Appalachian State University
Faculty Senate
Ad hoc committee on implementing the workload document

To: Faculty Senate, Council of Chairs, Deans Council
From: Ad hoc committee on implementing the workload document (Jamie Allan, Chip Arnold, Tim Burwell, Richard Carp, Paul Gates, and Gayle Weitz – Chair)
Date: April 5, 2002
RE: Implementing the Workload Document

Overview:
Tenure track faculty cannot be expected to teach the equivalent of twelve credit hours/four courses per semester AND engage in substantive scholarly research/creative activity in addition to performing service obligations and dealing with the other duties of being a faculty member. Since substantive scholarly research/creative activity is (or soon will be) expected of all tenure-track faculty, we recommend a standard nine credit hour/three course load for tenure-track faculty with a three credit hour/one course load release time to engage in scholarly research/creative activity. As first steps in implementing this teaching load, we suggest creating greater scheduling flexibility by immediately dropping special designators, opening up the core curriculum, and altering the scheduling and sizes of classes in the manners described below. Moreover, we feel the University should immediately initiate a comprehensive Academic Plan that would entail streamlining programs and scheduling. While these changes are being made, efforts should continue in a timely manner to alter the faculty funding formula so that Appalachian receives more tenure track lines, to use all 101-1310 lines and money for teaching faculty only, and to make committee/council structures, policies, and procedures more efficient.

Rationale:
Appalachian State University has developed into a leading comprehensive state university. With growth comes change. One such change pertains to expectations of faculty. In addition to providing excellence in teaching, faculty are or soon will be required to demonstrate levels of excellence in scholarly research/creative activity and service. In order for faculty to achieve the expected and necessary productivity requirements, workload must be adjusted. There are many factors that affect faculty workload including: 1) Number of faculty, 2) Number of students, 3) Service obligations, 4) Scholarly research/creative activity, 5) Advising, and 6) the Curriculum. Altering any one of these factors affects faculty workload, but some offer more promise than others.

NUMBER OF FACULTY - An obvious solution would be to increase the number of faculty so as to distribute the workload among more people. To increase the number of tenure-track faculty, we would have to change the faculty funding formula determined by the Board of Governors. While this change should be something the administration and the Faculty Senate continue to pursue, the likelihood of revising it dramatically or immediately is minimal. Increasing the number of tenure track faculty by adjusting the faculty funding formula is by itself an
unrealistic way to deal with Appalachian’s faculty workload issue initially. However, the current number of teaching tenure track faculty can be increased at Appalachian by reallocating all teaching faculty funds (budget line 101-1310) for tenure track teaching faculty only. Currently somewhere between $1,775,000 to $2,300,000 from the 101-1310 teaching faculty line is being used to pay non-teaching faculty, staff, and administrators. We support the Faculty Senate’s recommendation that every teaching faculty line allocated to the University be used by a tenure track faculty member and that all monies go toward teaching faculty. (add link to 3-18-02 budget committee report). Other University needs should be funded from other budget lines or sources. As these positions are reclaimed for tenure track teaching faculty, they should be distributed to those departments with the most demonstrable need as indicated by teaching load.

Another approach is to increase the number of non-tenure track faculty to deal with faculty workload. This is being done at Appalachian and at most institutions across the country. Indeed, the use of part-time faculty at Appalachian has already increased from ?? in 1977 to ?? in 2001 (add stats). However, dealing with the workload of tenure track faculty by hiring non-tenure track faculty to teach courses is problematic. Basically this approach creates a two-tiered system with separate expectations and degrees of commitment (Link to UNC study on non-tenure track.) Increasing the number of non-tenure track faculty is not an effective way to deal with Appalachian’s faculty workload issue.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS – An obvious solution to the faculty workload problem is simply to reduce the number of students we have – fewer students means a more manageable faculty workload. However, this too is not a realistic solution. In fact, our student enrollment is presently increasing, with the expectation of capping enrollment at 15,400 in 2010? (Cite chart from Office of the President). Reducing the number of students enrolled at Appalachian is not a feasible way to deal with the faculty workload issue.

SERVICE OBLIGATIONS – If we abide by our constitution and by AAUP standards, then it is apparent that we value faculty self-regulation, which at Appalachian plays out in faculty shared governance. This style of governance requires a degree of faculty service by all faculty. Faculty governance is healthy for institutions of higher education, so some service by all faculty is a necessary component. However, the committee/council structure at Appalachian could be made more efficient to avoid redundancy and to minimize the amount of time faculty spend on service activities. We recommend the Provost continue his efforts with the Faculty Senate and the Deans Council in streamlining committee/council structures, policies, and procedures at the College and University levels. We also recommend that every academic unit assess its service components and streamline them. Moreover, we suggest that various forms of faculty evaluations, including annual reports, classroom observations, post-tenure track reviews, and others, be examined as a whole to minimize redundant and time-consuming paperwork.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITY – As previously mentioned, promotion and tenure guidelines do now or will soon require greater degrees of excellence in scholarly research/creative activity. The quality of this activity will be largely determined by the amount of time faculty have available to devote to it. Major research institutions provide greatly reduced teaching loads and sabbaticals to enable such work. Though Appalachian is a comprehensive rather than a research institution, some reduction in teaching load and regularly sequenced OCSAs (off campus scholarly assignments) are nevertheless necessary to attain the degree of excellence in scholarly research/creative activity that should be expected of tenure track faculty. In order for faculty to meet these expectations, teaching loads should be reduced to the equivalent of nine credit hours/three courses per semester, with three credit hours reassigned time to engage in scholarly research/creative activity. Evidence of productivity must be required for continued release time for research/creative activity. Most departments have established such a system, but all departments will need to do so. In addition, we propose that all faculty be granted an
OCSA on the average of one semester every seven years, eligibility beginning the year after tenure.

ADVISING – Part of the duties of a tenure track teaching faculty member is to advise students on what major to choose, what courses to take, what changes to make to improve an assignment, which graduate schools to pursue, where to seek employment, etc. Could advising be altered to ease faculty workload? Yes and no. Faculty are charged with these duties, and generally speaking faculty are best suited to perform them. The University does provide support services to deal more in depth with some of these advisory roles, for example The Writing Center and the Career Counseling Center. However, Appalachian also provides help to students through General Studies advising, which is supported by the use of faculty lines. Although the effects of such a change should be carefully considered, the dozen or so tenure track teaching faculty lines (from 101-1310) currently used by General Studies for advising purposes might be utilized more effectively by tenure track teaching faculty. Claiming these teaching faculty lines and distributing them to needy departments would help reduce faculty workload.

CURRICULUM – Altering the curriculum seems to be the factor with the most promise for reducing faculty workload at the present time. It also is an area over which faculty have greater immediate control. But changing the curriculum is easier said than done. Changing the curriculum involves issues such as educational significance and value of certain programs, academic freedom, boundaries of disciplines, etc. There are, however, three basic variables faculty can manipulate to alter workload via the curriculum – what courses are offered, when they are scheduled, and the number of students enrolled.

SCHEDULING - If we increased class sizes in appropriate classes, dropped low enrolled classes, and reconsidered when courses are taught (the time of day or the frequency of rotation -- once a year instead of every semester; or every other year), we could affect workload, but other questions would need to be asked. Do we maintain quality with larger sections? In dropping low enrolled classes do we eliminate programs and courses the university needs? Great strides toward achieving a standard nine-credit hour/three course load could be made by appropriately altering the scheduling of classes. But even more progress could be made by altering what courses we offer.

AN ACADEMIC PLAN - It is time that Appalachian have an Academic Plan. The original Academic Plan was to prepare K-12 teachers. Now the role of the university has expanded, yet no comprehensive Academic Plan has been developed. The history of the development of Appalachian’s program offerings is characterized by a gradual accretion of courses and majors which have gradually outstripped the university’s ability to support them at a level which will insure quality. We cannot offer courses in every area, and not even in every area that we would like. We feel that all academic areas should be asked to analyze their present program and course offerings and, if necessary, develop a revised academic plan that reflects our university’s mission and classification. This process should be mandated by the Provost, guided by Deans and Chairs, and conducted by the faculty. The determination of necessary or appropriate offerings is a faculty responsibility and should be initiated at the departmental level. There would need to be a guarantee from the Provost that no tenured faculty would be eliminated on the basis of "institutional need" as a result of the streamlining decisions, and that every effort would be made to accommodate tenure track (untenured) faculty. Academic areas would classify their programs as: 1) Necessary to maintain, 2) Eligible for combining with another program, or 3) Eliminate. This process should address program size and content in relation to the mission of the unit and the University, the relationship to the Strategic Plan, pedagogy, number of majors, and number and size (in credit hours and sections) of service courses, faculty size and diversity, facilities, cost of per credit hour delivery, one-time and recurring equipment costs, and market forces (both student demand and employment/graduate school prospects). The plans should also include proposals to achieve optimum ranges, including targeted admissions and restricted enrollment, where appropriate. Once departments provide their optimal configuration, several processes should work in collaboration to
develop a university composition. These should include Chairs working with their Deans to integrate (and alter) these proposals into a College configuration, the Council of Chairs and the Faculty Senate working (separately and together) in a similar manner without respect to collegial structure, the Deans Council working in coordination with the Provost, and the Provost’s Cabinet on Cross-Disciplinary Activities. Some premises inherent in this planning process include: 1) Class sections should be run as close to full as possible. 2) Classes should be taught whenever possible by tenure track faculty. 3) Where programs are determined to be important to the overall composition of the University, they should be supported at a level that allows excellence. 4) "As big as possible" is seldom an adequate answer to the question "What is the best size for this unit?" The University may need to support programs that can never be large, because of their intrinsic contributions to the University. It may also need to restrict program size to control costs, reflect uncertain employment markets, or to provide resources to support other programs. 5) The issue is ultimately one of composition, so that all units find their appropriate size and constitution in relation to the whole.

**SPECIAL DESIGNATORS** - Two areas within the curriculum that could be altered immediately to reduce faculty workload are Special Designators and the Core Curriculum. Special designators resulted from the 1992 SACS recommendation. To satisfy this recommendation, special designators were conceived. Now, ten years later, there are more than 200 courses with special designator(s). This makes curricular changes and advising more difficult and time consuming. The quality of ASU students is better now than ten years ago, resulting in less of a need for such designators. Satisfying degree requirements with designators is very complicated, making the task nearly impossible for students to do independently. The actual requirements for the designators are weak. Numerous designators create busywork and overlap, and there is little evidence that special designators actually accomplish what they set out to do. Perhaps it is time to drop special designators and revamp the Core Curriculum to cover these areas, charge each degree program to meet these needs, or improve university assessment to see if these needs are being met.

**CORE CURRICULUM** - The core curriculum might be altered by keeping the same number of hours and specified academic areas to which they are currently assigned, but amending current policy to allow students to enroll in any class in each of the specified academic areas in which they meet the prerequisites. This would enable more options for students, allow experimentation (which is restricted to the few free electives in any program), provide greater breadth or depth of study, and open up the curricula for individual needs. In addition it could reduce the number of "service courses" departments need to offer and consequently reduce the use of part-time faculty. Of the many factors affecting faculty workload -- number of faculty, number of students, service obligations, scholarly research/creative activity, advising, and the curriculum -- it is the curriculum that holds the most promise for reducing faculty workload now. And since faculty are in control of the curriculum, the bulk of these changes rest on the shoulders of faculty. Changes in the curriculum can result in a more manageable teaching load and provide time for scholarly research/creative activity. Implementing the new workload document depends upon such action by faculty.

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:**
1) The primary recommendation is to develop a university wide Academic Plan. This would include streamlining academic programs by supporting only outstanding programs that help define Appalachian as an institution, and those which are necessary to our mission as a comprehensive state university. This would entail keeping some programs as they are, combining various programs, and dropping some programs.
2) We recommend the following be implemented immediately:
A. Drop the special course designators and find an alternative way to assure achievement of general core curriculum objectives.
B. Allow department chairs more flexibility and discretion in scheduling classes. Although departments must recognize the responsibility of the university to meet student academic needs, and must therefore be willing on occasion to adjust class schedules to meet those needs, it is important that the academic mission of the department also be respected. Chairs should be allowed to use their best judgment in determining numbers of sections, numbers of seats, times of classes, etc. within the boundaries of the established course catalogue. Chairs should also work together to ensure that departments schedules do not unfairly impede the options of students to take classes in other departments. Student preference for particular class items should not dictate department schedules. The scheduling of spaces for academic purposes should always take precedence over the scheduling of those spaces for non-academic purposes.
C. Retain the current number of Core Curriculum hours for graduation and the specified academic areas to which they are assigned, but amend current policy to allow students to enroll in any class in the specified academic areas for which they meet the prerequisites.
D. In order for faculty to achieve scholarly research/creative activity expectations, we recommend that teaching loads be reduced to the equivalent of nine credit hours/three courses per semester, with three credit hours reassigned time to engage in scholarly research/creative activity. To help achieve this, we recommend streamlining programs, offering courses less often, increasing class sizes, etc.
E. Grant all tenured faculty an OCSA on an average of one every seven years, with eligibility to begin after tenure is given.
F. Continue to work toward increasing the number of tenure track faculty lines by altering the faculty funding formula.
G. Continue to work toward utilizing all 101-1310 lines and money for tenure track teaching faculty only. For example, change "General Studies" to "Academic Support Services" to more accurately reflect the function of this area. Take the dozen or so tenure track lines currently used by General Studies and distribute them to needy academic departments. Consider the following options for fulfilling advising needs: 1) Have staff do advising as they do the other academic support services. 2) Have persons from academic departments receive release time to do advising in Academic Support Services. Or 3) Drop advising from Academic Support Services and assign it to individual departments to handle.
H. Have the Provost continue his efforts with the Faculty Senate and Deans’ Council in streamlining committee/council structures, policies, and procedures at the College and University levels. We also recommend that every academic unit assess and streamline its service components.