FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

FACULTY WORKLOAD GUIDELINES

Adopted June 30, 2026

The following are intended to be used as guiding principles for each department to use to establish faculty workloads.

All full-time faculty members are expected to engage in teaching, research/scholarship, and service activities, to varying degrees, that contribute to the mission of Towson University. Tenured and tenure-track (T/TT) faculty are expected to teach, perform service and maintain an active research program, whereas non-tenure track (NTT) teaching faculty are expected to focus the majority of their time on teaching with the remainder on service and scholarship. Clinical faculty have a more varied workload with the specific distribution between teaching, service and scholarship defined by the particular role they occupy within their department. The term "workload" describes all professional activities carried out by faculty members.

It is expected that department-specific guidelines and procedures will incorporate criteria relevant to each department consistent with the principles outlined herein. Each year faculty workload will be set in consultation with the Department Chair and approved by the Dean as part of the annual workload planning process. Consequently, the distribution of each faculty member's workload will vary according to their particular role and situation. It is expected that workload for all faculty will fall within the following range: teaching 40-80%, research/scholarship 10-50%, and service 5-30%. Productivity informing workload determinations should be evaluated over a period of time relevant to the field, such as a 3-year-running average (excluding time on parental and/or FMLA leave). Faculty will request workload adjustments in writing according to the process defined by their department.

Teaching Expectations

In the Fisher College of Science and Mathematics, the standard teaching load for tenured and tenure-track faculty members is between 24- and 15-contact hours per year, with the understanding that "reassigned time" inherent in the 21- and 18-contact-hour load must result in scholarly productivity, and faculty with a 15-contact-hour load must have high scholarly productivity that is supported by external funding in most cases. Tenured and tenure-track faculty members who prefer to focus on teaching without committing significant effort to research/scholarship will normally have a teaching load of 24-contact hours per year, in addition to service activities. Teaching and clinical faculty will generally maintain a 24-contact hour teaching load per year with variable time dedicated to service and research/scholarship. Discretion in determining teaching load, subject to the approval of the Dean, is allowed as described below.

Lab courses - for instructors to obtain full teaching credit for laboratory-intensive courses, the faculty member must be present and actively engaged in effective instruction during the whole laboratory period, and they must be directly involved in grading laboratory assignments.

New tenure-track faculty members will generally be hired with a 15-contact hour teaching load to provide time to develop a productive research program. This teaching load will continue throughout the pre-tenure period as long as research activity is maintained, provided department and college conditions allow.

Teaching loads fewer than 15-contact hours per year may be considered under exceptional circumstances.

Research/Scholarly Productivity

Research or scholarship activity will be assessed based on peer-reviewed publications (journals, conference proceedings, books), funded research grants, and supervision of student research. Therefore, research/scholarly ***productivity*** must include activities that pass peer review, and ***high productivity*** is defined as activities that clearly exceed department publication and grant expectations for the field. Evidence of high research/scholarly productivity will typically include at least two of the following per academic year: publication of peer-reviewed works, submission of external grant proposals, and work on a project (as PI or co-PI) supported by external funds. The number of TU students being mentored in research, the relative impact of the work, relative contributions to collaborative efforts, and field-specific metrics or timelines should also be considered in evaluating the level of research/scholarly activity.

Other factors relating to the calculation of teaching load are:

- **Directing Independent Work**

The direction of theses, undergraduate research projects, independent study courses, as well as membership on thesis and dissertation committees are part of a faculty member's teaching and/or research/scholarship workload. It is recognized that these activities take considerable time and effort and can directly or indirectly limit or promote faculty productivity. Consequently, the Department Chair, in consultation with the FCSM Dean's Office, may award additional workload credit to faculty members who regularly and effectively perform unusually extensive or intensive activities of this type.

- **Course Enrollment**

Workload credit may be given for teaching courses that require special effort and preparation time such as new courses and those with large numbers of students and/or multiple sections. In these instances, the amount of workload credit will be recommended by the Chair subject to the approval of the Dean.

- **Course Load Mix**

It is recognized that there exists a diversity of courses with differing contact hours, course levels (undergraduate and graduate), instructional complexity, and enrollment. Additionally, the number of preparations per semester may vary. The Chair will take the relative workload advantages and disadvantages of specific combinations into account and attempt to make them equitable over time.

- **Time-purchase**

Faculty members with external grants may, in some cases, purchase course releases. Typically, faculty members will seek summer salary support from grants before requesting an academic-year course release. However, in some instances it may be appropriate for faculty members to buy out of teaching during the academic year. The procedures for course buyouts are described by the relevant policy document found on the website of the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. The timing of the in-semester course release will be negotiated with the Chair to ensure departmental teaching needs are met.

- **Significant Service**

All faculty members are expected to perform service for the department, college, university, and/or their profession as part of their standard workload. Service expectations increase with each promotion. In unusual circumstances, where the service assignment is extraordinarily time-consuming (*e.g.,* primary responsibility for a portion of accreditations and designations), the Chair may modify the teaching load subject to approval by the Dean.

- **Other Releases**

The Chair may suggest other justifications for reassigned workload subject to the approval of the Dean.

Note: *FCSM leadership (below) drafted the Guidelines and shared them with the College Council and all full-time faculty. Comments were collected from the faculty and incorporated into the final document during the 2025-2026 academic year.*

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