

Recommendations of the Faculty Workload Task Force

Submitted on behalf of the ad hoc committee in response to

Strategic Bridge Plan Milestones 19.ii and 20.i

by

Guy Bennett,

Faculty Workload Task Force Co-Chair

4/1/2011

This document was created by G. Bennett with the full participation and input of the Faculty Workload Task Force, as identified within, and in consultation with the R. Lavender, Interim Co-Provost, following consultation with G. Keathley, Interim Provost, who assembled the Task Force in Fall, 2009.

Background

At the request of the Faculty Senate and with support from the Provost's Office, the Faculty Workload Taskforce (FWTF) was formed as a working group of the Academic Assembly in Fall 2009 to study Full-time and Adjunct Faculty workloads and to make recommendations regarding possible faculty workload adjustments. (See Appendix 1 for a list of Task Force members.)

To do so the FWTF adopted the following goals: to research current practices regarding faculty workloads at Otis and at fellow AICAD institutions; to re-examine the role of faculty and faculty needs regarding workloads, and to consider potential new workload models; to identify the basis for possible change and to form recommendations to the College.

The FWTF carried out both internal and external research; a survey was developed and data was collected regarding faculty workloads at comparable AICAD schools via the AICAD Deans list serve, and a survey was conducted at Otis regarding current Full-Time, Adjunct, and Part-Time workloads.

Twelve comparable AICAD schools responded to the external survey regarding NASAD guidelines for service and contact hours. Their responses indicate that faculty workload expectations at Otis are similar to most of the AICAD institutions for studio faculty, but liberal arts load requirements at Otis exceed those of the majority of schools surveyed. (See Appendix 2 for this survey.)

79 Otis faculty members responded to our internal survey (40 full-time, 20 adjunct, and 19 part-time). Their responses reveal that faculty workloads at Otis are inconsistent across departments, and suggest that they are inflated due to outdated service requirements, and are counterproductive with respect to the strategic goals of supporting academic excellence and the sustaining of faculty members' professional/academic endeavors. (See Appendix 3 for this survey.)

Though steps have been taken toward addressing some of these issues in the recent revision of the full-time faculty contract and in certain Strategic Foci and Milestones of the Strategic Bridge Plan, the FWTF recommends that more be done to create equitable and sustainable faculty workloads, as follows:

2010-11 Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for consideration—in part or in whole—as they may provide best options regarding the accompanying statement of issues and concerns:

- *Reduce the total BFA credit/contact-hour requirement from 130 to 120–124 hours.*

Lower total credit/contact hour requirements on the Otis BFA would align with expected recommendations of the Student Workload Task Force, which aims to reduce student workloads in light of student needs. At the same time, the credit/contact hour reduction would greatly off-set costs associated with a Faculty contact-hour load reduction, as recommended below. A reduction in total credit/contact hours required for the BFA degree would also bring Otis in-line with the majority of AICAD schools.

- *An optional 3-hour (or equivalent) course reduction p/semester in support of specific, sustained, and significant professional activity.*

This optional load adjustment would allow select full-time faculty members to devote a greater portion of their time to professional (i.e. non-teaching) activities, such as exhibitions or publications that enhance the reputation of the College. Faculty members who elect this arrangement would agree to and would demonstrate such enhanced professional activity, in accordance with the criteria for Rank and Promotion as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, and as approved and monitored by the Provost's office on an on-going basis.

- *A blanket reduction of 3 contact hours per semester in all cases where FTF studio teach 5 or more courses.*

While somewhat rare, there are full-time studio teaching loads at Otis that include 18 contact hours—comprised of 6 three-hour courses. The FTWF views this circumstance as highly problematic, and inherently inequitable, since the preponderance of 18 hour teaching loads among FTF include at least one—if not several—six-hour studio courses. To manage over 100 students, learn their proclivities, respond to their work—even remember their names—is simply excessive, and should be relieved, as recommended here.

- *Further and more clearly defining of appropriate Service activities.*

Though the recent revision of the full-time faculty contract includes some examples of appropriate service duties, service activity should be further and more clearly *defined* to exclude “pseudo-teaching” activities, such as remedial workshops, tutoring, regularly scheduled independent studies, etc., unless faculty elect to engage in them as their service duty.

Equity Concerns

- Based on its research and findings, the FWTF recommends that work continue in the next academic year (2011-12) with a new body in an effort to better understand the relative workload of studio and Liberal Studies faculty, and to consider

the issue of perceived inequities between them. Additional recommendations may be made by March, 2012, as warranted.

- Finally, the FWTF wishes to acknowledge the uniquely heavy workloads of some Fashion Design faculty, and views that department as one that warrants further attention in this regard. The FWTF has reviewed this issue on several occasions with the Interim Provost Team, who have encouraged the group to acknowledge its views and assured it that further examination of Fashion's unique conditions and attendant needs will be forthcoming through the Provost's Office. The Interim Provost Team, Provost, and/or Vice Provost will work with the Fashion Design Chair to address more deeply full-time faculty workloads in Fashion Design, and aligning them more appropriately with those of other Otis programs while at the same time properly recognizing and providing for the needs of the program.

APPENDICES

1. Faculty Workload Task Force members
2. AICAD-survey spreadsheet
3. Otis Faculty survey
4. Course-load Reduction Cost Analysis