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Academic Policy Committee (APC)

2025-2026 Faculty Senate Report



APC Committee Members

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Charges

Charge 1

Develop proposed language for the Faculty Handbook to implement the provisions of APC Resolution #13 (approved by the Office of the Provost on May 3, 2024) regarding faculty participation in the determination and adjustment of annual workload assignments.

Charge 2

Review the findings of the 2023–2024 Academic Policy Committee faculty survey and evaluate the status of the recommendations presented in the 2023–2024 APC Final Report regarding disparities in faculty workload policies across colleges and departments.

Charge 3

Develop and implement, in collaboration with faculty governance bodies in each college, a confidential and standardized process for collecting annual faculty feedback on administrative appointees who are not evaluated through the Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee, in accordance with APC Resolution #41 (approved by the Office of the Provost on May 5, 2025).

Charge 1 Background

- Faculty Senate Resolution #13 was approved by the Office of the Provost on May 3, 2024.
- The resolution addressed the need for greater transparency, consistency, and faculty participation in the determination and adjustment of annual faculty workload assignments.
- Prior faculty governance discussions identified variation across colleges and departments in how workload assignments were determined and modified.
- The resolution called for explicit language in the Faculty Handbook that recognizes faculty participation in the annual workload determination process.
- The resolution also emphasized that workload determinations and subsequent adjustments should occur through a collaborative process between faculty members and department chairs or unit heads.
- The Academic Policy Committee was assigned responsibility to develop proposed Faculty Handbook language to support implementation of the approved resolution.

Charge 1 Methods

- Reviewed the text and intent of Faculty Senate Resolution #13 approved by the Office of the Provost.
- Examined the current Faculty Handbook language related to faculty workload determination and adjustments.
- Identified areas where existing language lacked clarity regarding faculty participation and collaborative workload discussions.
- Drafted proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook that describe faculty participation in annual workload determination and workload adjustments.
- Conducted consultations with the Faculty Handbook Committee, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to review the proposed language.
- Proposed language received from the OGC did not capture the initial intent. APC met with Debra Franko and agreed on proposed language edits.
- Prepared the proposed handbook amendments for submission through the Faculty Handbook Committee resolution process.

Charge 1 Recommendation: Language for the Faculty Handbook

All full-time faculty members participate in some combination of instructional; research; scholarship; and creative and service activities that have been established to encourage the general development of Northeastern University students. Given that academic units vary in their contributions to the University mission, components of the workload policy will vary from one department or unit to another. However, each academic unit must have a comprehensive workload policy in accordance with criteria jointly approved by the University's provost and the Faculty Senate. **Further, full-time faculty will have the opportunity to discuss their workload assignments with their department chair or unit head before implementation. Initial workload assignments and any subsequent modifications shall be discussed with the faculty member by the chair or unit head through a collaborative process intended to promote mutual understanding and address questions or concerns regarding the assignment.** Each unit's workload policy must be approved by a vote of the full-time faculty of the academic unit and be approved by the College dean and the provost. Faculty workloads are administered by the appropriate academic unit head and or college deans.

Charge 1: Resolution to Approve Faculty Handbook Language on Faculty Workload

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate approved APC Resolution #13 of 2024, which was subsequently approved by the Office of the Provost on May 3, 2024, calling for clarification and standardization of faculty participation in annual workload determination and adjustment; and

WHEREAS the Academic Policy Committee has developed proposed Faculty Handbook language to implement the intent of Resolution #13 of 2024, in collaboration with the Faculty Handbook Committee; and

WHEREAS the Faculty Handbook Committee reviewed and approved the proposed language;

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate approves the following revised Faculty Handbook language addressing faculty participation in workload determination and adjustment:

All full-time faculty members participate in some combination of instructional; research; scholarship; and creative and service activities that have been established to encourage the general development of Northeastern University students. Given that academic units vary in their contributions to the University mission, components of the workload policy will vary from one department or unit to another. However, each academic unit must have a comprehensive workload policy in accordance with criteria jointly approved by the University's provost and the Faculty Senate. **Further, full-time faculty will have the opportunity to discuss their workload assignments with their department chair or unit head before implementation. Initial workload assignments and any subsequent modifications shall be discussed with the faculty member by the chair or unit head through a collaborative process intended to promote mutual understanding and address questions or concerns regarding the assignment.** Each unit's workload policy must be approved by a vote of the full-time faculty of the academic unit and be approved by the College dean and the provost. Faculty workloads are administered by the appropriate academic unit head and or college deans.

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Handbook Committee, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, is directed to incorporate the approved language into the Faculty Handbook and communicate the update to academic unit leaders.

Charge 2 Background

- The 2023–2024 Academic Policy Committee conducted a university-wide faculty survey to examine faculty workload policies and practices.
- The survey findings were summarized in the 2023–2024 APC Final Report issued on March 5, 2024.
- The report identified significant variation in workload policies across colleges and departments.
- Some units include provisions that allow adjustments for personal circumstances and support faculty research and service activity.
- Other units maintain rigid teaching assignments, particularly for Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty, with limited flexibility for professional development.
- These differences may create unequal opportunities for faculty participation in research, service, and career advancement.

Charge 2 Methods

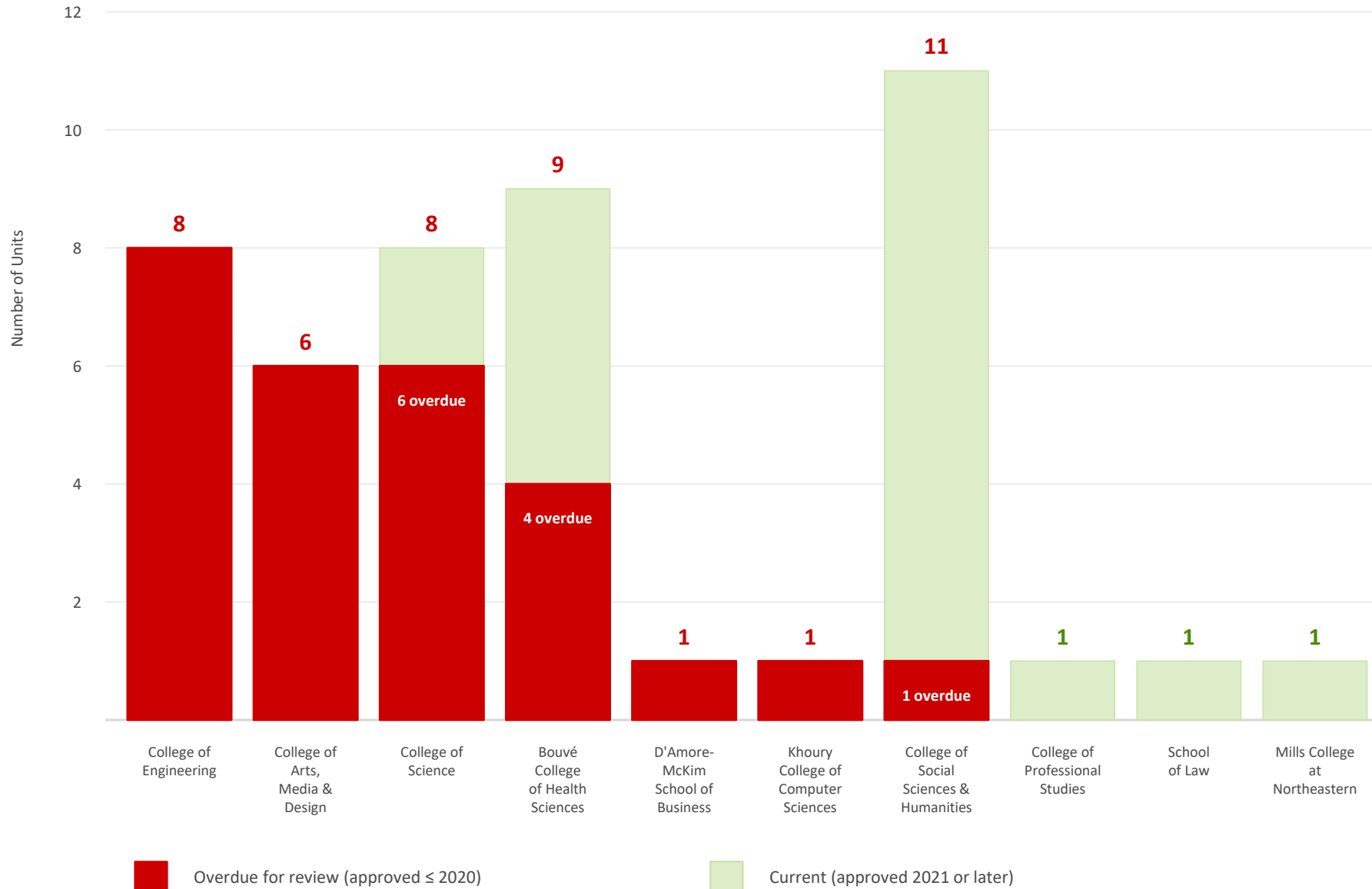
- Reviewed the faculty survey results and related analysis presented in the 2023–2024 APC Final Report.
- Identified recommendations related to workload policy frameworks, faculty participation in workload discussions, structural standardization, and flexibility in workload distribution.
- Contacted each Northeastern college to determine the current status of these recommendations.
- Examined 47 college and department workload policy documents published on the Office of the Provost Faculty Affairs website.
- Documented whether each recommendation has been implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented within each college.

Charge 2 Findings

- Many policies predate Resolution 13 (2024) and do not explicitly reflect collaborative workload determination between faculty and unit heads.
- Only about 25 percent of the policies contain explicit language describing workload determination as a collaborative process.
- Most policies reference consultation, discussion, or appeal processes rather than shared determination of workload assignments.
- Flexibility in workload adjustments for Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty varies substantially across colleges and departments.
- Multiple workload models are used across the university, including percentage allocations, workload units, and credit-hour frameworks.

Workload Policies Due for Review

Units with Provost-approved policies from 2020 or earlier (≥ 5 years old)



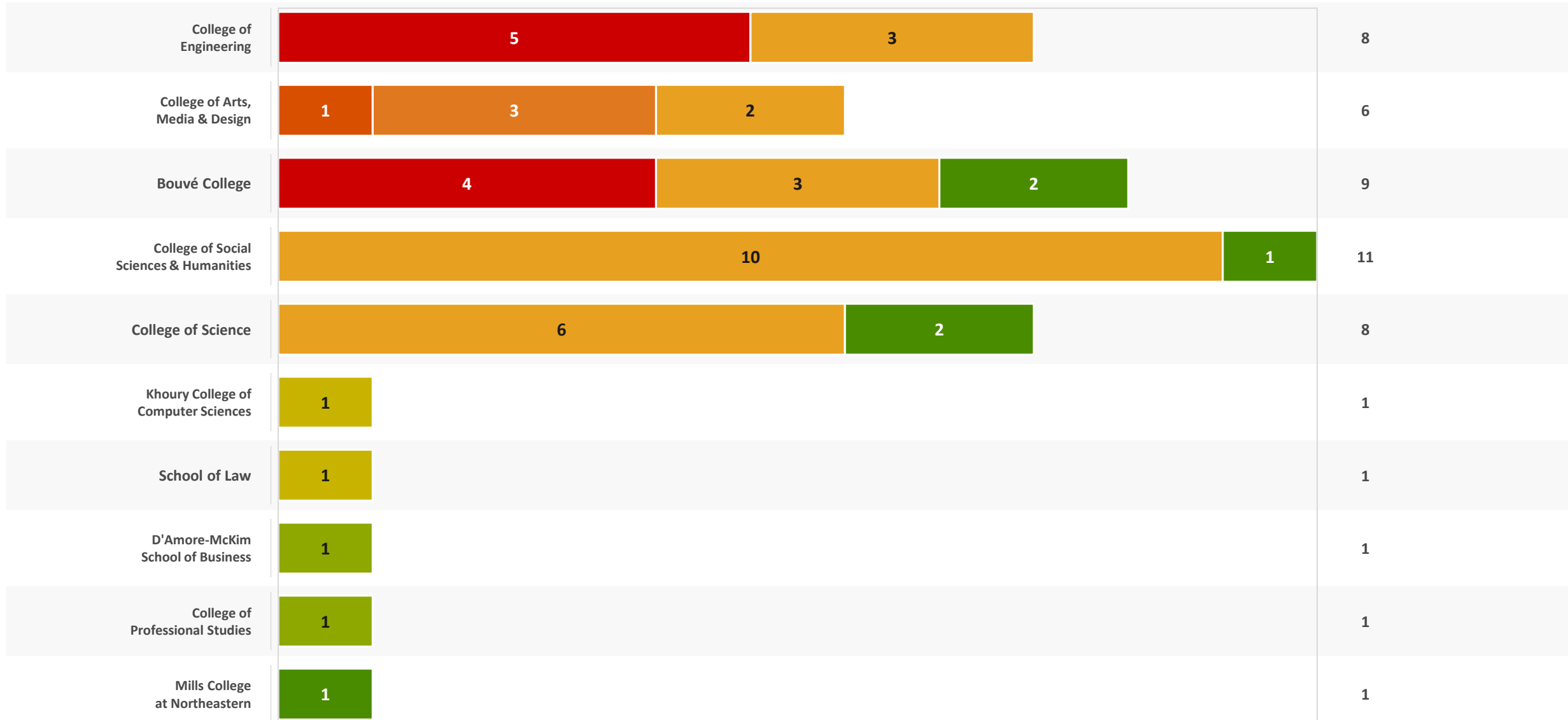
57%

of all workload policies
are overdue for review

27 of 47 total units

Resolution 13 Compliance by College

Distribution of compliance levels across all units, ordered from weakest to strongest profile



Compliance Level:



Limited



Limited to Partial



Partial to Limited



Partial



Moderate



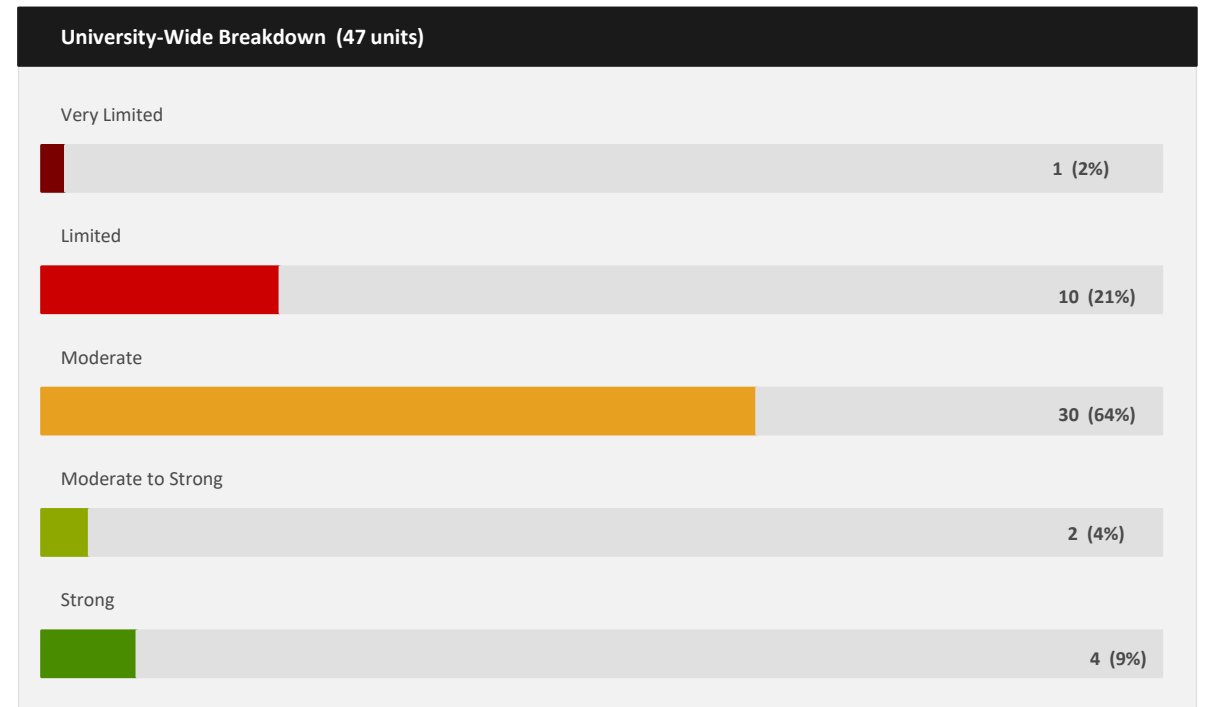
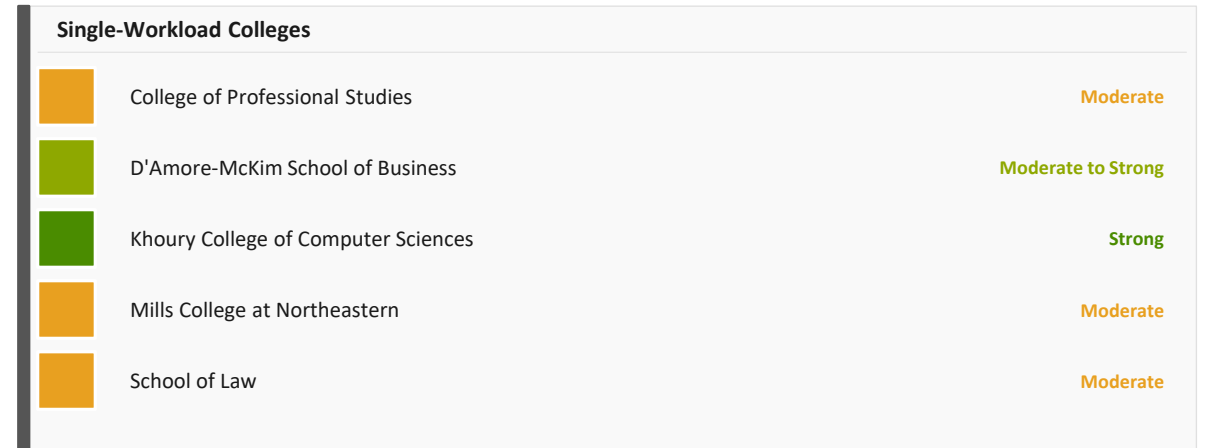
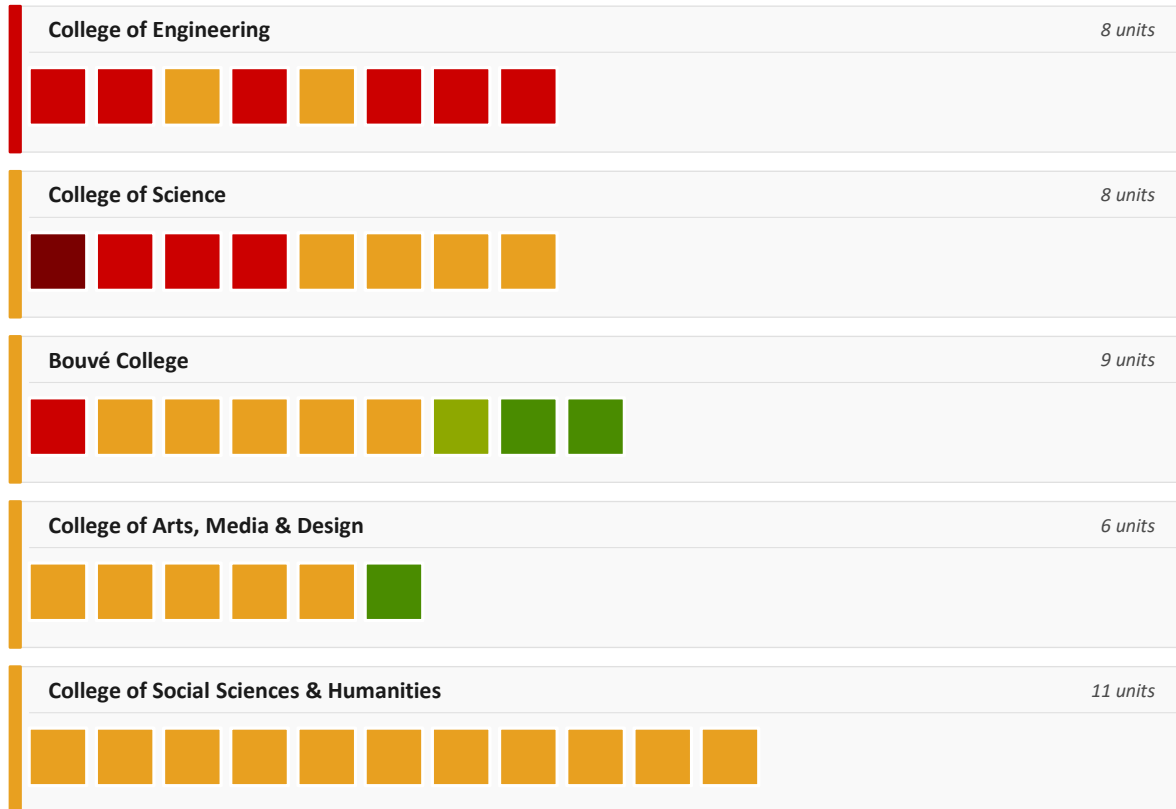
Moderate to Strong



Strong

FTNTTF Flexibility Across Colleges

How much flexibility do policies provide for Full-Time Non-Tenure Track Faculty workload? Each cell = one workload.



FTNTTF Flexibility Level:

■ Very Limited

■ Limited

■ Moderate

■ Moderate to Strong

■ Strong

Charge 2 Recommendations (1/2)

- Each college should update its workload policies to reflect the principles articulated in Resolution 13 and the updated language in the Faculty Handbook regarding faculty participation in workload determination and adjustment.
- Policies should clearly state that workload assignments are determined through a collaborative process between faculty members and the appropriate academic unit leader, as defined by the college's governance structure.
- Policies should explicitly describe mechanisms that allow faculty members, including FTNTTF faculty, to participate in discussions about workload assignments. These mechanisms should include:
 - Collaborative determination of annual workload assignments.
 - Opportunities for discussions regarding workload adjustments.
 - Transparent procedures for resolving disagreements about workload assignments.

Charge 2 Recommendations (2/2)

- Colleges should incorporate language that promotes greater flexibility in workload distribution.
- Policies should allow adjustments that support faculty engagement in research, service, and professional development activities, particularly for FTNTT faculty who often carry heavier teaching loads.
- Policies should clearly identify when workload discussions occur.

Charge 3 Background

- Faculty Senate Resolution #41 was approved by the Office of the Provost on May 5, 2025.
- The resolution calls for a confidential and standardized process for collecting annual faculty feedback on certain academic administrators.
- The process applies to administrators who are not evaluated through the Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee.
- These administrators include senior associate deans, associate deans, unit heads, and other administrators with substantial oversight of faculty.
- The goal of the resolution is to promote transparency, accountability, and consistency in leadership evaluations across colleges.
- The Academic Policy Committee was charged with developing and implementing the process in collaboration with faculty governance bodies in each college.

Charge 3 Methods

- Reviewed the requirements and intent of Faculty Senate Resolution #41 approved by the Office of the Provost.
- Examined existing evaluation practices related to academic administrators across colleges.
- Consulted with faculty governance representatives in each college regarding current evaluation approaches and governance structures.
- Identified the categories of administrators subject to the annual faculty feedback process.
- Developed a standardized framework for collecting confidential faculty feedback across colleges.

Charge 3 Finding 1: Scope of Administrative Roles for Evaluation

- Consistent with the findings of the 2025 Academic Policy Committee report, faculty identified the following administrative roles as having significant influence on faculty work and therefore appropriate for inclusion in an annual administrator evaluation process:
 - Senior Associate Deans of Academic Affairs
 - Senior Associate Deans of Faculty Affairs
 - Associate Deans of Faculty Affairs
 - Senior Associate Deans for Academic Programs
 - Associate Deans of Graduate Programs
 - Associate Deans of Undergraduate Programs
 - Associate Deans of Research and Innovation
 - Associate Deans of Curricular Development
 - Associate Deans of Graduate Education
 - Unit Heads
 - Group Chairs

Charge 3 Finding 2: Administration and Use of Survey Results

- The committee found that faculty administrator evaluations are currently administered at the college level, typically through the Office of the Dean in collaboration with the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs.
- While survey instruments and administration practices vary, faculty responses indicated that results are rarely shared with faculty and are often treated as internal administrative documents.
- This lack of visibility limits faculty understanding of how feedback is used and reduces confidence in the evaluation process.

Charge 3 Recommendations

- Adopt a standardized, confidential annual faculty feedback process for administrative roles with significant oversight of faculty, as identified in Finding 1. The framework should specify core roles subject to evaluation while permitting colleges to map equivalent titles within their local governance structures.
- Exclude Assistant Deans of Academic Affairs from this process unless a college can demonstrate that the role carries independent decision-making authority that directly affects faculty.
- Provide annual evaluation results to the administrator's direct supervisor and share summarized feedback with faculty within the college. Shared results should emphasize aggregate themes and areas for improvement rather than individual responses.
- Engage faculty governance bodies in each college in the review of survey instruments to promote consistency, clarity, and confidence in the evaluation process.
- Use the survey instrument included in the appendix of this report as a baseline for annual administrator evaluations. A well-designed survey captures faculty perspectives on leadership effectiveness, communication practices, decision-making transparency, and support for academic work while offering structured opportunities for written feedback.

Charge 3: Resolution to Establish College-Level Administrator Review Committees for Annual Faculty Feedback (1/3)

- WHEREAS Faculty Senate Resolution #41 (2025), approved by the Office of the Provost, directs the development and implementation of a confidential and standardized annual process for collecting faculty feedback on administrative appointees who are not reviewed through the Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee (AEOC); and
- WHEREAS Resolution #41 requires that this process be administered annually within each college and that evaluation results be shared with the administrator's supervisor and with full-time faculty within the respective college; and
- WHEREAS regular faculty feedback on academic administrators promotes transparency, accountability, and effective shared governance within the university; and
- WHEREAS effective implementation of Resolution #41 requires a clearly defined faculty governance structure at the college level to administer and oversee the evaluation process;

Charge 3: Resolution to Establish College-Level Administrator Review Committees for Annual Faculty Feedback (2/3)

- Be it resolved that each college shall establish a College-Level Administrator Review Committee responsible for administering and overseeing the annual faculty feedback process required under Faculty Senate Resolution #41 for administrators who are not evaluated through the Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee (AEOC);
- Be it further resolved that administrators subject to this process shall include Senior Associate Deans of Academic Affairs, Senior Associate Deans of Faculty Affairs, Associate Deans of Faculty Affairs, Senior Associate Deans for Academic Programs, Associate Deans of Graduate Programs, Associate Deans of Undergraduate Programs, Associate Deans of Research and Innovation, Associate Deans of Curricular Development, Associate Deans of Graduate Education, Unit Heads, and Group Chairs, or equivalent administrative roles whose responsibilities include significant oversight of faculty;
- Be it further resolved that the College-Level Administrator Review Committee shall consist of five to seven full-time faculty members elected by the full-time faculty of the college, according to procedures established by the faculty governance body of the college. Members shall serve staggered two-year terms to maintain continuity. Faculty holding administrative appointments shall be ineligible to serve on the Committee; and

Charge 3: Resolution to Establish College-Level Administrator Review Committees for Annual Faculty Feedback (3/3)

- Be it further resolved that the Committee shall administer an annual confidential survey of full-time faculty within the college to collect feedback regarding the leadership and administrative performance of the administrators subject to this process. The Committee shall use the evaluation instrument recommended in the Academic Policy Committee's 2025–2026 Final Report as the baseline instrument. Colleges may adapt or supplement the instrument to address college-specific governance structures or administrative responsibilities, provided that the core evaluation dimensions remain intact; and
- Be it further resolved that the Committee shall compile the evaluation results in aggregated and anonymized form and prepare a summary report. The report shall be transmitted to the administrator's supervisor and the college dean, shared with the full-time faculty of the college, and provided to the Senate Agenda Committee for institutional awareness and oversight.