Faculty Workload Practices, Policies, and Parity (WG3)

Executive Summary: Spring 2024 Progress Update[1]

Faculty contributions in teaching, research, and service provide critical input to the mission and reputation of the university. In addition, faculty perceptions of workload parity can be drivers of important outcomes that impact the future of the institution. This working group's charge is to bring clarity on current faculty workload practices, perceptions, and policies across CU Denver schools and colleges: developing a collective understanding of how faculty workload portfolios fit together, bringing clarity to campus- and system-level policies on faculty workload, and articulating values and principles that should guide faculty workload and identify best practices for workload parity.

Read full charge here.

Key Work Completed

- **Developed five key focus areas:** 1) Guiding Principles and Values; 2) Measuring Faculty Workload; 3) Documenting Campus and System Policies; 4) Understanding Workload Practices by School/College; 5) Gauging Faculty Perceptions of Workload Parity

- **Collected data**: surveys, focus groups, dashboards, and faculty workload documentation

Data Collected

Workload Measurement:

- Data collected through dashboards tracking course load, student credit hours, class sizes, and independent study contributions.
- Variations in workload across schools and by gender/BIPOC identity are being examined.

Research and Creative Activities:

- Preliminary data includes publications, grants, and creative works, but challenges remain in quantifying the effort behind research activities.

Service and Leadership:

- Limited data exists on faculty service, leadership roles, and the time devoted to activities like advising and committee work, making this an area for future focus.

Faculty Perceptions:

- Surveys indicated varying perceptions of workload parity based on job title, rank, and across different colleges. These disparities include compensation, academic freedom, and levels of academic advising responsibilities.

---

[1] This update does not incorporate valuable feedback received in meetings and surveys since August 2024. Prepared Oct. 21, 2024 for Nov. 6 Community Conversations event.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. **Establish Transparent and Clear Faculty Workload Policies:**

   - Workload benchmarks should be well-defined and visible within departments, including instructional, research, and service responsibilities
   - Provide credit and recognition for faculty contributing more effort in specific areas

2. **Increase Accountability and Flexibility:**

   - Ensure that we have the mechanisms and use them to monitor and ensure workload fairness across teaching, research, and service
   - Offer flexibility in workload to account for diverse faculty strengths and demands, ensuring equitable distribution

3. **Improved Data Collection and Reporting:**

   - Expand the use of dashboards to provide comprehensive data on faculty workload, including gender and BIPOC representation
   - Investigate workloads related to advising, course development, and leadership roles to ensure these efforts are adequately recognized

4. **Address Workload Inequities:**

   - Schools and colleges should analyze existing data to identify disparities by job title, gender, and minority status
   - Recommendations must focus on aligning workload expectations across different faculty ranks and tracks (tenure-track, clinical, instructional)

5. **Support Faculty Wellbeing and Burnout Prevention:**

   - Align workload policies with the CU Denver strategic goal of creating a Best Place to Work, emphasizing employee well-being and preventing burnout
   - Align workload expectations with strategic plans and budget allocations and human resource planning

Next Steps and Future Considerations

- Obtain feedback from faculty and other key stakeholders before final submission
- Ongoing data collection and analysis
- Further focus group interviews and dashboard refinement for more comprehensive insights
- Integrate workload fairness into all planning decisions at all levels
- Foster an environment where workload is openly and safely discussed