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Academic Policy Committee (APC)

2023-2024 Faculty Senate Report

APC Committee Members

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Charges

Charge 1

Review, in conjunction with Academic Technologies and CATLR, new faculty orientation and training related to in-classroom, hybrid, and online technologies.

- See Faculty Senate Survey Spring 2024 Results

Charge 2

Review faculty workload policies developed by units to assess the equitable distribution of workloads across faculty.

- See Office of the Provost Faculty Workload Policies
- See Faculty Senate Survey Spring 2024 Results

Charge 3

Review and obtain clarification of guidelines concerning teaching and service for merit reviews of jointly appointed faculty.

- See Previous Faculty Senate Surveys

2023 Fall Faculty Survey data suggested that most faculty believed hybrid technologies hinder teaching and learning, further analysis in 2024 this was found not to be the case

2024 Spring Faculty Survey

(1) Confirm that faculty were concerned with hybrid technology, not training

(2) Identify the reasons why faculty perceive hybrid classes as less effective than other modalities

(3) Ask faculty which solutions they preferred

1. ***Classes that are either in-person or online are better for teaching and learning than classes taught in hybrid formats (i.e., some students attend in-person while others attend virtually).***
   70.2% of faculty agreed that hybrid classes are less effective than in-person or online classes

2. ***Preferred solutions***
   - 37.1% of faculty would like to select the course teaching modality
   - 22% recommended improved quality or availability of live tech support during class
   - 20.4% recommended improvement of technology, apps or software for hybrid teaching
   - 14% recommended improvements in hybrid teaching training

1. **Difficulty Managing Multiple Teaching Modalities** simultaneously.
2. **Issues with Classroom Technology** disrupts the teaching process and hampers the overall learning experience for students.
3. **Preference for In-Person Interaction** for student engagement and learning.
4. **Skepticism Towards Technological Solutions** due to concerns about the fundamental differences between teaching in-person and online simultaneously.
5. **Need for Faculty Autonomy** to choose the most suitable teaching modality
6. **Call for Improved Support and Resources to include** access to reliable technology, timely technical assistance, and adequate training opportunities.
7. **Schools have varying requirements and purposes for utilizing hybrid technology**. Implementing a single university-wide policy may not be practical or feasible given diverse needs, student and faculty location, and circumstances across different schools.

Charge 1 Recommendation

As most faculty desire a policy that prioritizes student learning and ensures that courses are delivered in a manner that maximizes engagement, comprehension, and retention.

Each department/school/unit should create clear written policies outlining how courses within its unit will be selected for hybrid or online formats. These policies should also define the criteria for determining which faculty members are best equipped to teach these courses effectively. This ensures that faculty members are appropriately matched with the teaching modalities that align with their strengths, ultimately leading to a balanced distribution of courses across online, hybrid, and in-person formats.

To provide recommendations that align with the university's one-faculty model, promoting unity and equal respect among all faculty members, NU Department workload policies were analyzed to identify disparities between departments for FTNTT faculty for:

- clarity in workload distributions

- faculty involvement in establishing workloads and adjustments

- equity and flexibility of these distributions

Clarity in Workload Distributions

Disparities Observed: Workload definition and distributions varies significantly across departments.
Implications: May leave FTNTTF uncertain about their full range of responsibilities, potentially affecting their ability to plan their professional development and balance between teaching, research, and service.

Faculty Involvement in Establishing Their Workloads and Workload Adjustments

Disparities Observed: There is a noticeable variation in how much input FTNTTF have in establishing and adjusting their workloads.
Implications: Clear mechanisms for faculty involvement in workload discussions may inadvertently reduce faculty satisfaction and engagement.

Equity and Flexibility of the Workload Distributions

Disparities Observed: Considerable variation in equity and flexibility in workload distributions across departments.
Implications: Departments with less flexible workload policies risk overburdening FTNTTF with teaching responsibilities, potentially at the expense of their professional development, scholarship, research and service.

1. **Standardize Workload Policy Framework**

2. **Enhance Faculty Involvement**

   - FTNTTF discuss and negotiate their workloads with unit heads

   - Mid-year review of workload for adjustment, if necessary

3. **Increase Flexibility and Equity**

   - University-wide guidelines that promote flexibility in workload distributions

   - Establish minimum and maximum thresholds for each workload component

In addition to our review of unit workload policies, faculty were asked a third question in the Spring 2024 Faculty Senate Survey, "After reviewing your unit's workload policy, are there any edits you would suggest to best reflect current workload not well defined or represented in the policy?"

87 (12%) yes they would edit current policy

439 (61%) no they would not edit current policy

90 (27%) comments were received from 10 colleges and their units.

1. **Address Workload Policy Variability Across the University:** Reassess workload policy template, units review and approve workload policy with faculty annually and that the areas of workload be clearly described.
2. **Faculty Well-Being** & **Promotion**: Work-life balance is difficult as workload exceeds contracted time requiring use of personal time, and may not align with merit and promotion expectations.
3. **Teaching**: Workload percentage may not align with number of classes, credits, size of class, or requirements to prepare for a lab or advise. Three courses/semester leaves little time for significant course innovations and student support needs has increased workload.
4. **Scholarship**: Research may be included in teaching faculty scholarship instead of being recognized in workload as research.
5. **Research:** FTNTT faculty may be expected to conduct research without support or workload and if assigned a research workload, it quickly exceeds 10%. Grant writing is not considered in workload.
6. **Administrative**: Course release be defined.
7. **Service**: Service significantly exceeds assigned workload. Service expectations leave little or no time for scholarship or improving courses.
8. **Joint Appointment**: Faculty wishing to contribute appropriately asked what does it mean to have a 25% appointment in a unit? Workloads with joint appointments need teaching load clarity, and service commitment definitions.

Review the current university workload policy template to capture and clearly describe current areas of faculty contributions to the unit, college and university to provide a baseline for revision of a school's workload policy to be inclusive of current, as well as new workload needs.

That the school and faculty collaborate to annually review and revise the workload policy to reflect current faculty contributions and activities for improved retention and engagement.

Be It Resolved That, the Faculty Senate recommends the following amendments to the Faculty Handbook:

1. Active Participation of Faculty in Their Workload Determination:

- The Faculty Handbook shall be updated to explicitly require that all faculty members, including Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (FTNTTF), actively participate in the determination of their annual workload distribution.
- This participation shall include the opportunity for faculty to discuss and negotiate their workload assignments with department chairs or unit heads, ensuring that workload decisions are made collaboratively.

2. Collaborative Process for Workload Adjustments:

- Any adjustments to a faculty member's workload, whether initial determinations or subsequent modifications, shall be made through a collaborative process involving the faculty member and their unit head.
- The Faculty Handbook shall state clearly that such adjustments are to be discussed and agreed upon with the faculty member before implementation, ensuring mutual agreement and understanding.

Be It Further Resolved That, the Faculty Senate charges the Faculty Handbook Committee (FHC) to promptly implement the proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook and collaborate with the Provost's Office to ensure that all department chairs and unit heads are fully informed and trained on these updated procedures.

Be It Finally Resolved That, this resolution shall be communicated to the university administration and to all department chairs, by the Provost's Office, with the request for immediate action to update the Faculty Handbook in accordance with these recommendations.

- We reviewed and evaluated comments from a previous Faculty Senate surveys concerning interdisciplinary service and merit reviews.

- We reviewed the current policies regarding merit procedures for jointly appointed faculty.

Charge 3 Recommendation

Our recommendation is that there is no need to develop a new policy with respect to merit procedures for jointly appointed faculty. The merit procedure is clear about how merit reviews are conducted.

Chairs and unit heads should be encouraged to work with jointly appointed faculty to better understand how to evaluate research, teaching and service contributions in different units, but it is difficult and probably too inflexible to develop a policy given the vast differences in disciplinary norms across units.

Other APC Activities

TRACE Concern: A faculty member observed that students enrolled in online asynchronous courses confront the challenge of lacking an N/A (Not Applicable) option for certain TRACE survey questions resulting in statistically inaccurate data.

Recommendations to SAC

1. Insert an N/A option for the question "In-class sessions were helpful for learning" located under the "**Learning-Related Questions**" section to make it relevant for students of online, asynchronous courses.
2. Introduce an N/A option for the following questions under the "**Instructor-Related Questions**" section:
   a. "The instructor came to class prepared to teach"
   b. "The instructor used class time effectively"
   c. "The instructor was available to assist students outside of class"

Review of *Draft* Academic Consequences for Violating University Academic Integrity Policy
Review of *Draft* University Graduate Curriculum Committee Bylaws Revision