

Report on Faculty Workload Issues

Submitted to:

Rodney Rogers
Provost and Senior VPAA

Submitted by:

Joint Faculty Senate/Administration Workload Committee	
Faculty Senate Representatives	Administration Representatives
Joel O'Doriso, Co-Chair	Bill Balzer, Co-Chair
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On May 28, 2014, you met with our ad hoc Joint Faculty Workload Committee and provided a charge from Provost/SVPAA Rodney Rogers and the Faculty Senate:

.....The Administration's commitment to shared governance desires faculty input through their representation on the BGSU Faculty Senate. The Joint Faculty Workload Committee, comprised of representatives of the Administration and Faculty Senate, is charged to review faculty workload information (e.g., existing policies and practices, current and prospective teaching assignments, benchmarking data) and provide observations pertinent to that data. Data analysis support may be requested through the Office of the Provost. The JFWC is requested to submit a report in mid-September report that would include summary tables and bulleted paragraphs summarizing its general observations.

Preface

BGSU's existing faculty workload policy, Policy Statement on Faculty Assignments, was approved by the BGSU Board of Trustees in May, 1994 to comply with the Ohio Board of Regents February, 1994 Faculty Workload Standards and Guidelines. The changing nature of academic work since then (e.g., increase in time spent on electronic communication with students, online access from office and home to reference materials for scholarship) support updating our workload policy to recognize and accommodate the changing nature of faculty work. Articulating a workload policy that recognizes our unique mission, the number of hours worked (including uncompensated work done during the summer months), the contributions and success of all faculty (tenured and tenure track, non-tenure track, faculty administrators, and adjunct), and the need to be agile in response to a changing environment will better communicate faculty contributions to both internal and external audiences. The development of an updated faculty workload policy, developed with this joint input from BGSU faculty through the Faculty Senate and BGSU faculty administrators, would provide the colleges and academic schools and departments with useful guidance in fulfilling their missions and respond to requests by external stakeholders regarding BGSU's faculty workload.

In developing these recommendations, it became apparent to the committee that, currently, the manner in which data that inform faculty workload measures are collected limits its ability to reach conclusions at an individual, academic unit, or college level. For example, different practices across academic units in listing course sections taught by graduate students (e.g., as instructor of record or not as the instructor of record) make the correspondence of teaching expectations difficult to determine. "Local" systems in place at some colleges for gathering workload information differ significantly (e.g., prospective vs. retrospective gathering of information). Consequently, the following recommendations focus on general principles that may be useful in developing university-level policies and guidelines.

1. **The faculty workload policy should recognize and accommodate differences in academic missions and priorities among the colleges and schools/departments.**

A university faculty workload policy should reflect an understanding and appreciation for differences in faculty workload expectations based on collegiate and disciplinary focus and strategic plans and priorities. The work load policy should cover activities of any BGSU employee with faculty appointment including adjunct, non-tenure track, tenure track, tenured, and faculty administrators.

2. **Expectations for teaching/librarian effectiveness, research/creative work, and service are primarily a function of the nature of a faculty member's appointment (i.e., adjunct, non-tenure track, tenure track, tenured, or faculty administrators).**

The amount of typical classroom instruction (or online equivalent) that a faculty member is expected to do may vary depending on his or her other teaching-related responsibilities (e.g., chairing MA theses, sponsoring independent studies, co-directing musical ensembles, supervising clinical work), expectations for service, and (where applicable) expectations for research/creative work. Performance of university-related work that goes beyond the expectations of a faculty member's appointment cannot be required, though it may be considered in merit review. Additionally, these expectations should recognize the changing nature of academic work in relation to technology, particularly as it relates to communication and contact time with students.

3. **BGSU should have a stated and transparent faculty workload policy, and the policy should be used to develop college and departmental level workload policies.**

A university-wide faculty workload policy would provide useful guidance for aligning college workload policies with the missions of the Division of Academic Affairs and BGSU. In turn, unit-level workload practices can be aligned with the college's workload policy, and still reflect the unique mission, goals, etc. of the academic unit. The college workload policy document and subsidiary unit-level workload practices should define and clarify terms such as "Standards," "Expectations," etc. Additionally, the college workload policy document and subsidiary unit-level workload practices could provide guidance for the assignment of faculty activities to the areas of teaching/librarian effectiveness, research/creative work, and service (e.g., academic advising falls under teaching, presentation at a conference falls under research/creative work, etc.)

4. **College and academic units may consider gathering benchmarking data on workload expectations at peer or aspirational departments/schools and colleges.**

Intra-university comparisons among colleges and academic units may be less useful given collegiate and disciplinary differences, departmental missions, etc.

5. Conceptually defensible, transparent, and consistent guidelines should be developed for granting release time from teaching.

Both the absence of a centralized reporting system and the local evolution of practices for providing course releases have resulted in inconsistency across colleges and academic units, as well as over time. Guidelines can provide greater uniformity in decisions to provide release time from teaching for other activities (e.g., research, advising, administration, etc.), with the ultimate decision remaining with the contracting officer.

6. Workload expectation and allocation of effort should be informed by a discussion between the chair/director and faculty member.

While academic units have developed standard workload expectations (e.g., for teaching, three courses each semester during the academic year) and workload allocations (e.g., 40% teaching, 40% scholarship, and 20% service) that may vary depending on faculty appointment (i.e., adjunct, non-tenure track, tenure track, tenured, and faculty administrators), deviations from these standards may be appropriate based on careful consideration of a number of factors including academic unit needs, faculty career stage, and unique circumstances. There should be an annual meeting or communicate between the chair/director and each faculty member to discuss and document proposed workload and allocation of effort for the coming academic year. Proposed deviations from standard expectations and allocations would be subject to the final approval of the contracting officer.

7. Accurate data are needed before analysis and interpretation of faculty workload can be accomplished with a high degree of accuracy.

A centralized system, developed with input from the colleges and potentially building on existing data collection efforts (e.g., the new BGSU Strategic Analytic Reporting System) is necessary in order to provide accurate, timely, and transparent information on faculty workload.