

FINAL REPORT OF THE TEACHING LOAD TASK FORCE

September 18, 2012

Dean Tsutsui created the Teaching Load Task Force consisting of Jing Cao, Dennis Ippolito, Alicia Meuret, Ross Murfin, Elizabeth Russ, Lynne Stokes, Neil Tabor

PROCESS: The Task Force is a continuation of the Associate Professor Mentoring Task Force. The original Task Force member Thomas Osang was replaced by Alicia Meuret and Neil Tabor.

The Committee met with Department Chairs and representatives of all departments by Division. We were also able to obtain information from some of our aspirant and peer institutions. For reasons that will be made clear later the names of these institutions are not included in the Task Force report.

In conducting a review of our process for promotion from Associate to Full Professor the issue of teaching loads for Associate and Full Professors who are no longer research active arose. It was clear from those discussions that there is significant variability within the College in dealing with this situation. In particular, in some departments research inactive faculty remain at the typical 2-2 load while in other departments they are teaching at higher loads. In some cases these faculty members are being assessed annually primarily for their teaching and some have received larger raises based on their expertise in the area of teaching. The Task Force agrees with SMU's desire to be among the top fifty in the U.S. News and World Report rankings as well to continue to improve its Carnegie ranking. This will require that SMU maintain an academic culture that holds research in highest regard while maintaining a strong emphasis on excellent teaching and promoting the idea that teaching and research should enhance each other.

FINDINGS: University Policy Manual 6.2 states: "a normal, full-time teaching assignment consists of 12 class hours per week or the equivalent. This is the expected assignment for faculty who have no responsibility for administration, advising, curriculum oversight, faculty and university governance and committee work, or research. Faculty with significant responsibility for advising, curriculum oversight, normal faculty governance and university committee work ordinarily receive the equivalent of three class hours of released time each week for such duties. Faculty with active and productive research programs normally receive three class hours of released time each week for their research. Faculty with administrative responsibility may, when such administrative duties demand significant time, receive additional release time from teaching. Faculty with significant sponsored research programs may receive appropriate released time from teaching within individual school policy and with the approval of the dean."

At many of our peer and aspirant institutions faculty loads are computed on a 40%-40%-20% basis with 40% research, 40% teaching, and 20% service. A 2-2 load, which is typical here and at our sister institutions then translates to 10% per course over one year. Thus service is a one course reduction per semester. This way of viewing faculty time is helpful.

In Division I (Humanities) Dedman Departments the typical faculty member teaches two courses per semester. Exceptions for Department chairs (one course per semester), Undergraduate and Graduate Directors (in larger departments, often one course per year), and Program Directors (e.g., Womens' and Gender Studies, Asian Studies, one course per year). A similar situation holds in Division II (Social Science) Departments with two exceptions. Psychology tenure-track faculty teach 2-1 and forgo a third-year leave. In Economics newly arrived tenure-track faculty are granted a 2-1 load. The situation in Division III (Science) is more complex. In the Departments of Statistics and Mathematics the teaching load is 2-2 with reductions for faculty members with administrative responsibilities. Additionally the named (endowed) chairs (Clements and Frensey) receive a one course reduction per year. In the Department of Earth Science faculty members typically receive a 2-1 load. In the remaining three departments (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) the teaching loads are typically 1-1. In all three divisions there are faculty who are no longer research active and therefore receive a higher load (3-3, 3-2 or, in the case of Division III, 2-2). Currently there is no uniformity in whether or how departments handle such faculty members' teaching loads.

This situation is consistent with the practice of our aspirant and peer institutions. A number of Associate Deans reported sporadic efforts at requiring higher teaching loads from research inactive faculty members. Many expressed a lack of ideas in changing from the current model.

Consider, as an example, the recent APEC report for the Chemistry Department. The external reviewers (representing Notre Dame, Virginia Tech, Vanderbilt) called for a 2-1 load for those "actively seeking external Federal research support" with an additional reduction when funding ("overhead bearing research support") is obtained.

The most intriguing possibility being used by an aspirant institution (the Assoc. Dean requested the source be kept anonymous) is to allow individual departments to create teaching load agreements with the College. Departments develop their own teaching load guidelines for how teaching loads will be assigned. At the moment departments at this institution are not required to have such a contract so they employ a hybrid model. An edited version of such an agreement is appended to this report.

CONCLUSIONS: The current teaching load arrangements at SMU are typical at our peer and aspirant institutions. Thus Dedman College is not out of line in its expectations and the problems are not severe. Nevertheless Associate Deans at these institutions recognize that the current arrangements have shortcomings. In particular they pointed to the issue of faculty members who are no longer research active while admitting that they have no uniform solutions.

There are three strategies available to resolve teaching load problems: 1) do nothing, the problem isn't very large anyway and the alternatives are painful (most commonly adopted); 2) create a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach through the Dean's office and impose this solution on the College's departments (or the Dean can personally assign higher teaching loads based on his/her own assessment of the faculty member's

effectiveness) – no one recommended this strategy; 3) have departments create their own teaching load guidelines with the Dean’s approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS: While SMU strives to be a first-rate research university the Task Force recognized that tenured faculty members who are no longer research active can and should contribute to the academic life of the College and University through excellence in teaching. Greater utilization of some of our most successful teachers and rewarding them appropriately will enhance our teaching efforts and reduce the expenses we pay to lecturers or adjuncts.

The Task Force recommends that the College adopt a policy whereupon each department will generate and implement its own teaching load guidelines with the approval of the Dean. It was clear to the Task Force that teaching load variations in departments make it very difficult for the College to generate an overarching policy. Having the guidelines designed at the departmental level will allow the nuances of the department to be factored into an overall consideration of appropriate teaching loads and should encourage more buy-in that will make implementation easier. Implementing and enforcing the policy at the department level also has the advantage of increasing the sense of ownership and responsibility of all faculty members for teaching in the College. Alternatively, having the Dean’s office serve as “teaching load police” will lead over time to a sense of heavy-handedness that will impair the relationship between the College and its faculty. A sense of ownership was one of the reasons the approach was deemed successful at the one college that was implementing it.

If this policy is adopted we recommend that the attached agreement serve as a template for Dedman departments in drafting their policies with some modifications. We recommend that, after a policy has been agreed upon by the department, Chairs rather than departmental-level committees, be the designated party that determines the load for each faculty member based on the policy criteria. With regard to item 6 (see below) we recommend that faculty members be required to participate in the program and that appropriate information be submitted at the time of the annual report and review rather than at the beginning of the fall semester.

The Task Force recognizes that Associate and Full Professors may experience a natural slackening in their research productivity. These faculty members should be considered for greater teaching loads (3-2 or 3-3 or, in Division III, 2-2 or above) by policy. In creating their policy departments may wish to provide a period of time before increasing the teaching load of a faculty member; however, that time period must be specified in the contract and should be no longer than two years. During that time the Chair should discuss the possibilities at the annual review meeting. Faculty members may initiate this process. The department in consultation with the Dean may also wish to provide resources to such faculty members so that they can return to research active status within the agreed upon time period, especially Associate Professors who received tenure within the previous ten years.

In all cases higher-teaching loads should not be punitive or seen as demotions. Faculty with higher loads should be assessed at the annual review based on their performance in the classroom and to a lesser extent, service. Faculty with sustained higher teaching loads should be eligible for teaching leaves (comparable to the research leave) for new course development and/or efforts to improve their teaching abilities. Travel to conferences and/or workshops should also be considered.

MEMORANDUM

TO:
FROM:
DATE:
RE: Department of Philosophy I Guidelines

Committee name

The Department of Philosophy has established the following guidelines for its Committee

- 1. Although the teaching load for research-active faculty in philosophy will remain at four courses per year, all faculty are eligible to submit applications to [redacted] for teaching load reductions. It is understood that those who have independently negotiated teaching reductions with the College as part of their contracts or other agreements (e.g., retention agreements) with the Dean, whether currently being used or banked, will be granted further reductions only in unusual circumstances, and will, other things being equal, be assigned a significantly lower priority for such reductions by [redacted] than will faculty members who have not negotiated such reductions.
2. The [redacted] recommendation will normally remain in effect for two academic years. In cases in which a teaching load reduction is proposed, the normal reduction will be either one or two courses over two years. However, in rare cases, reductions of as many as three or four courses may be allowed. The Dean of the College or the Chair of the Department reserve the right to request the committee to reconsider the teaching load recommended for a faculty member prior to the end of the two-year period.
3. The [redacted] will consist of two Full Professors approved by the faculty, plus the Chair of the Department, who will also chair [redacted]. Members of the committee will serve two years.
4. [redacted] will meet in the early fall to make proposed assignments. The committee's proposal will be forwarded to the [redacted] Dean for [redacted], who may approve the proposal as submitted or request revisions. In the latter case, the [redacted] Dean and the Chair of the Department will enter into discussions until a final agreement is reached and approved. Final decisions about faculty teaching loads are made by the Dean.
5. [redacted] assignments will not reflect administrative teaching reductions (e.g. vice-chairmanships or graduate advisor) that are already provided by the College for allocation by the chair. Administrative course releases are awarded on top of any awarded by

Committee name

6. At the beginning of the fall semester in a year when _____ assignments are to be made, all faculty members wishing to participate in the program will be asked to specify at least 4 courses, plus a backup course, they are prepared to teach in the coming academic year. This information, together with the faculty member's CV, Annual Activity Reports, statement of research projects for the previous three years, and statement of current and prospective research projects will be submitted to the committee.

7. The primary consideration in instituting the program is to enhance our ability to successfully compete with the top research departments for the best faculty. Therefore, faculty members who have research, scholarly activity, and productivity at levels expected at the top philosophy departments in the country, and those who make an usually significant contribution to our graduate program, have the highest priority for teaching load reductions. Faculty members with lesser research performance and productivity will not be eligible for course reduction unless there is a clear indication that the course reduction will result in a specific deliverable product aimed at improving the faculty member's research productivity. The _____ should consider teaching loads of greater than four courses per year for faculty who are no longer research active.

Committee name

The specific criteria upon which _____ will base its assignments include (in order of priority):

A. Scholarly projects such as books, journal articles, and book chapters to be completed during the proposed period of teaching reduction. Consideration of such projects will be based on previous scholarly record, and evidence -- in the form of manuscripts in progress and papers recently delivered or to be delivered in prestigious venues -- of the scholarly significance of the projects, and the likelihood of their completion or significant advancement during the period.

B. Significant and exceptional contribution to the graduate program, such as chairing dissertation committees, preparing students to take 3rd year area exams (plus administering and evaluating the exams), serving on qualifying examination and dissertation committees, and playing leading roles in recruiting and placing students.

C. Exceptional and important service to the larger philosophical community, such as large scale editing projects, organization of conferences and workshops, memberships on important American Philosophical Association committees, and the like.

Committee name

8. The Chair of the Department reserves the right to override a _____ reduction in a year when the services of a faculty member are essential to the department's instructional mission. The Chair will make every effort to see to it that the faculty member's course reduction is *returned* in the following academic year.

9. In an academic year in which one's teaching load is greater than one class, one must teach in both semesters unless released from this requirement by the Dean of the College. In semesters in which a faculty member does not have teaching responsibilities, they still have research, advising, and service obligations and must be in residence in _____ as per the _____ Faculty Handbook. University policy is that faculty may not be released

City Name

College initials

Committee name

Committee Name

from all teaching obligations in a given year except under unusual circumstances, thus, course reductions may not result in a faculty member having a year in which no courses are required to be taught. This includes reductions in combination with any administrative releases or other University leaves or modifications of duties (with the exception of leaves or course reductions for child care).

10. The number of courses offered by the department over the two-year period covered by a committee name agreement will be determined as part of the annual College Schedule and Staffing process. The number of courses offered by the department is currently expected to be in the range specified in the curriculum review approved by the College in Fall 2010, unless asked by the College to revise that number. The department will commit to meet all GE seats required by the College and to staff all core courses for its various majors and minors. The department will institute reductions with no extra non-tenure track and/or part-time faculty positions (FTE). committee name

11. The Dean retains the right to terminate this agreement, if he or she decides it is negatively impacting the quality of the education offered by the department or having a negative fiscal impact.

Professor and Chair
Department of Philosophy

Date

Dean

Date