

## **RECOMMENDATION ON FACULTY WORKLOAD AND PRODUCTIVITY**

Submitted to President Warrick Carter by Steven Kapelke in March 2004 and revised in November 2005

### **The National Discourse on Faculty Workload**

The subject of faculty workload and productivity is not an issue restricted to Columbia College Chicago (CCC). For the past two decades, increasing amounts of research have gone to investigating and documenting faculty work “time” and productivity throughout higher education. This research has been produced largely to address two salient issues: First, the increasing demand from external constituencies for accountability within higher education, and in particular in response to a viewpoint that perceives college teaching as a nine-month job with few duties outside the classroom for its practitioners (faculty members) and little or no accountability. Articles authored by Robert Zemsky and William Massy as well as a report produced by the Boyer Commission under the auspices of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching offer two of the more aggressive attacks on higher education practices.

This demand for accountability has triggered the Second issue, which is deep concern within the Academy about the effect on the quality of education students receive, occasioned by increasing responsibilities for full-time faculty members and, often, shrinking resources. Much of the research perceives these as related issues; where public support for higher education decreases, resulting from misapprehensions about what educators do—that is, about how much faculty actually work and what they produce--the impact on post-secondary institutions is often a very practical one. Resources begin to dwindle and educational quality is affected. Beyond this, members of the Academy are concerned that external constituencies do not understand or appreciate the nature, the substance and the extent of work carried on by tenured and tenure-track faculty members—or its importance to the college and the larger academic and civic communities

From the standpoint of the academic membership (the professoriate), a number of well-documented factors have contributed to the currency of the subject and to the proliferation of research on it. Among these are 1) increasing and ever-urgent demands on faculty members to remain current with constantly changing technological innovations, which have a direct impact on the nature of instructional delivery and class preparation; 2) increasing reliance in many institutions on adjunct or part-time faculty members due to shrinking or static budgets and increasing enrollments, which places greater responsibility on smaller numbers of tenure-track and tenured faculty members in student academic advising, curriculum review and development, institutional service and instructional evaluation; 3) ever-increasing diversity within student populations, demanding significantly greater amounts of time spent in the study and practice of instructional delivery. The greater demands on faculty time triggered by such factors as these have not altered the stated positions of most institutions on evaluation or tenure eligibility; the research shows that most institutions that grant tenure still expect their

faculty to be effective teachers, productive scholars or creative professionals and active in service to their institutions, communities and professions. Most faculty and professional educational organizations see the increase of expectations and unchanged tenure or other evaluation standards as counter-positional.

### **The Nature of Faculty Activity**

Typically, tenure-track and tenured faculty members are evaluated and rewarded based on the quality of their activities in three areas: 1) Teaching and teaching-related efforts, such as academic advising; 2) professional activity, such as scholarship or creative endeavor; and 3) service, such as institutional committee work and student recruitment. Some institutions treat these as discrete and mutually exclusive activities, while others see them as integrated, with the ultimate goal the quality of education the college offers. And each college and university has different expectations in these areas. In virtually all cases, however, the quality of effort and product in all three areas is viewed as essential to processes of faculty evaluation.

Much recent research emphasizes the importance of evaluating faculty work as a totality or a “whole,” so that true measures of faculty productivity can be created. The most comprehensive and useful piece of research on the subject is Michael Middaugh’s *Understanding Faculty Productivity: Standards and Benchmarks for Colleges and Universities*. Middaugh’s work cites—among others—the efforts of the Joint Commission on Accountability Reporting (JCAR), a commission constituted in Washington D.C of representatives from several major higher education associations. The formation of JCAR was “a visible and tangible acknowledgement on the part of college and university officials of the need to respond to external constituencies seeking consistent, credible measures of accountability and productivity in higher education.” The commission focused its analyses on four related areas: Placement rates and full-time employment for alumni; persistence (retention) and graduation rates; student charges and costs; and faculty activity. In enumerating these four categories, Middaugh goes on to say that “These four areas are clearly interconnected. Faculty activity is related to persistence and graduation rates and to whether graduates obtain jobs, pass licensure exams, or go on to graduate school.” These categories are measurable and therefore useful in examining faculty productivity at Columbia, but not meant to be exhaustive.

JCAR’s analysis, which Middaugh lays out in some detail in his book, attempts to create a clear definition of each of the three areas of faculty activity and a protocol for measuring this activity. These definitions, which Middaugh takes from the JCAR Faculty Assignment Reporting, are particularly useful in creating a comprehensive framework for the category of teaching and for approaching a standard for what is actually a very complex set of activities. According to the JCAR analysis, teaching is defined in the following way:

Teaching includes the direct delivery of instruction, as well as those activities supporting the teaching-learning process. Examples of direct delivery of instruction are lectures, seminars, directed study, laboratory session, clinical or

student teaching supervision and field-placement supervision. Activities directly supporting teaching include class preparation, evaluation of student work, curriculum development, supervision of graduate student research, including thesis or dissertation, academic and career advising, faculty training and mentoring. Professional development geared to increasing faculty effectiveness in the foregoing areas would also be included.

If we accept this definition as a starting point, it's clear that when we speak of a faculty member's "teaching responsibility," we are engaging discussion of a wide range of activities that include, not only the time a faculty member spends in direct classroom discourse with her/his students, but also such activities as academic advising, class preparation, research and development, writing grant proposals to secure contributed income and exploring instructional technologies. And, equally important, this discussion embraces the direct impact of these activities on such factors as recruitment, persistence and graduation rates, and career placements.

### **Benchmarks**

This is probably one reason that faculty teaching responsibilities vary markedly from one institution to another, depending on, among other things, the nature—or identity--of the institution, available resources, institutional traditions, etc. The standard teaching assignment for a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at Columbia College Chicago is currently 4 classes per semester or 8 per year—often stated as 4/4. Using local and regional institutions as benchmarks, we see that Columbia's faculty members have a greater teaching responsibility than their peers. At Roosevelt University, for example, the teaching responsibility is 6 courses per year, or 3 per semester; at Loyola, Creighton and Bradley Universities, faculty members, who are expected to be professionally active, also teach a 3/3. The teaching responsibility for faculty members at the University of Illinois-Chicago is 2/2. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recommends that, for undergraduate instruction, faculty members teach no more than nine credits (again, loosely translated to a 3/3 course load) per term. Other professional organizations—such as the National Association for Schools of Art and Design--make recommendations based on the specific demands of their discipline. Most would acknowledge that there is no one ideal approach to assigning teaching responsibilities; however, it is rare for institutions of Columbia's size and complexity to define teaching expectations at greater than 3/3. It's not uncommon at larger research institutions to find a 2/2 teaching load (2 classes per semester) or even 2/1. At many institutions, teaching responsibilities—number of assigned classes per semester--vary by department, division or school and, quite often, school deans have the discretion of reducing teaching assignments further. That said, it is more useful to examine and articulate these responsibilities in terms of institutional mission and institutional expectations of faculty, the nature and quality of faculty activities, and the relationship of faculty productivity to institutional outcomes, as Middaugh indicates.

The statistics he cites are revealing. In the National Study of Post-Secondary Faculty (NSOPF) study administered in 1988 and again in 1993, the statistics show that, over a

five-year span, faculty members at all four-year institutions spent increasingly more time in teaching and teaching related activities; this was true in virtually all disciplines. In Fine Arts, for example, the mean number of classroom hours taught by an individual faculty member increased by almost a full hour per week during that period; and the mean number of contact hours spent with students in a given week by seven hours. The study also contradicts the notion that faculty members work less than people in other professions; in 1992 the “mean hours” worked per week for full-time instructional faculty and staff in all disciplines and at all types of post-secondary institutions was 52.5.

However, while Middaugh finds these statistics important, he believes they tell only part of the story because they don’t link faculty time spent on work to institutional goals, which the JCAR study does. Middaugh’s argument is that faculty productivity can only be measured in terms of institutional expectations and outcomes. In other words, “work” becomes productivity when it creates a more effective institution—when evidence of learning outcomes assessment reveals that teaching and learning goals, gauged most comprehensively, are being achieved.

### **The Issue of Faculty Workload at Columbia College Chicago**

According to the “Proposal for the Revision of Workload for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty,” produced by a task force created by the Columbia College Faculty Organization (CCFO) and submitted to Provost Steven Kapelke in January of 2004, the issue of faculty workload was first addressed indirectly by the formation, in 1996, of a CCFO committee to examine the subject. While direct links from the original committee to the existing one are difficult to make because of elapsed time and uneven documentation, it’s clear that the subject of faculty workload has been a part of the institutional discourse since the mid-1990s. The January 04 proposal provides a summary of this discourse, a review of CCC faculty responsibilities as articulated in the Statement on Academic Freedom, Faculty Status, Tenure and Due Process (The Tenure Statement), a brief review of pertinent documentation on the subject of faculty workload and, finally, a recommendation that tenure-track and tenured faculty teaching responsibilities be reduced to 9 credits (three classes) per term from its current 12 credits (four classes) per term.

An examination of the current faculty workload—as represented in the “total” expectation of faculty—reveals that the challenges facing faculty and academic administrators at other institutions of higher education are also present at CCC. These include the incorporation of sophisticated technology into curricula and instructional delivery, the presence of a fast-growing and diverse student population, and an increasing reliance on part-time faculty. In addition, full-time faculty members in many departments at the college take on managerial responsibilities as well, due to a thinness of academic support staff throughout the institution. In most cases faculty members are granted “release” time or awarded stipends for taking on these responsibilities; frequently, however, the release time and/or stipend often fail to account adequately for the amount of time actually spent at these tasks, forcing a further imbalance in the distribution of faculty work time.

To design faculty workload fairly is to do so in terms of institutional expectations—and then to measure that design against the reality. At Columbia these expectations are articulated in the Tenure Statement, which identifies the three categories by which faculty members will be evaluated and provides descriptions of the evaluation standards for each. For example, in the area of Teaching and Curriculum Development, “excellence” is the standard; in Creative Endeavor and Scholarship, “professional distinction”; and in College and Community Service “service that rises significantly above the level of general expectation.” And, while Teaching is given priority in this taxonomy, faculty members are expected to meet performance standards in all three categories to achieve and maintain tenure. These categories and the way they are explicated are generally consistent with the JCAR definitions. Given the expectations of CCC tenure-track and tenured faculty, the next logical question is whether institutional expectations and institutional policies and practices guiding faculty workload are consistent with each other. It is clear that the college expects its faculty to be excellent teachers, professionals of distinction and individuals who “serve” at a high level; and, perhaps most important, in so doing, the college implies strongly that its institutional objectives are best met when its faculty meets the established standards in these categories. At the same time, however, the college’s policies and practices work against faculty members achieving these goals. This doesn’t mean that the college is insensitive to faculty issues. However, with the implementation of a tenure system and a more clearly articulated, and more rigorously applied, set of expectations for its faculty, the college must be prepared also to establish workload standards that actively support its faculty reaching expected performance levels—in other words, to help the faculty become more productive.

### **Faculty Productivity**

Without a more consistent approach to faculty workload—that is, workload linked to institutional expectations—it is also difficult for the college to gauge or evaluate faculty productivity. We can make the claim that “Columbia College faculty work too much,” but we have no real indication of what the institution gains or loses from this overload. As indicated earlier in this report, Middaugh’s work links faculty activity with the quality of the student experience and institutional goals, as evidenced in such factors as persistence and graduation rates, employment opportunities, etc. Clearly the importance of the faculty as a cadre of academic and career advisors, for example, is made manifest in these areas. Yet, given the current faculty workload and the too few numbers of tenure-track and tenured faculty, we can infer that the quality of academic advising carried out by the faculty is uneven. In fact, the ratios of full-time faculty to student and full-time staff to student in many instructional areas at CCC exceed regional and national norms by significant numbers, in some departments dangerously so. (The most extreme example is in Arts, Entertainment and Media Management, with a student-faculty ratio of about 90:1; however, many departments exceed 50:1. Best practices suggest a ratio of no higher than 30:1) Given these ratios, we can infer equally that this circumstance “costs” the institution—in educational quality, retention and graduation rates, and student satisfaction. This is no criticism of the faculty, merely an observation on a set of circumstances. Since Columbia is an open admissions college, with a diverse student

population, many who enter the college with poor academic preparation, faculty advising takes on yet greater importance. (Middaugh correctly states that "...student-faculty ratio [does] not measure performance." However, he goes on to say that "[These ratios] are important indicators that help to suggest whether there is an environment conducive to learning...")

There seems to be implicit in current CCC practices the assumption that "more" teaching (i.e. time in the classroom) is more effective teaching; this ignores both the research and the fundamental definition of teaching, which goes well beyond direct classroom contact. Hence, given the array of responsibilities college faculty assume, the working premise should be exactly the opposite: that quality in-class, in studio, in laboratory teaching relies on time for preparation, time to assess learning outcomes and adjust teaching and learning accordingly, time to evaluate, time to review and develop curricula, etc., and that students are served best by a faculty that has this time to devote to one of its primary activities. If this is true, then faculty members are more productive teachers when the relationship of these activities to College objectives is acknowledged.

Further, the college makes the claim, implicit in its mission statement and explicit in many of its recruitment publications, that CCC students are taught by working professionals; and, given the standards memorialized in the Tenure Statement, it is clear that the college expects its tenure-track and tenured faculty to be just that. It's equally clear that the college links faculty activity in the three aforementioned areas to its mission and purposes. If we take the Tenure Statement at face value and apply the standard of "distinction" to faculty activities in Scholarship and Creative Endeavor, we must conclude that the amount of time that any faculty member allots to this work is affected by the number of hours she/he spends in teaching and service—and, further, that the quality of performance in this area is affected yet again by the fact that CCC has held its faculty members to a 10-month academic contract, in a field where the norm is 9. While it isn't the intent of this report to question or contest the appropriateness of the current teaching responsibility or length of contract in their historical contexts, these facts suggest strongly the necessity of moving beyond them.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that, for the purposes of increasing faculty productivity and, consequently a more effective institution, the teaching responsibility for tenure-track and tenured faculty at Columbia College Chicago be reduced to three courses (9 hours) per semester, or 6 courses for the academic year beginning in the 2006-07 academic year, with complete implementation no later than the 2007-08 academic year.

### **Goals for the Teaching Load Adjustment**

The proposed adjustment to the teaching load will enable the College to reach specific goals outlined in Columbia 2010:

#### **In the Category of Learning:**

- [To] Develop a faculty and staff that advance student-centered arts and media education;
- [To] Develop a faculty and staff that advance arts and media practice

#### **In the Category of Enrollment:**

- Increases in enrollment, retention and graduation rates
- Broader distribution of enrollments across the curriculum
- Development of academic programs and initiatives serving new markets
- Development of new teaching/learning pedagogies and delivery formats

These goals will be met because the adjustment will enable the faculty to assume greater responsibility in such areas as these:

- Assessment leadership
- Academic Advising
- The evaluation of teaching
- Student orientation and registration
- Effective use of new teaching/learning technologies
- Pursuit of professional development opportunities
- Pursuit of external funding opportunities

In addition, the teaching load adjustment will enable the College to compete more readily with other institutions in hiring and retaining highly qualified new faculty members and in retaining the best faculty currently employed at the College. In this regard, Columbia currently operates at a significant competitive disadvantage. In a number of instances recently, “first choice” faculty candidates have rejected offers from Columbia due to teaching responsibilities that are out of line with other, similar institutions.

### **Implementation**

Because of the costs associated with the reduction of teaching loads for tenure-track and tenured faculty, it is useful to consider two different options for implementation. These costs would derive largely from replacing these teaching assignments with part-time faculty members.

The College’s senior administration strongly supports the Provost’s plan to implement the teaching load adjustment in two stages—over two academic years. The two stage option would enable the institution to spread the initial costs over a two year period. This is how it will work over a two-year span: During the 06-07 academic year, faculty teaching loads will be reduced to a 3/4 system; the second stage of the implementation will take place in 2007-08, when the reduction would be completed by moving to 3/3. The Teaching Load Adjustment is included in the Strategic Objectives of the College’s

FY07 budget and included as well in each year of the five-year budget projections. The working assumption in this budget is that the teaching load adjustment will take place over two years. The first year will cost \$900,000; the second year \$2,000,000. The costs will then increase in small increments in each year thereafter, depending largely on the size of part-time faculty salary increases.

The implementation of a standard 3/3 teaching responsibility for tenure-track and tenured faculty will be accompanied by other efforts. These activities will enable the college to reduce somewhat the financial impact of the teaching load reduction, fairly evaluate faculty activity and productivity, and standardize practices in a number of key areas. First, the academic administration, working with faculty representatives, has completed a review and revision of its policies regarding consistent, college-wide standards for the awarding of release time and stipends. Also, the faculty and the academic administration, working together, will create rigorous and reliable methods for the evaluation of teaching and the teaching-related activities described earlier in this document. And finally, the faculty and academic administration, working together, has created and documented a standard for faculty responsibilities.

#### **What the College Gains from the Teaching Load Adjustment**

Columbia College Chicago benefits significantly through the implementation of the teaching load adjustment. In addition to providing clear support for its faculty, the College will derive measurable gains through the following:

- Greater visibility for the College through an increase in faculty creative and scholarly activity;
- More effective teaching, enabled by additional time for class preparation, inclusion of new teaching/learning technologies and stronger evaluation methods;
- Greater involvement in areas directly affecting student recruitment and retention including student academic advising;
- Greater involvement by the faculty in recruitment of students who are “good fits” for the College;
- The standardization of release time and stipend policies, which will result in financial savings;
- More opportunities for faculty members to pursue external funding opportunities related to their scholarly or creative work;
- Competitiveness in recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty members.

## **Summary**

The research on faculty workload and productivity indicates clearly that the College will be doing the right thing by supporting the recommendation on the teaching load adjustment, both in enabling a more productive faculty and by aligning the College's standards with "best practices" and the teaching expectation standards set by like institutions. This report has outlined the benefits to the College.

In regard to two key constituents, the teaching load adjustment will provide significant benefits to students and faculty alike—for students, improving the effectiveness of classroom instruction, student academic advising, career counseling and graduate school preparation. Faculty members will benefit from a more evenly distributed workload, which will enable them to serve students better, more readily reach professional goals in creative and scholarly endeavor and continue to provide excellent service to the College and their professional and civic communities.

By approving this recommendation, we make a clear statement of support for one of our primary constituencies—Columbia College Chicago's full-time faculty—and, in so doing, in support of the goals set forth in Columbia 2010 and the College's educational mission.