

# Teaching Assignment Process

(‘Workplan Proposal’ – FC Approved 4/27/06)

**Preamble:** *Formulation and effective delivery of a curriculum consistent with advancement of academic disciplinary goals is a fundamental prerogative and responsibility of each department and school in the university. Procedures for assigning teaching and other academic duties must take this as a guiding principle, and they must be devised in a rational, equitable and transparent manner that represents a consensus of faculty members in a school or department.*

The Teaching Assignment Process (TAP) described herein is meant to apply to all tenured and tenure-track members of the university instructional staff, with certain exceptions as noted below. Normal procedures involving cooperation between the faculty and administration will be followed in its development, adoption and ultimate inclusion in the Faculty Handbook. It is understood that this is a document that shall evolve over time, with necessary timely modifications and appropriate improvements being appended through the usual processes of faculty/administration collaboration. It is expected that budgets shall be distributed among the colleges, schools and departments in a manner that facilitates effective application of the TAP, and appropriately rewards those units that meet or exceed the associated projections.

## 1 Guiding Principles

The TAP has been developed to address the following principles, most of which are fundamental to the university mission in research, scholarship, technology development, teaching and service, and essential to the attainment of university goals:

- 1.1 Every effort must be made to assign teaching duties in a transparent, rational and fair manner that maximizes the productivity of the faculty in concert with the university mission and goals. This productivity relates primarily to research and scholarship, and other creative activities as gauged by scholarly publications and lectures, research grants, and mentoring of Ph.D. students, and the development of intellectual property. In the matter of grants, where the teaching assignment criteria may be based upon funding levels, it should be understood that the investigators should make every effort to obtain funded release time, where possible. The teaching assignment criteria are likely - due to the diversity of disciplinary goals and measures of success – to vary from department to department, and college to college, but a reasonable degree of uniformity must be achieved.
- 1.2 The teaching duties of active researchers and scholars should ideally be no more than three to four courses per academic year to insure parity with our colleagues at other leading research universities, so that our faculty will not be placed at a disadvantage when it comes to scholarly productivity and competition for research funding. It should be noted that the envisaged course assignment goals of the TAP more than meet the normative maximum teaching assignment of nine contact hours per semester stipulated in the December 1993 memorandum of understanding between the university and the Professional Staff Association.
- 1.3 There are a variety of administrative positions (with detailed job responsibility descriptions) such as chair, associate chair, and program director, which have concomitant teaching reductions.

- 1.4 Negotiated teaching reductions for exceptional service activities such as six (three) hours per year for chairing (serving on) the Institute Promotion and Tenure Committee and three hours per year for chairing the Faculty Council, will continue to be observed.
- 1.5 Certain teaching activities such as exceptional efforts in innovative course and program development, and additional service related activities such as extraordinary recruiting commitments might also warrant a reduction in teaching.
- 1.6 Assistant professors will teach only two courses per year for their first two years in order to improve their chances of quickly establishing their research credentials (a course here and in the sequel nominally equates to three contact hours). New untenured (tenure-track) associate professors will teach a maximum of three courses per year for their first two years, so as to enhance their efforts in research. Newly hired untenured (tenure-track) full professors will teach no more than three courses during their first year in order to help them establish their research activities here. Except for these special cases, all faculty members shall have their teaching assignments determined by the TAP.

## 2 Process Goals

In accord with the guiding principles, the TAP shall be designed to achieve the following goals:

- 2.1 Create an intelligent, equitable, clear and effective process, called the TAP, for assigning teaching duties. The TAP will be open and accessible to all involved, and will be designed to accomplish the following: (a) Maximize the time provided for faculty members - who are most deserving based on past performance and projected activities - to be productive in creative and innovative activities in research, scholarship, intellectual property development, and teaching, subject to the constraint of an acceptable level of teaching responsibilities. (b) Minimize invidious comparisons with regard to teaching hours among faculty by designing and applying a fair, appropriate and widely disseminated set of criteria for assigning teaching duties. (c) Achieve an average teaching load of three courses per academic year for faculty across the university.
- 2.2 Develop, as a key element of the TAP, a well-articulated, rational, and relevant set of standards, called Teaching Assignment Criteria (TAC), for assigning teaching responsibilities for all faculty members. These TAC, which may naturally vary from department to department and college to college, shall be principally based on research and scholarship as manifested by publications in archival journals, scholarly books, research grants, invited lectures, design achievements, and mentoring graduate students, and technological innovation in the form of creation of intellectual property, but they should be broad enough to weigh administrative duties and exceptional service, and flexible enough to include innovative activities in areas such as teaching that require large investments of time and are deemed important to the university mission.
- 2.3 Produce, as another component of the TAP, an Anticipated Professional Activities (APA) form for faculty members. The APA form shall be a single online form appended to the Annual Summary form on which individual faculty members will briefly describe their plans for the forthcoming academic year in the following areas: (i) Research/Scholarship - with regard to research grants submitted (including details concerning the funding agency, title, PI/Co-PI information, dollar amount, and attributable percentage of the project, where possible) journal and proceedings papers to be submitted, scholarly books written, and lectures to be given. (ii) Technological Innovations - such as creation of intellectual property in the form of patents

obtained and pending. (iii) Teaching – including course and curriculum development, and innovations in pedagogy. (iv) Service – professional activities such as chairing an editorial board, offices held in professional societies, and organization of conferences; and institutional service of an exceptional nature including chairing the Faculty Council, chairing (serving) on the Institute P&T Committee, extraordinary recruiting activities, and the like. It is recommended in this regard that service on the Faculty Council also be considered exceptional to the extent of a one contact hour reduction per year of service. This may help encourage more dedicated participation on the Faculty Council. (v) Administration – including formal duties in a position requiring a letter of appointment

### **3 Process Development Details**

In order to insure that the TAP adheres to the aforementioned guiding principles and is capable of achieving the goals listed above, it is essential that its development and implementation take place in an atmosphere of extensive faculty and administration interaction. In short, the issues of clarity, fairness, and appropriateness of the TAP can only be successfully addressed through broad and open cooperation among the faculty and administration. To this end, the development of the TAP should proceed as follows

- 3.1 Each department/college/school develops a draft TAC via a process that includes significant faculty feedback. These TACs must clearly - and as unequivocally as possible - delineate the criteria for assigning teaching duties based primarily on the measures of success in scholarship and research, and technology development relevant to the particular discipline, but they should be flexible enough to include innovative activities of a nonstandard nature in such areas as pedagogy and exceptional service.
- 3.2 Upon receiving the proposed TACs for a college or school, the dean recommends whatever revisions are deemed necessary to achieve the desired levels of transparency, specificity, and relevance for these TACs, while maintaining an acceptable level of uniformity even in colleges embracing a diversity of disciplines.
- 3.3 Once the deans are satisfied that their proposed TACs satisfy the guiding principles, and are in accord with the strategic goals of their colleges/schools, they will meet as a group with the Provost and President to determine what modifications, if necessary, should be made to conform to the university mission and strategic plans, and also achieve a suitable degree of uniformity for the whole faculty.
- 3.4 After approval and modification at the stages 3.1-3.3, the TACs should be presented to the full faculty of each college or school for approval. Upon acceptance at the college/school level, these TACs should be posted on the university website, and possibly included in an appendix of the Faculty Handbook.
- 3.5 The APA is to be developed by the faculty and administration along the lines of the experimental version introduced by the Provost this fall, and this will be added to the Annual Summary form that is filled out by all faculty members at the beginning of each fall semester. Unlike the Annual Summary as a whole, the APA part will be open for updating until just before the classes are assigned for the next academic year, early in the spring semester.
- 3.6 A university website will be created (and continually maintained) that contains all the TACs, and annual summaries and teaching assignments of all full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty.

## 4 Process Implementation Details

After the development details as described in Section 3 are worked out, and the full TAP has been approved by the faculty, administration and Board of Trustees, it should be added to the Handbook. The process will be implemented as follows:

- 4.1 Early in every fall semester, each faculty member shall complete an online Annual Summary form, which includes an APA form. The online forms shall be designed so that the APAs can be updated until early in the spring semester just prior to the course teaching assignments for the next academic year. It will be the responsibility of the Deans, with oversight by the Provost, to see that all this information is uniformly and accurately posted.
- 4.2 Early each spring semester, Department Chairs (or Deans in the cases of NJSOA and SOM) shall make tentative teaching assignments for the forthcoming academic year (at least with regard to the number of courses to be taught) for each department (school) faculty member based on the Annual Summary with the APA, and in strict accord with the appropriate TAC. If the TACs are well designed, these teaching assignments should be almost automatic. However, if a faculty member disagrees with the assignment, the Chair (Dean) must meet with said member to discuss the case. If the faculty member is still not satisfied, a small subcommittee (the TAP subcommittee) of two to three members of department (school) promotion and tenure committee shall be selected to hear the case, and then make recommendations to the Chair (Dean). In the event that the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the faculty member at this stage, the options of appealing to Dean (Provost) and then the Provost are still available.
- 4.3 Once the teaching assignments for the next academic year are made at the department (school) level, the Deans (except in the case of NJSOA and SOA) must check to see that the process has been properly and fairly administered for all faculty members in their college, and must see to it that these assignments are posted online along with the Annual Summaries (including the APAs).
- 4.4 After the process has been completed for each college and school (around the middle of the spring semester), it is the responsibility of the Provost to meet with the Deans to verify that the TAP has been properly applied for all faculty members, and in cases where it has not, to make the appropriate adjustments. Finally, the Provost shall make sure that there is a posting online of all the relevant materials (Annual Summary + APA, and teaching assignment for the next academic year) for all university faculty members covered by the TAP, which is readily accessible to all tenured and tenure-track faculty and academic administrators.

\* The Faculty Council and the Provost will work together to develop a timeline for implementation of this plan. It is expected that a schedule will be developed to have everything set up by the beginning of the spring 2007 semester so that it is in place when the teaching assignments for the succeeding semester assignments are normally made.