

[note: This document was produced as a result of a discussion among chairs of Humanities departments in the College of Arts and Sciences in the spring of 2003. This is an internal document and should not be distributed beyond the use of these workshops.]

## **Workload Policy in the Humanities** **June 6, 2003**

Faculty engage in scholarship, teaching, and service, all three activities being part of a faculty member's routine responsibilities. The relative weight given by faculty to each area will differ (even among faculty in the same unit) and may change for a faculty member over the course of a career, as recognized in recent modifications to the *Faculty Code*. The success of our units will depend on achieving a responsible, attractive, and equitable balance of these three activities throughout the department and over a faculty member's career.

By tradition and practice, faculty course loads vary across this campus and most others. This variation reflects in part different pedagogies and instructional needs. In the humanities division at the University of Washington, the typical, or at least "notional," faculty course load is five courses per year, higher than in some other college divisions in part because of a higher percentage of lower-enrollment classes. The annual course load sometimes is adjusted for individual faculty who take on unusually heavy administrative duties or teach unusually large courses, including TA supervision. Occasional other ad-hoc arrangements may also result in a lower than typical course load.

The number of courses taught is only one way to describe one's teaching effort and responsibility. As members of a research institution, faculty are also expected to work intensely with graduate students, setting exams, serving on reading committees, and directing dissertations, and to supervise student internships and research activities. Faculty also provide their department, the campus, and the community with their service. In looking at a faculty member's effort workload is a more fruitful metric than course load.

As an institution, we are committed to teaching the students who enroll at the UW. We cannot, therefore, reduce our aggregate instructional responsibilities, but it is appropriate and timely to rethink how we teach and to ensure that the responsibility for teaching and service are more broadly shared. In other words, a department, recognizing its collective instructional responsibility, may choose to meet it in a different way from current practice. The changes that one might consider to effect a routine change in course load include: larger "gateway" courses, greater use of web-based instruction, more frequent cross-listing of courses, and less frequent offering of lower enrollment courses. While some departments may decide that such changes are not practicable for their range of courses and essential pedagogy, others may choose to reconfigure their teaching along these lines. Changes in course load must also take into account the reduction of teaching staff as a result of recent and anticipated budget cuts. Any formal change in routine course load for a department will require approval by the College.

### **Principles of Individual Faculty Workload**

- Faculty engagement in the collective work of their departments and the university should be equitable.
- Faculty instructional activities has many components (course instruction, graduate supervision, etc.) and these varied activities should be taken into account in calculation of workload. At the same time, this full range of activities falls within normal performance expectations for all tenure-line faculty and only an unusually heavy commitment warrants special consideration.
- Service, while not occupying the same place as teaching and scholarship, also constitutes part of workload, and in some cases may be particularly demanding.
- Continued scholarly activity is expected of all tenure-line faculty. Reduction of scholarly activity or student supervision should lead to a greater commitment in other areas.
- Workload is best calculated at the local level (departments). Some units might choose to have a formula for establishing equitable distribution of workload; others will prefer a less formal arrangement. Factors included in workload calculation might include number of courses, size of course, number of credit hours, course level, course format, and TA assistance *and* supervision. Most importantly, a department needs to arrive at a shared sense of what an equitable distribution of workload is and what a reasonable method of calculating it would be.

### **Requirements for Any Departmental Change in Faculty *Course Load***

- Students cannot be disadvantaged by any change.
- Student access cannot be reduced.
- Quality of instruction must be maintained or improved.
- Changes must make curricular and pedagogical sense.