

Policy on Faculty Course Load Management

Introduction

- This policy is intended to complement the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture (GCA) Annual Faculty Evaluation Criteria (AFEC) document. Exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the dean and documented in writing. Approval by the provost may also be required in certain instances.

Faculty Course Load Management Expectations

- “Courses” discussed in this policy are those considered as organized courses. Organized courses are regularly scheduled classes with multiple students enrolled. The college recognizes that many faculty members also engage in additional instructional activities such as independent study, directed readings, and supervision of research. Some of these additional instructional activities generate credit hours (e.g. supervising students in independent study, honors research, thesis research, and dissertation research) whereas others do not (e.g. serving on graduate student committees or advising student competitions). Although these additional instructional activities have value and constitute part of a faculty member’s total workload per the AFEC and are taken into consideration as part of a faculty member’s annual and promotion evaluations, they cannot and do not replace the obligation to teach organized courses.

All 1.0 FTE regular or non-regular faculty member with a 40% distribution of effort towards teaching are expected to teach 12 credit hours per academic year. Only organized courses may count towards the 12-credit hour minimum. Courses that are “slash-listed”, “cross-listed”, or “co-located” shall be collectively counted as one three credit hour course unless the combined enrollments meet or exceed 30 students in the instance of a lecture/seminar, or 20 students in the instance of a four-to-six credit hour studio.

Each 1.0 FTE regular or non-regular faculty member assigned to undergraduate level lecture courses is expected to teach a minimum total of 76 students each academic year when teaching 12 credit hours. Each 1.0 FTE regular or non-regular faculty member assigned to a combination of undergraduate and/or graduate level lecture and design studio courses equaling no fewer than 12 credit hours is expected to teach a minimum total of 49 students each academic year as an average. Each 1.0 FTE regular or non-regular faculty member assigned to graduate level-only lecture courses is expected to teach a minimum total of 60 students each academic year when teaching 12 credit hours. Course assignments shall ideally align with a faculty member’s expertise, though program and/or college needs take precedent when assignments are set.

Exceptional Conditions

When a set of course assignments made by the director for a 1.0 FTE regular or non-regular faculty member does not meet the terms of the faculty member’s appointment letter, or the course enrollment or load minimum averages above, the director shall have the following options.

1. Adjust the faculty member’s course load or aspects of the course(s) in coordination with the faculty member and Committee A so that the total course enrollment and credit hour load conforms to the policy, or
2. The director themselves shall, with no additional compensation or adjustments to the percentage of teaching, research, and service efforts, take on an additional course or similar in order to offset the faculty member’s reduced course enrollment or load average, or
3. The director, in coordination with the faculty member in consultation with the dean, assigns additional teaching-related service in lieu of added teaching commitments, or

4. Additionally assign one course during the summer session, in consultation with the faculty member and Committee A, so that the annual total course enrollment and credit hour load conforms to the policy.

Adjustments to the program's strategic plan, student recruitment plan, curriculum, or course syllabus shall be made when a repeating pattern exists where a set of course assignments made by the director for a 1.0 FTE regular or non-regular faculty member does not meet the terms of the faculty member's appointment letter, or the course enrollment or load averages set forth in this policy.

Course load reductions may occur on occasion and require special conditions to be met. Special attention to research efforts is the most likely case for a course load reduction. A reduction in course load resulting in fewer than 12 credit hours per academic year is permissible through a course buy-out coordinated between a faculty member and their respective director and dean, or unless specified by contract as part of a faculty member's appointment letter. The value of a course buy-out shall be a per-credit-hour rate of 3.34% of the faculty member's annual salary in addition to the applicable university fringe rate calculated on a per-credit-hour rate basis. There is a maximum of one course reduction per year.

Course overloads may take place in rare instances when the curriculum or college budget conditions dictate said overload. Faculty members who teach an overload above 15 credit hours per year shall receive either supplemental compensation for each course taught above 15 credit hours or a proportionate adjustment in teaching, research, and/or service efforts. In cases when a faculty member is financially compensated for an overload above 15 credit hours, the dollar amount of supplemental compensation for each course taught above 15 credit hours as an overload shall be equivalent to the replacement instruction cost as determined by the dean in a given year in coordination with the directors. A faculty member may not be offered compensated overload course assignments in cases when the director's prior assignments did not fulfill ordinary enrollment expectations.

In the case of a course buy-out, uncompensated course overload, or course release, each three credit hours taught or not taught by a faculty member shall result in a proportionate percentage adjustment to the teaching, research, and/or service efforts. Adjustments in teaching load shall be reflected in the annual evaluation form and consistent with the AFEC document. Course buyouts will be approved only if a suitable replacement instructor can be identified. Individuals buying out courses will not be eligible for compensated summer instruction.

Academic administrators shall annually maintain a six-credit hour minimum course load, while the dean shall maintain a three-credit hour minimum course load. Academic administrators are typically not eligible for overload-related supplemental compensation. Instances may arise when an academic administrator may be eligible for a course release, such as during the semester of a program accreditation visit.

The AFEC process may reveal a pattern of relative research inactivity by a faculty member that may result in a course load increase at the discretion of the dean or director in consultation with Committee A. In such instances, a proportionate percentage adjustment to the teaching, research, and/or service efforts shall be made at that time. Course load calculations may be adjusted for semesters during which a faculty member is on sabbatical. Course load expectations for faculty with less than a 1.0 FTE appointment shall be defined in the appointment letter by the dean in coordination with the director and faculty member.

Cancelled Courses

A course shall not be cancelled unless one or more of the following conditions may be met.

- The course is not required by the curriculum.
- A viable course alternative is available to the students without hindering the students' time to degree completion.
- The course is repeatedly below the enrollment minimums.
- Offering the course every two years is not a viable option.
- A qualified instructor is unavailable.

Recommended average minimum course section enrollment sizes

- Undergraduate lecture/seminar course: 19 students
- Upper division undergraduate or graduate level lecture/seminar course: 15 students
- Cross listed graduate/undergraduate lecture/seminar course: 15 students combined
- Studio course: 15 students (meets regularly under instructor supervision for at least 8 hours per week)
- Summer studio course: 5 students (meets regularly under instructor supervision for at least 15 hours per week)

Note: Course sections do not have a maximum enrollment limit unless one is required or recommended by a program's accrediting entity. Courses officially designated by PACGEO as a general education course have an enrollment limit of approximately 50 for upper division (3000-4000) general education courses. There is no maximum section size for lower division (1000–2000) PACGEO-approved general education courses.

Graduate Liaisons

Divisions, with approval from the dean, may provide one course release per year in lieu of a stipend for faculty members who serve as a Graduate Liaison.

Course Releases for Family-Related Leave

University, State, and Federal policies must be followed in instances of approved family leave or requests defined by FMLA.

References

Faculty Handbook 3.6.1
Faculty Handbook 3.16.1
Faculty Handbook 3.17
Faculty Handbook 3.18
Faculty Handbook 3.20