FT Faculty Load Sheets; A Basic Explanation

This document is an attempt to clarify the process of accounting for teaching load balances for full time instructors here in our Dept. As a full time Faculty Member in Biology in addition to your non instructional duties (committee work, peer evaluation, cleaning up the break room, etc.) you are expected to be engaged in full time teaching responsibilities related to your assigned classes. The accounting for the amount of time a particular class needs to have dedicated to it (for both faculty and students) is done in units. Different classes have different unit values and these unit values take into consideration both the time the class meets and the out of class preparation time that should be devoted (by both faculty and students) to the class if it is to be successful. A full time teaching assignment is based on 15 units. And by contract a full time faculty should be teaching about 15 units worth of assignments each semester. The basic accounting for this is expressed in two ways, as units (one FT assignment = 15 units) and as FTE, which stands for Full Time Equivalent and is a percentage value based on 15 units. In essence, FTE is the number of units divided by 15. For example an instructor teaching 15 units in a semester would be exactly one FTE (15units ÷ 15 = 1.00 FTE). An instructor teaching only 12 units would be teaching an FTE of .80 or 80% of a full time load. (12÷15=.8).

Given the variation in unit values of the specific classes we offer, seldom does an instructors assigned teaching load for a given semester equal exactly 15 units. Some semesters you might teach a little more some semesters a little less, and the assumption is that over the years the ± in individual semester assignments will balance out. In accord with this assumption your pay is based on contract not units so the amount of pay you receive in your paycheck each semester does not fluctuate with the minor reverberations in your teaching load. Remember the contract is based on the assumption that full time instructors will teach ~ 15 units each semester over time. In order to keep an eye on this long term balance, around the end of each semester the college sends the department a load sheet for all full time instructors to account for and keep an eye on the running balance of any overages or deficits over time. The Dept. chair double checks the assignments for accuracy makes any adjustments and tallies up the running balance of units which is carried over from one semester to the next.

Adjustments:
Many things can influence a teaching load it can be adjusted up or down depending on assignments or other factors. For example things that can increase your teaching load:

- **Teaching more classes or taking on more lab sections.** Note: the amount of increase is due to the Unit value of the class, for teaching lab sections we are currently only given .85 unit value added to our loads for each unit of lab class taught.

- **Teaching larger classes.** Note: if a class is contains 60 students or more then it is calculated at 1.5 times the unit load. A class of over 100 students is calculated at 2 times the teaching load. The load adjustments for class size are made in advance for established classes with traditionally large enrollment but for some classes these adjustments are made after the fact on the load sheets once the census reports show an accurate enrollment for the current semester.

- **Release Units.** Some work involved in running our programs is not directly related to a specific class and if it takes a significant amount of time away from your teaching duties it may be compensated by release units. These are units that are added to some instructor’s loads to offset the work and time spent on other specific duties assigned by the chair or college. These units are specifically negotiated in advance and they directly relate to compensation for time spent on a specific project or function. Release units are expected to have time and effort required of the instructor receiving them. In that sense if you are receiving release units it is expected that you will do work associated with them and this work will take you away from your full time teaching
responsibilities. A single semester release unit represents compensation for ~47 hours of work in a semester.

The teaching load can also be negatively adjusted by:

- **Teaching a class for Extra Pay:** if you teach a class for extra pay (sometimes referred to as an overload assignment) then it is designated as PX on your load sheet under the column titled “CONT TYPE” and the units for that class or section are not added to your teaching load. Instead there is increased pay that is added to your paycheck above and beyond your regular contract pay. The assignment of overload or extra pay is made at the time of scheduling a class. For example the spring semester classes are scheduled in the previous fall semester and the PX designation for a class must be included during scheduling. It cannot be applied retroactively. (This is due to how the college budgets units and assignments requiring board approval and is why there is a line on your schedule preference forms asking if you want an overload assignment for the future semester that is currently being scheduled). Without special approval from the administration past practice has been that instructors take no more than 6 units for extra pay in a given semester.

The use of extra pay or a PX assignment makes most sense in the case of teaching an overload assignment. Let’s say I have 15 units of assigned teaching but the college wants to add another 3 unit class to my teaching. If I take the class as PX then I get extra pay in my paycheck for teaching the extra class but my teaching load remains 15 units because the extra units I was teaching was not added to my load for that semester.

It gets more complicated because I can also take extra pay (PX) without teaching more to reduce my teaching load. For example let’s say I have 15 units of assigned teaching but designate one of my 3 unit classes for extra pay (without adding a extra class) then I receive extra pay in my paycheck but my load is now only 12 units for the current semester because three units were designated PX and were not added to the calculations that make up my full time teaching contract (15 – 3 =12). During this semester I will not receive less base pay, because that is based on a full time teaching contract and the contract pay is determined by steps and negotiated contract not actual teaching units assigned. So I will receive extra pay for a regular teaching assignment but my units on the load sheet would add up to less than 15.

So why would an instructor want to have less than 15 units in their load for a given semester? The answer is to balance out an overload in teaching units they accumulated in a previous semester. Any extra load units (both positive and negative) carry over from one semester to the next. Accounting for that carry over is the entire purpose of the load sheets.

### Calculating the Balance:

*(note: it might be handy to have one of your old load sheets with you to accompany this explanation)*

Each semester (usually at the end of the semester) the office of instruction will send the Dept. Chair a load sheet for each full time instructor. That sheet shows details of all teaching assignments, as well as any adjustments to teaching load due to class size, or release time assigned to that instructor for the current semester. Each class section, release assignment or other assignment is represented as a line on the load sheet. The columns titles above these lines indicate what details are shown where. The Dept. Chair reviews the specific details of each assignment and corrects any mistakes, omissions or miscalculations. They then add up all the teaching assignment units which are represented on the far right of the load sheet under the titles “workload” and Assign FTE. *(Note: as explained at the beginning of this document these two columns represent the same thing and one is just a divided by 15 percentage of the other).* The Dept. Chair then hand writes the total units for that semester on the bottom of the columns. This line is usually titled with “Semester Total”.* The Dept. Chair then look back at their records for the amount of carry over units from the previous semester and adds that on a line titled “Carry Over” below the Semester Totals, *(note; the carry over value can be both positive or negative depending on the previous load balance)*
Adding up the current semester total and the carry over a new “Total” is achieved and written in on a third hand written line. However, none of these calculations took into account that by contract the current semester we are accounting for should have used 15 units of work done, so from the new “Total” 15 units (or 1 FTE) is subtracted to determine the “New Net” that will be carried over into next semester. This New Net value is then written down at the bottom of the calculation sheet under the line “Cumulative Units” if it is negative in value it goes in the space marked “Instructor owes college” and the assumption is that the instructor will teach more classes or be given more assignments in the future to balance out the deficit. It the value is in the positive then it is written in the space “College owes Instructor” and it is expected that in the future the instructor will be assigned less teaching or take some future classes for extra pay (PX) to reduce this imbalance. These forms are then presented to you (the instructors for your review and signature. A signed copy is also provided to you each semester for your records.

Please note the district does not want instructors caring too much balance in either the positive or negative direction so the goal is to adjust assignments to keep these carry over values relatively small. Our challenge is that the load sheets usually come to us after the next semesters classes have already been scheduled. So awareness of what you are being paid for, how much balance you are carrying over and foresight in scheduling future assignments are appreciated by all. If you have any questions or would like more detailed explanations regarding your current load balance, please contact your humble Department Chairperson.