

# Department Equity Action Plan

Department #1

## Background and Project Aim

Department #1 at the University of Denver (DU) places diversity, equity, and inclusion at the heart of its mission and visions. However, in the summer of 2022, three faculty of color resigned from their posts, citing excessive workload as a key factor in their decision to [step away \(Tassy, 2022\)](#). In addition, junior faculty within the department have expressed concerns around the clarity of workload expectations.

Given the evident disconnect between the department's mission and practices, we (four faculty members within the department) formed a department equity action planning committee (DEAP) as part of a larger workload equity initiative at DU. Our DEAP committee worked together over one-year to address the following project aims (American Council on Education, 2022):

- Clarity: Develop clear faculty workload guidelines, especially in terms of service.
- Transparency: Improve transparency in faculty service work.
- Credit: Make invisible service work visible to ensure faculty receive credit for their labor.

## Context

As one of the ten colleges at DU, our department offers one doctoral program, four master's programs, and one undergraduate major and minor. Altogether, these programs serve approximately 434 students. There are 34 full-time faculty and 24 full-time staff that make these programs possible. Table 1 displays a breakdown of faculty line and rank.

Table 1

Full-time Faculty Line and Rank			
Line		Rank	
Clinical/Teaching	15	Assistant	13
Tenure	15	Associate	11
Research	4	Full	10

## Action Steps

To address our project aims we carried out the following steps.

### **Step 1: Establish overall faculty workload guidelines across faculty lines.**

We developed overall workload guidelines. Our guidelines established a norm of 36 credit hours accumulated throughout the autumn, winter, and spring quarter (10-months). The 36 credit hours are distributed across teaching, research, and service according to faculty line (see Table 2).

Table 2

	Teaching	Research credit hours	Service credit hours
<b>Clinical/Teaching Line</b>	27 CH or 75%	3.6 CH or 10%	5.4 CH or 15%
<b>Tenure Line</b>	18 CH or 50%	12.6 CH or 35%	5.4 CH or 15%
<b>Research Line</b>	0 CH or 0%	32.4 CH or 90%	3.6 CH or 10%

\*36 credit hours (CH) accumulated throughout the autumn, winter, and spring quarter (10-months)

**Step 2: Compile a list of all service work opportunities.**

With overall workload guidelines in place, our DEAP then focused on enhancing service workload equity. To begin this process, we compiled a list of all service work opportunities within the department and DU. With the help of faculty, we identified 36 different service opportunities ranging from standing committees within the department, to commencement marshal, and faculty meetings, for example. The list of service opportunities continues to grow as we become aware of unrecognized service work.

**Step 3: Calculate credit hour equivalency for service work.**

Next, we standardized a credit hour equivalency for each identified service opportunity based on the time and intensity required for a service item. Then, we created a basic algorithm to calculate the credit hour value based on the time and intensity of work (see example below). In summary, one credit hour was deemed equivalent to 10 hours of service work, and a weight was applied to this figure based on the intensity of work required for a service item. A key outcome of this process was a list of service opportunities and their associated weighted credit hour value.

**Example:**

<b>Faculty of the Whole Meetings</b>	
Number of Meetings	10
Average Minutes per Meeting	90
Total Minutes	900
1 hour in minutes	60
Total in Hours	15
1 credit hour	10
Total in Credit Hours	1.5
Weight (intensity?)	1
<b>Total Weighted Credit Hours</b>	<b>1.5</b>

$(\text{total hours} / 10) \times \text{weight} = \text{total weighted credit hour}$

$(15/10) \times 1 = 1.5$

**Step 4: Create a service work dashboard that displays all faculty and their ongoing service work.**

Finally, we created a dashboard that displayed faculty and service work. This helped us see who was doing what type of work.

Table 3

Faculty	Line	Faculty of the Whole meetings	DEI Committee	Faculty Senate – Personnel Committee	Graduate Council
<b>Name 1</b>	Teaching	1.5 CH			2.0 CH
<b>Name 2</b>	Teaching	1.5 CH	1.3 CH		
<b>Name 3</b>	Research	1.5 CH			
<b>Name 4</b>	Tenure	1.5 CH			
...					

## Findings and conclusion

List any findings here?

Project outcomes?

- Clear faculty workload guidelines, especially in terms of service.
- Improved transparency in faculty service work.
- Some invisible service work is now visible accounted for.

## Future Steps

- Continue to account for invisible service work (letters of recommendation, student mentorship) that is often disproportionately placed on women and faculty of color.
- Adjust overall workload for faculty who involuntarily take on extra service. For example, provide a course release for faculty of color given their additional mentorship responsibilities.
- Adjust service workload expectations based on rank/time in the department. Newer faculty could have reduced service expectations given the extra work they typically have to put into course prep, training, etc.
- Train program directors to advise faculty based on whether they are meeting or far exceeding service workload expectations.
- DEAP committee work needs to be expanded to account for teaching, research and admin duties. This will likely be taken up by our appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure committee.
- Update appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies to account for workload expectations.
- Nominate and award faculty who go above and beyond in their workload requirements.
- Recruit, reward, and retain faculty based on clear, transparent, and equitable workload guidelines.

## References

American Council on Education. (2022). Equity-minded faculty workloads: What we can and should do now. <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Equity-Minded-Faculty-Workloads.pdf>

Tassy, E. (2022, June 28). *As professors leave, University of Denver confronts a campus diversity challenge*. CPR News. <https://www.cpr.org/2022/06/28/university-of-denver-faculty-diversity/>