic unit must be consulted and encouraged to participate in the formulation and articulation of the workload policy for that unit," review of unit policies should afford faculty an excellent opportunity to engage in dialogue with administrators regarding workload expectations and perceived inequities.

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Teaching Workloads from College and Campus Workload Policies

Academic Unit	Appointment Type (Tenure-line, FTMY, FT1)	Credit Hours	Semester Load or # courses
Abington	Tenure-line	18/year	-
Abington	Fixed-term Multi-year	18-21/year	-
Abington	Fixed-term 1	24/year (min.)	4-4
Abington, Kinesiology	Fixed-term Multi-year	5-7.5/sem	5-5
Altoona	Basic teaching, 3 cr. courses	12/sem, 24/yr	4/4
Altoona	Research-active, standing, 3 cr.	9-12/sem, 18-21/yr	3-3 or 3-4
Altoona	Tenure-line, provisional, 3 cr. courses	9/sem	3-3
Berks	Tenure-line, active research	18/year	-
Berks	Tenure-line, non-active research	24/year	-
Berks	Fixed-term Multi-year	24/year	-
Erie, Behrend	Fixed-term faculty	12 cr/sem	4-4
Erie, Behrend	Tenure-track	9/sem	3-3
Erie, Behrend	Tenured	9/sem	3-3
Great Valley	Tenured, pre-tenure, and fixed-term	9/sem	3-3
Harrisburg, Capital	Tenure-line, productive scholar	9/sem	3-3
Harrisburg, Capital	Tenured, low scholarly productivity	12/sem	-
Harrisburg, Capital	Newly hired tenure-track (1st 2 years)	15/year	2-3
Harrisburg, Capital	Fixed-term 1/Fixed-term Multi-year	12/sem	-
University College	Tenure-line	18/year	4-4 max.
University College	Fixed-term 1/Fixed-term Multi-year	24/year	-
Agricultural Sciences	Tenure-line 50% RI apt.	12/year	2-2
Agricultural Sciences	Tenure-line 25% RI apt.	6/year	1-1
Arts & Architecture	Tenure-line	6-18/year (studio)	2-2 min. (lecture, seminar)
Arts & Architecture	Fixed-term 1	-	3-3
Business	Tenure-line	12/year	-
Business	Clinical	18/year	-
Business	Fixed-term 1	21/year	-
Communications	Tenure-line	-	2-2
Communications	Fixed-term 1/Fixed-term Multi-year	-	3-3
Communications	Dept. Heads	-	2-1, 1-2/sem
Communications	Dean & Assoc. Deans	--	1/year
Earth and Mineral Sciences	Tenure-line	~12/year	4/year
Education	Tenure-line	6/sem	2-2
Engineering	Tenure-line	-	4/year
Health and Human Development	Tenure-line, productive research	6/sem	2-2
Health and Human Development	Tenure-line, non-productive research	-	3-2, 2-3/sem
Health and Human Development	Tenure-line, clinical	-	1/sem
Health and Human Development	Fixed-term	9-12/sem	3-3 or 4-3
Information Sciences and Technology	Tenure-track	6/sem	2-2
Information Sciences and Technology	Tenured or Tenure-track	-	3-3
Information Sciences and Technology	Non tenure-track	-	3-3
Liberal Arts	Tenure-line	6/sem	2-2
Liberal Arts	Tenure-line, named/Disting. Prof.	-	3/yr
Nursing	Tenure-line, active research	6/sem	2-2
Nursing	Tenure-line, non-active research	9/sem	3-3
Nursing	Fixed-term	12 cr hrs /sem	4-4
Science	Tenure-line	-	4/yr

http://www.opia.psu.edu/progress/goal7/PerformanceMeasures/WorkloadPolicies