

December 17, 2014

To: Jose Wudka, Chair
Riverside Division

From: David Lo, Chair
Graduate Council



RE: CNAS Teaching Load Policy

The Graduate Council discussed the implications of the proposed CNAS Teaching Load Policy. It was not immediately clear what problem is being addressed by this policy, as overburdened faculty are not going to find relief under this policy, and for those areas where enrollment is already low, additional teaching requirements will not generate additional courses for these underburdened faculty to teach. The implementation of this policy on merit file evaluation is also problematic, as the calculations for OR versus IR/OR or IR/CE appointments, the Calculated Credit Multiplier, differential credit for undergraduate versus graduate courses, and so on, are all provided without justification. The credit calculations proposed in the new teaching policy appear to be entirely arbitrary.

The arbitrary nature of the total enrollment multiplier is particularly troublesome because it directly devalues smaller enrollment courses; specifically, anything with <100 students does not receive full teaching credit. This seems very much out of the spirit for UCR, which has traditionally prided itself on offering many courses with relatively low enrollment compared with some of peer institutions. The enrollment multiplier would also be problematic in practice because if, for example, a single student were to drop from a course with an enrollment of 100 (often capped by the size of the available lecture room and/or the number of students allowed per Discussion section), then the amount of teaching credit would immediately drop. A perhaps more appropriate total enrollment multiplier would contain no penalization for smaller courses but just give some amount of additional credit for larger courses (e.g., as shown in the table).

It was suggested that the teaching target levels for IR versus OR appointments would create a caste system that would be bad for morale and productivity. Although it is recognized OR faculty (and CE faculty) have additional responsibilities, the proposed reduction of teaching by 50% for an appointment that contains ANY OR component (e.g., only 10%) makes no sense. Given that IR faculty in the life sciences currently are expected to teach, on average, 1.5 courses

per year, their load would be doubled to three in the proposed policy, while those with any OR component would see their loads halved, thus creating a huge inequality.

It was also pointed out that no credit is offered for mentoring graduate students, whereas it is proposed to offer some credit for mentoring undergraduates who work with faculty (e.g., enrolled in 197, 199, 297 or 299). If teaching credit is to be given for mentoring students in research, then this should also be offered for graduate students, given the UC mission of graduate research and education.

Without an academic equivalent of a “time and motion study” these calculations essentially promote unequal incentives for certain types of work (e.g., graduate courses with smaller enrollments are disadvantaged versus undergraduate didactic courses; faculty with OR components to their appointment will have less incentive to contribute to graduate courses). Finally, we noted that the proposed policy indicates that some types of service are now to be counted towards teaching load, which mixes teaching with service, which is both inappropriate and likely to cause considerable confusion during merits and promotions.