Faculty Workload Task Force Report  
April 19th, 2016

The Workload Task Force was charged with:

a. Reviewing workload policies at selected institutions.
b. Analyzing current MSU faculty workloads at the department level.
c. Proposing recommendations for a faculty workload policy.

1. Reviewing workload policies at selected institutions.

The task force was provided with names of 11 selected institutions for our analysis. These universities were contacted by the MSU provost’s office requesting information on their workload policies. Of the 11 programs contacted, four did not respond and four replied that they did not have a workload policy. One institution reported that they had an institutional policy, with some unit level involvement. Finally, two institutions reported that they had non-institutional workload policies (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>No Policy</th>
<th>Institutional Policy</th>
<th>Unit Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington State</td>
<td>Oregon State</td>
<td>New Mexico State</td>
<td>Colorado- Boulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah State</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td></td>
<td>S. Dakota State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado State</td>
<td>N. Dakota State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of workload policies from comparison universities. Eleven institutions were queried about workload policies on their campuses.

Summary of Comparison Institution Policies:

**Oregon State University**

Oregon State does not have an institutional policy, but some colleges have guidelines. The example provided was the College of Forestry. In this college, the department head (DH) is responsible for assigning teaching loads consistent with other assigned duties and faculty members’ performance on these duties. Minimum teaching load for a 1.0 FTE faculty is an equivalent of three 3-credit classes/year. Appropriate consideration is given for class size, number of labs sections and other workload factors. Special circumstances can exist (i.e., more than 2-4 graduate students) that would impact assigned teaching loads, and it is the DH’s responsibility to ensure fairness and transparency in making teaching assignments. Teaching assignments are reviewed by the dean, associate deans and director of research.
University of Oregon
This institution has a deinstitutionalized workload process with fairly large variation among units. University of Oregon is currently contemplating more institutionalized and regularized policies to govern both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty. They are working with individual units (colleges, schools, departments, programs) to develop unit-level guidelines about professional responsibilities.

New Mexico State University
At this institution, workload is based on a 12 credit teaching load with release time for research and service. Some departments with graduate programs have a 3-course load per semester with time for research. Doctoral programs typically have a 2-course load per semester excluding work with doctoral students. The expectation is that the third course would be equivalent to working with doctoral students. These are the typical loads with variations across colleges and departments depending on mission (e.g. extension faculty) and research expectations. New Mexico has an allocation of effort form used to document individual faculty assignments. The form gives some flexibility to departments so they can allow one faculty to do more research or outreach while another may take on a greater teaching load. Each department has developed their specific workload policy that is approved by the dean. Teaching loads are determined annually by the DH using the established departmental policy and involve an element of negotiation. The departmental policy must clearly specify the methods by which teaching loads are distributed. The dean or equivalent may ask for revisions to the departmental workload policy. The workload policy considers the impact of courses with lab components, career path of the instructor, tenure and promotion, workloads at peer institutions, and national disciplinary norms.

CU Boulder
Every academic unit is required to have a workload policy on file in their Office of Faculty Affairs. Workloads described in these documents, particularly in the area of teaching, vary significantly across units. One example they shared was for the Geography Department; Faculty in that unit are required to teach four courses/year, and this includes at least one large course. In addition to the four courses, faculty are expected to supervise graduate students, independent studies, and provide mentorship on MA and PhD committees. They indicate that 40% of effort should be devoted to teaching, 40% research and 20% service. Differential loads are considered to be deviations for time and effort among equally valuable forms of contributions (i.e., teaching, research and publications).
Teaching loads can be higher or lower than 4 courses/year- if research goes down, teaching goes up.

North Dakota State University
This university has no institutional workload policy. Faculty sign a contract each summer that specifies division of effort for the following year.

South Dakota State University
The DH makes assignments. This process involves negotiation between faculty members and DH, with provost involvement in cases of disagreement. The typical distribution of effort is: 60% (teaching), 30% (research) and10% (service). The typical workload unit assignment is 15 units per semester or 30 units/year. Faculty with primarily teaching/advising responsibilities will be given a minimum of 20% release time (6 units/per academic year) for research. A 20% teaching workload assignment corresponds to teaching one 3-credit undergraduate lecture course per semester. This suggests that a 40% teaching workload would represent 2 courses/semester and a 60% teaching workload would be 3 courses/semester. Units of workload are at the discretion of the department. It is recommended workload units associated with sponsoring students in research activities be split equally between teaching and research. Courses are given a designated value-this means that lecture, lab, and studio courses can vary in credit. When determining a workload unit, the type of course is relevant. The document also puts a value on academic advising.

South Dakota State Policy statement:

“The quantitative expectations for activity in each area depend broadly on the mission of the university, the faculty unit member’s discipline and its role within the university, and on the specific past and present role assignments of individual faculty responsibility.”

Collective Themes of Comparison Institutions:

- Development of workload policies is generally the responsibility of departments or primary academic units, with institutional oversight and the expectation that workload assignments will be fair and transparent.
- Departments should have formal and standard policies guiding workload assignments.
- Workload assignments at institutions vary by academic unit.
- Changes in workload assignments are made through faculty and DH negotiation.
• Instructional assignments should include other teaching related activities beyond the traditional classroom setting (e.g., teaching of independent studies, internships, and structured mentoring).
• Expectations for research/creative activities, undergraduate advising, and service/administrative activities should be considered when developing instructional workload assignments.
• Workload assignments are determined on an annual basis and should be documented.

2. Analyzing current MSU faculty workloads at the department level

The task force considered available data to define departmental workloads in the areas of teaching, research/creative activities, and service.

Research
The assessment of research productivity for individual academic units is complex given the discipline-specific diversity in products and outcomes. In an attempt to develop a meaningful representation for individual units, the task force utilized data from Academic Analytics. The Academic Analytics database includes information on over 270,000 faculty members associated with more than 9,000 Ph.D. programs and 10,000 academic units at more than 385 institutions in the US and abroad. Although this database may not capture all aspects of research/scholarly activity for some units, it represents the best comparison data currently available to the task force. The Academic Analytics metric is the percentile rank of an individual faculty member, weighting six areas of research productivity (e.g., articles, citations, books, conference proceedings, federal grants, and honorific awards). The database utilizes discipline specific weights derived from the NRC. The MSU Office of Planning and Analysis provided the task force with a composite number for each department/unit. This number represents its average faculty member’s relative standing among similar external units in the database (see Figure 1).
Figure 1. The department average research percentile as reported by Academic Analytics. Departments at 50 or greater are, on average, at or above the national median for that discipline. Academic Analytics research scores may not closely fit all departments.

Teaching
The MSU Office of Planning and Analysis provided data summarizing student credit hours, course credits, and number of sections taught by individual tenurable faculty and averaged within an academic department. Note that instruction by NTTs, graduate students or other instructor types is not included in any of the analysis the Task Force undertook.

These instructional data contain known errors in some departments due to inaccurate assignment by departments of faculty in Banner instructional data, incomplete designation of graduate student instructors, assignment of full course responsibility to course coordinators, and inclusion of faculty that are on payroll but may not have instructional assignments (e.g., illness, sabbatical). The task force considered data that excluded independent study, internships, labs and
zero-credit recitations to minimize the incomplete or inaccurate instructor-of-record errors, though some bias remains in the data. Nevertheless, it is the best centralized dataset on instruction available and provides some overarching trends that the Task Force considers reliable and valid. Reviewing these data also present an opportunity for departments to review the assignments submitted to Banner.

Department-level distributions of assigned sections, credits, and student credit hours were reviewed, and the Task Force settled on department-level median sections as the best proxy for course-based instructional activity. As illustrated in Figure 2, department average faculty section assignment ranges from 0 to more than 16 sections per year. University-wide, the median faculty member is teaching 3.5 sections per year. There is significant variability across and within departments that may reflect real differences, misreporting, or both.

Figure 2. Median course sections taught by tenure track faculty by department. Values were generated using individual data from tenure track faculty and aggregated by a total of 32 departments.
A second analysis involved an estimate of the number of credits taught by departments (Figure 3). The range of tenure track faculty teaching by credit hours ranges from 0 to more than 30 credit hours per year. The high credit hour values reported in this analysis likely reflect the inclusion of faculty who are serving as coordinators for multiple sections of a course. In general, faculty are teaching ten credits per year (Mdn = 10.5). Department, on average, generate between 5 and 17 credit hours per faculty member.

![Figure 3](image.png)

*Figure 3. Median number of credit hours taught by tenure track faculty by department. Values were generated using individual data from tenure track faculty and aggregated by a total of 32 departments.*

Student Credit Hours (SCH) is calculated by multiplying course enrollment by the number of credits. For tenure track faculty, the central value for the university is approximately 200 (Mdn = 225, with a range of 0 to approximately 1000. The department with the lowest median is music (Mdn = 50) and the highest median value is History and Philosophy (Mdn = 444). A relatively high or low tenure-track
faculty SCH value in an academic unit is influenced by the decision to assign tenure-track faculty to either large service courses or smaller upper division classes. The task force strongly cautions against the use of SCH as a factor or indicator in the development of workload instructional policy.

The task force examined the relationship between instructional assignments percentages as assigned in Activity Insight or on the annual review card [Figure 4].

![Figure 4. Median number of credit hours taught vs. mean % Instructional assignment.](image)

These data suggest that the difference between individual faculty and units is not accounted for by different percentages of instructional assignment; the number of sections taught is not equal. In addition to the bias introduced in the teaching data, there are less systematic errors in the percent instruction data. Units may provide credit for instructional activities that are not captured in Banner (e.g., mentoring graduate students, off-campus instruction by Extension Specialists). In
addition, anecdotal information from task force members suggests that units are not adjusting % effort in areas of teaching, research, and service when faculty assignments are modified. Better alignment can be achieved if units address this issue.

**Service**

The task force had limited data and opportunity to evaluate this area of workload. Service assignments range from 0% to 80% across academic units. Staff from the MSU Office of Planning and Analysis determined that these extreme values represent department heads that are assigning administrative activities to service, or including service as part of their administrative assignments. One source of data that could be used to determine service outcomes and products is *Activity Insight*, the faculty activity reporting tool in use by MSU for faculty annual reviews and to support P&T dossiers development, along with institutionalized reporting on research and scholarly productivity, strategic plan progress, and other institutional purposes. Because the faculty member enters service activities manually, it is unclear if reporting is complete and comprehensive. The system has separated service activities by university, professional and public categories. In addition, the electronic form permits faculty to report their role on the particular activity, the number of hours spent, specific responsibilities, and other details. Units may find these data valuable in evaluating workload policies and service expectations.

3. **Proposing recommendations for a faculty workload policy.**

Information from comparator institutions and the MSU Office of Planning and Analysis was used to guide these workload policy recommendations. Our analysis indicates that the quantitative expectations for faculty in each area of workload assignment depends broadly on the mission of the university, the faculty member’s discipline, and the specific role assignments of individual faculty responsibility. The workload task force recommends that the university establish an *institutional workload policy* that provides general expectations and guidelines for academic units to follow. The *institutional workload policy* will charge academic units to develop *unit level workload policies* that meet institutional expectations.

a. **Institutional Workload Policy.** All tenure track faculty shall contribute to the teaching, research/creative activity, and service mission of the institution. In the area of instruction, the institutional expectation of faculty will depend on the research expectations of the unit, and contributions of individual faculty in that unit. Units that offer graduate training and have faculty actively engaged in mentoring students will have instructional
expectations that differ from programs that have minimal graduate-education expectations. Table 2 and 3 summarize the proposed instructional expectations by type of academic unit and faculty, respectively. Academic units will use these instructional guidelines as they develop their own workload policy.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Classification</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Min teaching load* (sem:sem)</th>
<th>Max teaching load* (sem:sem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Programs and high research productive</td>
<td>Unit strives for effective instructional, sponsoring normative number of Ph.D. students, and generates high levels of research/creative products.</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>2:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. and professional doctorates</td>
<td>Unit strives for effective instruction, sponsoring normative number of Ph.D. students, and generates high level of research/creative products.</td>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate only</td>
<td>Units strive for effective instructors, generates an appropriate level of research/creative products.</td>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>3:3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teaching units are generally based on a 3-credit lecture course that meets for 150 minutes/week.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Classification</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Min teaching load* (sem:sem)</th>
<th>Max teaching load* (sem:sem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Program and high research productive</td>
<td>Faculty member is an effective instructors, sponsors normative number of Ph.D. students, and generates an high levels of research/creative products.</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>2:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S. and professional doctorates</td>
<td>Faculty member is an effective instructor, sponsoring normative number of M.S. and/or professional doctorates students, and generate high level of research/creative products.</td>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate only</td>
<td>Faculty member is an effective instructor and generates an appropriate level of research/creative products.</td>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>3:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching focused with minimal research/creative activities.</td>
<td>Faculty member is effective in all areas, however the individual may be an outstanding instructor with a level of research/creative productivity that is below what is normative for the discipline.</td>
<td>3:3</td>
<td>4:4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teaching units are generally based on a 3-credit lecture course that meets for 150 minutes/week.
b. **Unit Level Workload Policies.** Academic units will be responsible for developing their workload policies in alignment with the university policy and the Faculty Handbook. Unit policy must address the instructional, research/creative activities, and service mission of the unit. Departments must define measurable outcomes for the different workload areas and justify assigned percentages. Policies will address common sources of inequity in instructional workload distributions (e.g., class size, preparations, instructional effort). The development of unit policies will ensure equity between academic units with similar instructional or research/creative activity assignments. Policies will include a mechanism for changing the workload assignment of an individual faculty in the academic unit. The procedure for changing a faculty member’s assigned percentage of effort must be consistent with university policies (see Faculty Handbook). Specifically, tenure-track faculty will maintain the percentages of effort as assigned at hire until they achieve tenure, unless a change in effort is initiated by the faculty member and approved by the DH. After the award of tenure, either the faculty member or the DH can propose changes to the faculty member’s percentages of effort, but mutual agreement must be reached before the change can be made. The revised percentages of effort can be for a specified term or reflect a long-term change of focus for the faculty member and the department. If the revised percentages are for a specified term, the end date will be noted and the percentages of effort will revert back to the assignments and assigned percentages of effort in place before the term.

Unit expectations associated with a given assignment in research/creative activity will be aligned with the indicators and associated quantitative and qualitative measures specified in the department role and scope documents. These expectations should be informed by discipline-specific national performance data. Expectations associated with a given teaching, research/creative activities and service assignment should recognize all activities identified in the faculty handbook. They will be calculated based on traditional classroom assignments, and equivalent responsibilities such as off-campus instruction in Extension, advising, mentoring of doctoral, thesis masters, and undergraduate students.
In summary, academic unit policies must address and demonstrate the following:

- Reflect the instructional, research/creative activities and service mission of the unit.
- Define faculty expectations and measurable outcomes for each workload area.
- Address common sources of inequity in instructional workload distributions (e.g., class size, preparations, and instructional effort).
- Ensure equity between academic units with similar instructional or research/creative activity assignments.
- Ensure equity within the academic unit such that individual faculty in that unit have work assignments that align with actual efforts in teaching, research/creative activities, and service.
- Include, when appropriate, teaching-related activities beyond the traditional classroom setting (e.g., off-campus instruction, teaching of independent studies, internships, advising, and structured mentoring).
- Describe a mechanism and rationale for changing workload assignments that involves faculty and DH negotiation.
- Consider expectations for research/creative activities, undergraduate advising, and service/administrative activities.
- Define research workload assignments to align with unit role and scope documents.
- Be consistent with the institutional workload policy and the Faculty Handbook.