



Academic Personnel Workload Parity and Class Size Variability

Context

Faculty have a portfolio of duties that include:

- (a) teaching classes that vary across colleges and disciplines by number, enrollment, level, delivery modalities, number of preparations per semester, etc.;
- (b) conducting research and producing creative works, for some ranks;
- (c) and providing service, student advising, and leadership, etc.

Relatedly, course enrollment levels currently vary widely across disciplines and colleges. Taking the needs of our diverse learner population into account, and in recognition of disciplinary differences, this group will consider the following questions:

- What are the fiscal implications of our current workload practices?
- What are the fiscal implications of creating a sustainable workload?
- What can we learn from other institutions of similar type and serving similar student populations about how they approach workload?

Goal

Develop a collective understanding of and relative weighting scheme for how the different components of faculty workload portfolios fit together to be equivalent to those of other colleagues, despite the differences in workload mix and disciplinary contexts. Relatedly, consider how class-size variability factors into workload across the schools and colleges.

Charge

The charge of this working group has a dual focus. First, it will study the class size variability challenge and propose a process for establishing minimal and maximum class sizes based on modality and pedagogic considerations within each broad disciplinary area. Taking into account our institutional goal to become more financially sustainable, it is also expected that the working group's research will include reviewing primary unit criteria across all colleges/schools to appreciate this variability internally, and benchmarking with peer institutions to determine optimality for CU Denver.

Second, the working group will recommend a model for how to achieve parity in the overall faculty workload portfolio, taking into account both our student needs and how best to achieve fiscal sustainability. What minimum number of assigned credit hours should a faculty member be reasonably expected to teach in their workload portfolio mix, for example, alongside other elements (research/creative works, student advising, leadership responsibilities, etc.) in the portfolio? What “weighting scheme” would make sense to apply to different workload components within the portfolio to achieve a measure that allows for relative parity?

Deliverables

A two-part report that discusses class size variability and proposes what would be considered optimal for CU Denver in terms of pedagogic efficiency, on one hand; and, on the other, a mechanism or weighting system to be applied to different components of a workload portfolio to determine equivalency across workloads that contributes to overall fiscal sustainability.

Timeline

April 15, 2024, report due.