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TO: Patricia O'Brien
Dean, CHASS

FROM: Dean's Workgroup on Workload
Steven Gould Axelrod (English), Chair
Michelle Bloom (Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages)
Shaun Bowler (Political Science)
Christine Chiarello (Psychology)
Bob Hanneman (*ex officio*, CHASS)
Carolyn Murray (Ethnic Studies/Psychology)
Erich Reck (Philosophy)
Maurya Simon (Creative Writing)
Jonathan Turner (Sociology)

RE: Report on Workload

Report of the Dean's Workgroup on Workload

I. Preliminary Considerations

The Workload Workgroup has been charged with examining workload issues in CHASS. Specifically we are asked to investigate ladder-faculty course load and course releases across the College. This report provides a statement of general principles rather than a bill of particulars.

Enrollment in the College is rising rapidly, and as a result most students no longer feel that it offers the "personal touch." Ever-larger classes taught by ladder faculty may represent one attempted solution to this problem, but the amount of "personal touch" in such classes is at least debatable. Moreover, Unit-18 lecturers and associates-in often provide instruction that is both personalized and high in quality. Simply increasing the number of students taught by ladder faculty without attention to the full dimension of the class size issue would predictably degrade the quality of instruction across the College. It would also have a negative impact on the research environment. We must be careful not to deliver a long-term injury to pedagogical and research interests because of immediate financial concerns.

We note that the ratio of students per ladder faculty member has been steadily rising in CHASS, whereas it has been stable or even falling in NAS. We also note that faculty in NAS have a generally lower teaching load than do faculty in CHASS, in which the standard load is presently 4/5. The de facto teaching load in the Humanities and Social Sciences at other UC campuses and at the Comparison Eight is 4 (or below). All UC campuses except UCR employ some sort of point system giving teaching credit for directed studies, large classes, dissertation/thesis work, and/or professional courses. Whatever changes we make, we need to make sure that UCR does not become the "poor cousin" of the UC system. In order to become competitive with other UC's in hiring and retention, we need to find a way to arrive at a competitive course load.

It is also important to note that when the legislature computes departmental course load, it gives no credit for uncompensated course releases. Although a fellowship at the UCHRI does not adversely impact a department's mean course load because it is compensated, a course release to serve as Associate Dean, member of CAP, Graduate Advisor, or Director of a Program or Center does indeed adversely impact overall course load. Although we should be cognizant of the legislature's computing method, we must vigorously maintain and promote methods of our own that are rigorously fair to departments that may contribute more than their share to UCR's need for capable administrators. The competence of a department's faculty must not count against it.

II. Teaching Load

To be competitive with other high-quality institutions in research profile, UCR cannot require ladder faculty to teach more than four courses per year. We therefore recommend a 4 course load across the board for all departments in the College. This recommendation is predicated on the assumption that UCR will continue on the quarter system; it would need adjustment if the campus moves to a semester system. We support the elimination of obvious inequities that have emerged within and between departments. No department should be able to negotiate a favorable exception to the College-wide teaching load. We do not favor granting extra credit for very large classes, unless a compelling case is made that they entail additional work (for example, by requiring faculty to teach discussion sections or to grade large numbers of student essays).

The College may need to innovate methods to achieve the goal of a competitive course load. Faculty who routinely supervise students in directed studies (190 and the lower 290 series), professional courses (300 series), and/or dissertation/thesis supervision (upper 290 series) should have the aggregate of such activities counted as one of their courses. That is, the college may need to design a point system permitting appropriate credit for teaching such courses. Using the definition of class size already in place, the aggregate would need to equal 12 lower-division students, 8 upper-division students, or 4 graduate students in order to count as a course. The College might consider factoring in committee chairmanship and other extraordinary service activities as well. It might wish to give some credit for Freshman Discovery Seminars. Other UC campuses already provide this sort of credit. For example, the UCLA English Department grants extra credit for teaching large classes, new classes, classes with TA's, and directed studies, as well as for dissertation supervision (see Appendix). These credits reduce the average course load from the official 5 per year to 4 or, in many case, even fewer. The key to moving UCR in the right direction as a research university is to devise a plan that pegs the standard teaching load for productive faculty members at four courses per year.

III. Course Releases

Course releases are essential to the ability of departments and the University to function properly. Releases based on favoritism or other forms of inequity should be terminated. Nevertheless, in some cases Department chairs in consultation with the Dean may have valid reasons for assigning individual faculty members a course release. For example, it is appropriate to provide a course release for faculty who “buy themselves out” of a course by means of a grant if it brings visibility and includes cost recovery. Moreover, course releases based on legitimate administrative service are justifiable and necessary. To achieve transparency, data on course releases should be reported at the end of each year by the Dean to the faculty. This data should be in aggregate for the College and in detail for each department. But again, an innovative restructuring could reduce the number of formal course releases without diminishing the quality of units. For example, if some form of appropriate credit were granted for teaching English 301, 302, and 303 (professional courses for graduate students), the English Department would reduce the number of course releases for the Director of Composition and the Director of Basic Writing from 2 each to 0. If some form of credit were granted for administering English 280 (a literary colloquium), the Department would reduce the number of course releases for its Chair from 2 to 1. These changes alone would eliminate 5 course releases, reducing the number of departmental releases from a total of 9 to a total of 4.

IV. Conclusion

We hope that these ideas will prove helpful in the decision-making process. In a nutshell, our recommendations are as follows:

- a normal and standard course load of four courses per year
- a redefinition of teaching so that appropriate credit is given to such courses as directed studies, professional courses, and dissertation/thesis supervision
- approval of course releases by both Dean and Chair
- a granting of course release for non-teaching activities only if they bring honor to the college, significant cost recovery of grant overhead, or substantial administrative benefit
- an annual Dean's report to the faculty on all releases from the four-course load

Appendix to Workload Workgroup Report

UCLA DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH TEACHING WORKLOAD POLICY

A normal teaching workload for ladder faculty in the department of English consists of teaching-related activities whose credit-point value over any consecutive three-year period averages 20 teaching credits per year. Of these 20 teaching credits, at least 16 teaching credits per year must be earned through the assignment of four 4- or 5-unit lecture courses and/or seminars. The following teaching-related activities (and their point value) will be recognized in determining each faculty member's total teaching credits for the year:

4- or 5-unit lecture courses = 4 teaching credits

Since all courses in the department have significant writing components attached to their syllabi (requiring significant time of the instructor in meeting individually with students and evaluating their written work), additional points will be given to lecture courses whose enrollments exceed a normal class size of 35 students:

Class size of 36-45 students = 1 extra teaching credit

Class size of 46-55 students = 2 extra teaching credit

Class size of 56-65 students = 3 extra teaching credits

Class size over 66 students = 4 extra teaching credits

Since courses whose enrollments exceed 75 students are usually provided with TAs, class size will not be a factor in assigning teaching credit for those classes. Instead, recognition of the faculty member's additional teaching responsibilities will be based upon the number of TAs assigned to assist the faculty member in the course (since it is assumed that the faculty member will work closely with these apprentice instructors both individually and as a group):

Courses to which 1-2 TAs are assigned = 1 extra teaching credit

Courses to which 3-5 TAs are assigned = 2 extra teaching credits

Courses to which 6-7 TAs are assigned = 3 extra teaching credits

Faculty members teaching large lecture classes who elect to meet in a weekly-scheduled discussion section with students participating in the College Honors Program will earn an additional 1 teaching credit for the course.

In order to encourage and acknowledge the faculty's involvement with students in individual tutorial relationships that involve the faculty member's meeting with a student one hour weekly through the course of a term, 0.5 teaching credit will be given for each of the following courses: 199, 199HB-HC, 375, 596, 597, 598, 599.

Because of the close involvement of several faculty members in graduate students' dissertation research (and for which in the present enrollment process only the director of the dissertation is usually recognized in the student's enrollment record), all members of a dissertation committee will be awarded 0.5 teaching credit during the quarter in which the student passes the Part II examination, and 1.5 teaching credits during the quarter the completed dissertation is filed. Members of Part I examination committees will be awarded 0.5 teaching credit since participation in this exercise requires independent consultation with the student and evaluation of written work in addition to conducting the two-hour oral examination. It will be the responsibility of those faculty who participate in the graduate instruction of students in departments other than English to report to the chairman's office details of their involvement.

Finally, in order to recognize and encourage innovation in fulfilling one's teaching responsibilities, faculty members will be awarded credit for planning and teaching courses for the first time, the number of credits being 1 teaching credit for a seminar and 2 teaching credits for new lecture courses.

Faculty members who fail to maintain an average of 20 teaching credits per year for any consecutive three-year period will be given additional course assignments in order to bring that average up to the minimum level required by the departmental teaching workload policy. In order to guarantee accuracy in departmental records, the chair's office will provide each regular faculty member during the fall quarter a tabulation of his or her teaching credits earned during the previous academic year. This will provide the faculty with an opportunity to report their teaching-related activities in other departments and programs and to designate those course that should be considered according to departmental guidelines as "new" courses.