



Resolution 10.2.2 - Statement from Chairs Regarding Workload for Accreditation Self Study: *02/13/08, Revised 12/09/09*

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A major challenge facing faculty at Mesa College is an increased workload outside of the classroom. This problem has become more acute, in the last several years, as the hiring of new tenure-line faculty has not kept pace with generalized expectations that Faculty will carry out more detailed assessments of students, participate in reviewing their programs, work on curriculum, and shoulder responsibilities of college and district committee work. Department chairs have ultimate responsibility for this reporting, which, by default, frequently becomes added work for them. Though this problem exists in every discipline, it is most acute in programs and disciplines where there is a small number of tenure-line faculty. The only reasonable solution is to increase the number of faculty able to carry a commensurate share of these responsibilities, which means specifically increasing the ratio of tenured/tenure-track to adjunct Faculty to the 75:25 level recommended by AB 1725.

Beyond the classroom, faculty are responsible for many activities within the realm of the department, including, but not limited to, creation and revision of curriculum; evaluation of colleagues, including adjunct faculty; professional development activities; serving on screening committees for tenure-line hires; and participating in accreditation self-study committee work. Department chairs have additional responsibilities such as scheduling, interviewing prospective adjuncts, maintaining budgets, participating in resource allocation processes, handling student issues, and serving on the Academic Senate's Committee of Chairs. Beyond playing roles in department affairs, Faculty take on more global duties, such as committee assignments at the school, college and district level. All of this work, over time, has been considered in contract negotiations between the union and the district.

During the last several years, however, there have been additional activities which incrementally have been added to the faculty duties, but notably without any compensatory changes in workload. Three of these duties—updating course outlines; program review; and development, implementation, and assessment of student learning outcomes—are outlined below. Maintaining currency of all official course outlines, as mandated by the State Chancellor's Office, in May 2008, is a time-consuming and labor intensive duty. Chairs also have responsibility for development of new curricula.

Program review became a major responsibility of faculty in each department, requiring considerable time in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Currently Mesa College uses a 5-year cycle for program review with the first-year report being a lengthy and descriptive document. Typically the lead writer, a faculty member, spends hours gathering information and writing the report. The reporting for the successive four years, though less detailed, still is time-consuming.

To meet accreditation requirements and the mandates of the U.S. Department of Education, faculty have been charged with developing student learning outcomes corresponding to student learning objectives, then assessing the outcomes, entering raw data into the Taskstream software, interpreting the data reports, and implementing any changes that may be warranted. Though Faculty have just begun this process, the assessment of select classes, the expectation is that, by 2012, all classes will have been assessed. This assessment is a daunting and cumbersome task. Moreover, the feedback cycle requires continuous assessment, presumably to achieve improved student learning.

Through all of this, Mesa College has not significantly increased the ranks of the tenured/tenure-track faculty. Adjunct faculty, though excellent instructors, cannot be expected to do these additional tasks by virtue of their compensation being limited to hours of instruction, with some allowance of office hours. Furthermore, the ratio of tenure-line to adjunct faculty has not changed significantly, since Proposition 98 was approved, in 1988. Put simply, the workload has increased significantly while the number of people to do the work has not. Morale amongst faculty is suffering, which affects the quality of education and professional relations on campus. This problem has already been well-documented in individual program reviews. Nearly every program review reveals concrete evidence as to how this work has caused instruction to be compromised.

As mentioned above many disciplines have few or only one full time faculty member. For these disciplines, the problem is even more acute as all of this work falls on a very small number of individuals or, perhaps, only one! This increased workload has reached a crisis stage. The only real solution is to increase the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty to the level recommended by AB 1725. Because we understand that the current budget climate precludes hiring, we have no choice but to prioritize. Whether the work that now is expected "needs to be done," or not, is moot. The bottom line is that there are not enough people to do it.

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