Ad-Hoc Committee on Faculty Workloads  
Report to the Faculty Senate  
April 16, 2012

Background

During the 2010/2011 academic year the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) requested that colleges and their respective academic units identify and report faculty with “low teaching loads“. The formula used by OAA to determine “low teaching loads” incorporated only organized class sections of lecture, lab, seminar and recitation but did not recognize low enrollment, special topics, or research contributions to credit hour production. The present policy for accounting for faculty workloads as stated in the LSU Baton Rouge campus faculty handbook reads as follows:

“The work load of faculty members includes formal classroom and laboratory teaching; course development; scholarly activities; supervision of theses, dissertations, and independent study courses; student evaluation and advising; and professional, University, and public service duties. The distribution among these various duties may vary from one faculty member to another and from one semester to another. Assignments are made by the department chair in consultation with the faculty and must be consistent with stated departmental goals and objectives and with stated criteria for evaluating faculty performance. The normal classroom teaching assignment (for full-time faculty with minimum involvement in other faculty duties) is the equivalent of 12 semester hours of lecture per week. Classroom teaching assignments are adjusted according to research, service, and administrative assignments, and may vary according to student level (undergraduate, graduate, professional). All full-time faculty members carry full work loads and normally have budgetary assignments that reflect the variety of assigned duties.” (LSU Faculty Handbook, pg. 13, 1997)

In light of OAA “low teaching load” reports, Faculty Senate Resolution 11-2 (see appendix) and was drafted and presented to the senate and ratified at the May 2011 meeting. In accordance with the resolution, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee appointed a representative committee hereafter referred to as “The Ad-hoc Committee on Faculty Workloads (ACFW)”. The charge of the committee includes the following:

1. to examine the standards and practices of peer institutions related to faculty workloads;
2. to recommend whether it is in the best interest of the University to articulate a Faculty Workload policy statement; and if so
3. to draft said policy statement.

Faculty appointed to the committee are: Dr. Wes Harrison (Committee Chair), College of Agriculture; Dr. Teresa Buchanan, College of Education; Dr. Gerald Knapp, College of Engineering; and, Dr. George Stanley, College of Sciences.
Committee Activities and Analysis

The committee approached its charge by reviewing available information regarding faculty workload policies at selected LSU peer institutions; arranging a meeting with Dr. Jane Cassidy, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; and, informal discussions with colleagues at selected peer institutions.

Summary of meeting with Academic Affairs

We Harrison met with Dr. Jane Cassidy, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, to discuss the committee’s charge in September 2011. She explained that all colleges are expected to submit workload reports annually, and that she expected to have written descriptions of workload policies, which would be made available to the committee for review. No explicit guidelines from the provost office were given in articulating college policies, with the exception that college-level policies are expected to “reflect standards within their respective industry” (i.e., academic profession). The committee requested that college reports at the end of Fall 2011, but Dr. Cassidy informed us that OAA priorities had been diverted to strategic planning and the policies were not yet available. We tried again early in the Spring of 2012, but were informed once again that policies were not yet available, with the exception of a draft policy being developed by the College of Agriculture.

Results from the review of policies at peer institutions are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Workload Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Campus Policy</th>
<th>Use of Formulas &amp; Metrics a</th>
<th>Scope of Policy b</th>
<th>Administrative Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U. of California System</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>T/R/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of Alabama</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>T/R/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of Florida</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of Georgia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T/R</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of Kentucky</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>T/R/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana State U.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>T/R/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi State U.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>T/R/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma U.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dept Head/Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M U.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>T/R/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of Tennessee</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia U.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T/S</td>
<td>Dept Head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: a) 0 = Formulas are not used in the policy statement; 1 = Slight use of formulas, e.g. 100% teaching FTE = 12 semester hours; 2 = Moderate use of formulas, e.g. credit hour adjustments for research and grant; 3 = Strict use of formulas to convert non-lecture courses and graduate advising to formal classroom credit hours. b) T = instruction, R = research, and S = service.

Table 1 summarizes the committee’s review of faculty workload policies at selected peer universities. Ten of the 11 universities reported in the table have general campus wide policies. University of Florida is the only school contacted that did not report a campus wide policy. Column three in the table indicates the committee’s assessment of how each school rated on a scale of 0 to 3; where a 0 rating
means a policy makes no use of formulas or metrics to account for tradeoffs in formal classroom teaching for other university activities, and a 3 indicates the policy uses explicit formulas/metrics to determine tradeoffs between formal classroom teaching and other university activities.

Of the 10 universities with campus policies, only two, the University of California and Texas A&M University have policies with a high level of metrics in converting non-lecture courses such as independent studies, graduate advising, research, and service to formal classroom credit hours. The remaining policies range from 0 to 2, with most of them being general written statements that give administrators (usually the department head/chair) the authority to adjust classroom teaching loads based on a faculty’s involvement in a variety of other university activities. Some of these, such as those by the Universities of Georgia and West Virginia make use of a moderate level of metrics, e.g., reduced classroom teaching based on faculty FTE allocated to research.

The committee placed LSU’s Baton Rouge campus policy at the low end of the scale. LSU’s policy provides a thorough description of the types of university activities that department chairs and deans can use in adjusting classroom teaching loads, without use of formulas to determine credit hour tradeoffs. In fact, LSU’s policy is quite a bit more descriptive than many of the other schools we reviewed.

The committee did not attempt to determine whether the policies summarized in table 1 are strictly enforced or successful. The time and resources needed to study the effectiveness of the various workload policies are beyond the committee’s means, and it is not entirely clear how such a determination would be made. However, a few concluding observations are with noting.

1) There is a great deal of diversity with respect to mission, mix of private and public funding, political landscape and administrative structure across each of our peer universities. This makes it unlikely that any one policy is “best”.

2) The standards for each academic profession are different, and therefore the standard for each academic unit within a university is different. This makes it unlikely that any campus-wide policy will be ideal.

3) Administrators are paid to manage people, and one would hope they carefully consider all factors in determining faculty assignments and make reasonably adjustments accordingly. Policies that are too rigid may handcuff administrators in making good decisions about faculty workloads. On the other hand, not all administrators are created equal and policies that are too vague may not provide adequate protection to faculty.

Committee Recommendation

The committee believes that revising the current campus-wide policy (as stated above) would be extraordinarily complex. It is unlikely a campus policy would be equitable across all colleges and departments, and would likely be untenable in its application. Colleges, departments and faculty appointments are heterogeneous, and developing a formula-based policy would potentially impose constraints on colleges, departments and faculty in fulfilling their unique missions. That said, the committee does recommend that written policies are advisable for each college, as long as they are developed with input from the respective college’s policy committee. We suggest the following guidelines in their preparation: a clear and appropriate adjustment in workload assignments for
untenured junior faculty; a specific adjustment made for the following: chairing graduate committees, teaching independent and service learning courses, student club advising, and chairing college or departmental committees that support the teaching mission of the university.
FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 11-12

“Ad-hoc Committee on Faculty Workloads”

Sponsored by Wes Harrison

Whereas the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) has requested that colleges and their respective academic units identify and report faculty with “low teaching loads”; and

Whereas the formula for determining “low teaching loads” incorporates only organized class sections of lecture, lab, seminar and recitation and does not recognize low enrollment, special topics, or research contributions to credit hour production; and

Whereas the Faculty Handbook states that faculty workloads include not only formal classroom instruction but also various teaching related activities, such as:

1. course development,
2. scholarly activities,
3. supervision of theses, dissertations and independent study courses,
4. student evaluation and advising, as well as,
5. professional, University and public service; and

Whereas the Faculty Handbook also states that the distribution among these various duties (i.e., both formal classroom and teaching-related activities) may vary from one faculty member to another and from one semester to another, based on assignments made by the department chair; and

Whereas the University has no specific policy statement to provide guidelines on the appropriate credit-hour tradeoffs between classroom instruction and teaching-related duties; and

Whereas other national peer institutions have a faculty workload policy statement.

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee appoint a representative committee to investigate, report on, and make recommendations regarding the development of a University policy statement that defines faculty workloads and fully accounts for all formal classroom instruction and all teaching-related activities. The charge to such a committee shall include:

1. examining the standards and practices of peer institutions related to faculty workloads;
2. recommending whether it is in the best interest of the University to articulate a Faculty Workload policy statement; and if so
3. draft said policy statement.

Therefore be it further resolved that the report be presented to the Faculty Senate at or before the October, 2011 regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting.