

From: APAFT Committee

To: Executive Committee

Date: Mar 9, 2011

Re: Report on Charge 2 of the APAFT Committee

Charge 2: Review the new work load model of the College of Science for consistency with WSU and Board of Regents policies.

Synopsis of the COS Workload Model (WLM):

According to the last bullet item in the summary section of the WLM (p. 17), “The ultimate goal of the proposed model is to count all teaching activity in contact hours, with a teaching load of nine contact hours per semester for all faculty actively engaged in research, scholarship, and/or undergraduate research mentoring as specified in the College of Science Tenure Policy.” The overall faculty load will be 12 contact hours per semester, with 9 of those for teaching assignments and the remaining three reassigned for research and scholarship. This load distribution is automatic for new faculty in tenure track positions for the first two years. All other faculty, including tenure track faculty after the first two years, can apply for this workload. The faculty member is to submit an application (details for the application are not specified in the model), be recommended by the department chair or a department committee, and then approved by the dean. Faculty who are not active in research will be assigned 12-15 contact hour loads. Higher loads will be given to faculty who are not “significantly” active in research or service (p. 12).

Discussion: The WLM is incompatible with Regents Policy R485 and WSU PPM 4-6 which set the teaching loads for the university. According to the Utah State Board of Regents Policy R485.4.1.2, the average faculty teaching workload for WSU should be 24 credit hours each year and the average contact hours should be approximately 13 hours per week. In page 7, part D.i of WLM, it is incorrectly stated that the above Regents policy specifically indicates contact hours are to be unit of measure in determining teaching load. The WLM policy of 24 contact hours per year and/or reduction of teaching load of new faculty by 3 credit hours per semester will result in the failure to meet the Regents policy. Also in this section of the WLM, it is stated that PPM 4-6.A diminishes the value of the TCH unit when compared with the course credit for instructional pedagogies such as activity courses, laboratory supervision, directed readings, etc. The policy R485.4.3.2 gives the responsibility of recognizing extra teaching credit hours (above student credit hours) for laboratories, independent study, etc. in an equitable manner to each institution. If the College of Science believes this is not done at WSU in an equitable way, they should refer the matter to the faculty senate for university wide discussion.

The WLM creates inequity between faculty members within COS and across other colleges because some COS faculty members will have reduced teaching loads while working on research for achieving tenure and/or promotion. The committee is aware of at least one such case of inequity for tenure-track faculty in COS; the department which both faculty belong to has not adopted this policy, but one faculty was given the reduced load and the other was not. In addition, higher emphasis on research for new faculty could be detrimental to their teaching development and contribute to failure to achieve tenure or promotion since, in general, a higher ranking for teaching

than research is required for both. This document does not (and cannot) change the criteria for tenure or promotion.

While the WSU mission and Vision 2030 document are used to justify WLM (see page 2 of WLM), there seems to be a contradiction between these documents. The WSU mission statement includes “To accomplish its mission, the university, in partnership with the broader community, engages in research, artistic expression, public service, economic development and community-based learning experiences in an environment that encourages freedom of expression while valuing diversity.” Vision 2030 document includes Teaching Excellence (focus of teaching excellence, expanded recognition and reward for excellence in teaching and undergraduate research) and Research (development of research centers, leadership role in traditional, applied and community-based research and pedagogy research). The first bulletin on page 10 of the WLM states that its goal is to have faculty actively engaged in research scholarship, as defined in the current version of the COS Tenure Policy. The COS Tenure Policy favors research (published in refereed publications) heavily over undergraduate research. Undergraduate research is a major focus of this university. In addition, in pages 14 and 15 of WLM, it is stated that low enrollment courses may be eliminated or offered less often and class sizes in some other, like general education courses, may be increased. Smaller classes, individualized attention, and flexibility to serve the needs of students are hallmarks of a WSU education. Therefore, WLM is in conflict with the WSU mission and Vision 2003 document it quotes as its justification.

We believe that the WLM teaching load redistribution is in conflict with the PPM. On page 12 of the WLM, it is stated that “tenure-track or tenured faculty not actively engaged in research or scholarship as defined in the current version of the COS Tenure Policy will have twelve to fifteen contact-hour teaching load each semester. Greater [sic] contact hours will be given to those faculty who do not participate significantly in research, scholarship, or service activities. ” The COS Tenure Policy sets the criteria for achieving tenure. It is not a document for promotion or post-tenure evaluation. The faculty evaluation is done through peer review, department and college ranking tenure review committees, and periodical reviews. Through these evaluations, faculty are encouraged to meet the mission of the university and failure to meet criteria for tenure and promotion have obvious consequences, including dismissal. Those criteria include teaching and service as well as research and, as stated before, WLM does not (and cannot) change the criteria for tenure or promotion. The PPM does not allow for penalizing faculty by increasing the teaching load if the dean is not satisfied with the research output of the faculty. Moreover, as stated in Vision 2030 document, excellence in teaching should be recognized. Teaching should not be used as a punishment.

The implementation portion of WLM is problematic. It is the general policy of the university that faculty are reviewed by their peers. As mentioned before these include peer review, department and college and ranking tenure review committees and university wide RSPG committee for research, scholarship, and professional growth proposals. The awarding of the reduced teaching load is based on evaluation by the department chair/department committee and the dean. There is no oversight by faculty from other departments within the college. The review for approval of reduction in teaching load must be done by a college wide committee, if this policy is implemented within a college, and by a university wide committee, like RSPG, if as stated in last bullet on page 4 of the WLM, this model is used by other colleges at WSU. RSPG already considers requests for reassigned time in grant proposals.

It should also be mentioned that the university already has policies, with established criteria, for a one-course reduction for tenure-track faculty and a sabbatical of one semester for each three years of teaching after tenure is achieved. A sabbatical leave gives 12 credit hours reduction and which may be more in terms of contact hours, while in the three year time period for sabbatical eligibility, WLM provides a reduction of 18 contact hours and which may be less than 12 credit hours. Even though the bullet item in page 13 of WLM indicates that sabbatical applications will continue to be considered as per existing university policy, it seems a faculty who is denied load reduction under this model would also be less likely to be given a sabbatical leave whereas a faculty who is given load reduction under this model would be more likely to be given a sabbatical leave.

Conclusions: PPM is the faculty contract. The COS WLM is incompatible with both Regents Policy R485 and WSU PPM 4-6 with regard to the method used to determine faculty workload. It is clear that implementation of this policy will result in higher teaching loads for some faculty.

Implementation of the WLM raises fairness issues both within COS and between COS faculty and those of other colleges with regard to such things as ability to achieve tenure and/or promotion, teaching loads, and post-tenure reviews. Another fairness issue is that the process of reviewing applications for a reduced teaching load is not open to scrutiny by the college faculty outside of an applicant's department.

The university community should decide if increased research production is its goal. If the answer is yes, there are many ways to accomplish this goal within the Regents and university policies. Here are some actions that can be taken.

1. Change the formula for recognition of teaching credit hours for laboratories, independent study, etc. in PPM 4-6.
2. Increase the research requirement for achieving tenure or being promoted. Considering that there is an inherent significant difference in the amount of research production in different fields, the policy can simply reflect this fact, rather than having the same standard for all fields.
3. Interchange the required Teaching and Research standards for achieving tenure or being promoted, add additional ranking tracks, or follow the model in COAST in which faculty select ranges of emphases (see 1.2.5.2 of the COAST Promotion, Tenure and Post-Tenure Review Policy).
4. Give more released time through RSPG grants.
5. Give financial incentives for research productivity, say, \$1000 to \$3000 for each published paper, based on its impact.

If the university believes this goal cannot be achieved under existing policy, then it should attempt to bring about a policy change at the Regents level.