Ohio State Mansfield Tenure-Track Faculty Workload Policy

PREAMBLE:
This policy is based on three guiding principles: active scholarship, strong TIU linkages, and flexibility. First, as a regional campus of The Ohio State University, the Mansfield Campus has a primary mission of providing high quality undergraduate instruction to students. Such quality can be assured only if the majority of instruction is carried out by University faculty who are actively engaged in scholarly research. There is no substitute for the palpable link between the classroom and faculty research. Second, having close ties between Mansfield and Columbus faculty is an essential element of the One University ideal. Therefore, Mansfield Campus faculty are encouraged to develop and maintain strong relationships with their respective departments (throughout the tenure and promotion process and beyond), and those relationships require that faculty members have a consistent record of high quality research, despite the heavier teaching demands of a regional campus. Third, we recognize and value the fact that faculty may wish to emphasize teaching, scholarship, and/or service at various points in their careers. A workload policy must accommodate these variations in emphasis.

GOALS:
The above principles underlie a workload policy that facilitates ongoing faculty research and recognizes the diverse types of research and other activities conducted by Mansfield Campus faculty. Transition to a semester system changes the opportunities for scheduling long blocks of research time previously afforded by the quarter system (e.g., by stacking courses to create larger blocks of uninterrupted research time). This proposal offers possibilities for thinking about teaching load more creatively and flexibly. With acknowledgment that budgetary constraints can and should curtail the number of available course releases in a given year, the use of 50 total course releases (i.e., the combination of all release categories) is set as the goal for the OSU-Mansfield campus. This document is a pathway toward that goal, which is founded on a review of historical data in combination with the chosen ideal of the Mansfield campus containing 50 research active faculty members who can earn at least one course release for teaching, research, and/or service contributions. This document will be evaluated each year for the first two years under semesters to ensure that the process of distributing reductions is working. Similarly, the determination of how many releases are available will be based on budgetary considerations and will be reviewed yearly (see below).

POLICY DETAILS:
1. The Regional Deans consulted with the Office of Academic Affairs on the quarter to semester translation of teaching loads. As a result, the Regional Deans determined that the baseline teaching load for tenure-track faculty on the semester calendar would be approximately 18-21 credits per year. Thus, if all of a faculty member’s courses are 5 credits, then his or her baseline typically will start at 4 courses. If a faculty member’s courses are all 4 credits then his or her baseline will start at 5 courses. If a faculty member’s courses are all 3 credits then his or her baseline will start at 6 courses. Other faculty may have other combinations and need to work with their program coordinators and/or the Associate Dean to come up with a combination that
will satisfy the baseline teaching load and also ensure that programmatic needs are met. For example, faculty whose courses are a combination of both 4 and 5 credits might teach three 5-credit courses and one 4-credit course for 19 credits per year.

Courses with labs carry more credits than typical classes (i.e., 4 or 5 credits rather than 3). Faculty teaching a lecture with one lab section (capped at 25) will get credit for one course, but faculty teaching a lecture with two lab sections may get credit for two courses (either 8 or 10 credits) if each lab section is capped at 25. This applies to both tenure-track and auxiliary faculty. Finally, faculty teaching the lecture but not the lab portion or vice versa will only receive partial credit for that course toward their workload. Lab or studio preparations will count as some credits toward a faculty load, depending on the time/effort involved (to be worked out with the program coordinator and Associate Dean).

2. BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS: In any given year, the Dean and Associate Dean will consult with the Mansfield campus Senior Fiscal Officer to determine a working estimate of available course releases based on budgetary considerations. The number of administrative course releases is subtracted from the total number of available course releases to determine the number of releases to be made available for Professional Development Committee (PDC)-recommended leaves and absences (see below). The Dean will then make this initial number of releases available for the upcoming year known to the faculty and the PDC, along with a list of approved administrative releases for that coming year. However, this number is to be treated as an estimate. As soon as better estimates are available throughout the year (e.g., when budget decisions occur in July and also midway through the first term, based on enrollments), the Dean and Associate Dean may need to revise this number either up or down accordingly. Because enrollment figures play a significant role in budget estimates, and because these numbers are not known in advance, a general rule of thumb will be applied such that more administrative releases will occur during Autumn Semester and more scholarship and teaching releases will occur during Spring Semester. As a result, the PDC may have to issue multiple calls for applications.

In summary, budgets vary from year to year, and therefore, the number of course reductions available each year also will vary. Each year the Dean will work with the Senior Fiscal Officer and the Faculty Budget and Compensation Committee to estimate the maximum number of reductions that the campus can award in a given year. The Dean will apply the prioritization scheme noted above, granting all course reductions to probationary faculty first, all administrative reductions next, and so on. Except in extraordinary budget emergencies, as determined by the Dean and the Senior Fiscal Officer, all probationary reductions and SAs and FPLs awarded in the previous year shall be honored.

3. COURSE REDUCTIONS: There will be three categories of course reductions for tenure-track faculty from the above baseline: 1) reductions for probationary faculty; 2) administrative reductions; and 3) Professional Development Committee-recommended reductions. In cases of severe budget restrictions, the below represents the priority ranking of these categories of reductions.

   a) PROBATIONARY REDUCTIONS: In keeping with current practices, probationary tenure-track faculty will be automatically granted a total of two course releases from their teaching load in their first 5 years. Assuming programmatic needs are covered, the two-course reduction shall be taken regardless of typical credit hours of courses taught by
that faculty member. Faculty will work with administration and program coordinators to determine which courses they will be released from and when they will use those releases. Historical data indicates that approximately 4 probationary releases are distributed on average per year. Probationary faculty members also are encouraged to apply for an SA sometime before they go up for their sixth year review.

b) ADMINISTRATIVE REDUCTIONS: Because of the extraordinary amount of work in carrying out these administrative duties, the Program Coordinators of English, History, Psychology, Education, the Faculty President, and the Art Studio Coordinator should receive a course reduction per year. The Writing Program Administrator and Art Gallery Coordinator should receive one course reduction per semester, for a total of two each academic year. Finally, the Honors Director may negotiate a course reduction or other compensation with the Dean. In the unlikely case that the budget requires any of these be cut, then a staff member must be hired to assume these responsibilities unless financial exigency demands more drastic reductions in workforce. Historical data indicates that approximately 10 administrative reductions are distributed on average per year.

c) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (PDC) RECOMMENDED LEAVES AND COURSE REDUCTIONS: Beginning in 2013, the membership of the PDC will be mostly associate and full professors with at least one assistant professor. To the extent possible, these faculty will be representative of all fields at OSU-M (e.g., humanities, SBS, math and science, education etc).

The Dean will inform the PDC of the approximate number of reductions it will have to work with in a given year (see “Budget Considerations” above). The PDC will determine its own application process and deadline schedule that includes the possibility of a second round of considerations should the budget allow more reductions than initially planned. Faculty members only need to submit one application per year. If more releases become available, then faculty members who were initially turned down may resubmit their original applications.

Once applications have been submitted, the PDC will rank applications within and between each category of course reductions. The Dean will be actively involved with the PDC during the deliberation process. Once the PDC has officially recommended their priority rankings of applications, the Dean will make his/her final decisions based on budgetary considerations and the merits of individual applications. If the Dean deviates from the PDC recommendations, s/he will provide the PDC with an explanation, and will be available to meet with the PDC to consult on these matters. In some cases, based on the budget and number of qualified applicants, the Dean may approve an individual’s request but at a lower number of releases than originally requested (e.g., 2 course releases requested but only 1 granted).

i) Special Assignments (SAs) can be requested by tenure-track faculty for release from one semester (1 to 3 courses depending on the faculty member’s course load). Special assignments can be not only for scholarship, but also for unusual service commitments, outreach, or professional development. Faculty with SAs,
per University rules, are still responsible for service unless their research takes them outside of Ohio.

ii) Pursuant to University policy, Faculty Professional Leaves (FPLs) can be requested by tenured faculty once every seven years. FPLs can be used for research, outreach or professional development opportunities (www.oaa.osu.edu/assets/files/documents/facultyprofessional leave.pdf). One semester FPLs (2 to 3 courses, depending on the faculty member’s course load) are at full pay; 2 semesters at two-thirds pay. While on FPL, faculty members are not responsible for service.

iii) Faculty may apply for one or more Course Reductions for scholarship, major outreach opportunities, major service obligations to the profession (e.g. journal editorship, officer of a national scholarly association), or teaching. Teaching reductions include faculty who have routinely taught more than 18 credits per term (accumulating “banked credit hours”), faculty whose entire load of courses consistently contain dramatically high student enrollments (defined as an enrollment that is at least 50% greater than the campus average), or for faculty who have supervised substantial non-compensated credits for independent-studies, research hours, honors thesis supervision, and other similar kinds of instruction (substantial defined as at least 24 undergraduate credit hours or 12 graduate credit hours (4 x 3 credits)).

4. COMBINATION OF REDUCTIONS IN ONE YEAR: It is possible for tenure-track faculty to have multiple types of course reductions. However, in no case shall a tenure-track faculty member teach fewer than 9 credit hours per year, unless those faculty members experience one or more of the following: 1) an FPL; 2) course-release money earned through a grant; and/or 3) Family Medical Leave. In all cases, combinations of course reductions will be authorized by the Dean/Director on a year-by-year as well as case-by-case basis, will be sensitive to equity issues in terms of the distribution of course reductions across academic programs, and will involve a rigorous scrutiny of the applicant’s overall teaching, research, and service record.

5. EXCEPTIONS IN REDUCTIONS: There may be cases when a faculty member is awarded a reduction but, due to programmatic needs or lack of a replacement, the faculty member is not able to use the course reduction immediately. The faculty member in this situation will be able to bank that course reduction for future use, which will translate into a higher priority given to their application in a subsequent year.

6. COURSE BUYOUTS: Other course reductions related to release time from funded research projects also are available as course buyouts. The OSU-M Course Buyout Policy, an internal document approved by Faculty Assembly, will be revisited periodically to ensure it is fair to faculty but also fiscally sound.

7. ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS: During the annual review process, each faculty member will enter into an agreement with the Dean and Associate Dean regarding workload. This agreement will specify research, teaching, and service goals for the upcoming year and percent efforts, and will specify what data and other evidence will be used to determine the fulfillment of those goals and efforts. At the subsequent annual review, the Dean, in consultation with the
appropriate Department Chair, will judge the record and decide whether or not the goals and efforts were successful. In cases where the evidence supports the conclusion that the goals and percent efforts were met, the faculty member will remain eligible to apply for new course reductions. In the event it is determined that the faculty member did not meet the stated goals and percent efforts, then that faculty member will remain ineligible for any course load reduction other than for administrative reasons for a period of not less than two (2) years from the original release term.

8. TEACHING-INTENSIVE WORKLOAD: Faculty members whose research activity is negligible over the course of five years may be encouraged to opt for an increase in their teaching load of one additional course above the baseline. As a benefit, this faculty member will not have their research scores factored into their annual evaluation for raises. However, faculty members working on this teaching-intensive workload cannot use this as part of an application for a teaching reduction in the following year nor can they take on such an intense load during a year when they were granted a PDC reduction.

9. SCHEDULING: Where it makes sense pedagogically (taking into consideration such things as room and student scheduling perspectives), the 7-week half semester, the May term and the Summer term may be considered viable options for all tenure-track and auxiliary faculty in terms of spreading out their teaching responsibilities.

The Senior Fiscal Officer will assist the Associate Dean in monitoring the teaching level of all faculty members to ensure that the number of required courses is being taught. They will work with the Program Coordinators and Advisors to ensure that courses are scheduled in such a way to maximize chance that number enrolled students will meet course cap limits. They will also ensure that there is a fair distribution of less preferred course days and times – faculty in each area must take turns teaching evening or morning courses at the same rate (unless these slots are preferred by some faculty). Faculty members who do not teach their expected load and/or who do not conform to requests to teach early morning or evening courses will not be eligible for course releases.

10. CANCELLING CLASSES: Undergraduate elective courses below the 3000 level should have an enrollment of at least twelve and an elective course at the 3000 level or above should have an enrollment of at least eight for the course to be taught; elective graduate courses will be cancelled if fewer than 4 students enroll. However, programmatic and campus needs may necessitate offering some courses at enrollments below these numbers; decisions in these cases will be made by program coordinators and the Associate Dean.

11. CO-TEACHING: Faculty who “team teach” courses, provided that each faculty member contributes approximately 50% of the teaching and course preparation, will be credited with teaching one-half of a course (e.g., 1.5 credits if the course is worth 3 credits).

Endorsed by Faculty Assembly, May 2012