

What's up with this workload point system?



Dear Colleagues,

This note is addressed specifically to my full-time colleagues across the district because the program we will discuss here does not apply to part-time faculty although many will find it a relevant discussion.

Before I get into some details, I want you to first imagine all the meetings, mentorship of colleagues and students, faculty evaluations, program reviews, course outline of record revisions, SLO assessments and all the other things that you do in your job which are not directly related to your courses, counseling assignments, or library work. Can you make a list? Try.

The recent introduction of a pilot workload point system has prompted some confusion and concern on the part of faculty. It's important that faculty understand (or remember) the origins and intention of this system. My overriding message to you is that this should be seen as a tool for faculty to QUANTIFY and LIMIT the amount of work we do OR argue for increased compensation.

Here are some important facts to know about this pilot points system:

1st: This came from faculty, lots of them, not the district. The point system is the result of years of concern and discussion about the steadily increasing workload of faculty members. From shared-governance committee meetings and hiring committees to SLOS to statewide initiatives, the sphere of work that is expected from faculty has grown steadily. The point system is the first attempt to quantify all the work that faculty do which is not directly related to their primary duty (such as teaching classes, counseling students, or providing librarian services) and that would otherwise go unrecorded, unaccounted for, and uncompensated. This replaces a system where any work that could be described on the Appendix D list would be just "part of your load" regardless of whatever else you were already doing.

2nd: This is a program meant to help faculty limit their workload. In the research leading up to this proposal it became clear that most faculty already do much more than "6 points" worth of work. Thus, our expectation is that the overall workload for most faculty should decrease under this plan. Faculty should not be taking on unlimited amounts of work!

During a joint taskforce on workload in 2018 a survey was conducted among faculty. The results even convinced then-Executive Vice Chancellor Kathy Blackwood to exclaim, "Wow, faculty really are doing a lot of work outside the classroom?"

3rd: The point system can be used to increase faculty's collective strength, but that also means we have to sort some things out and actually talk to each other. You are not just an individual worker dealing directly with your supervisor/Dean on your own.

Firstly, if you are concerned about not having enough points, or being pressured to do more, the best place to turn is your department or division colleagues.

- If you are in a department with multiple faculty, we highly recommend you work out a division of labor with your colleagues, then present that to the Dean.
- If you are a one-person department, you should consult with others who are one-person departments on your campus or across the district. Faculty who are the only full-timer in their department can claim the points for department lead. However, you should try and document all the things you do beyond your core duties (such as teaching or counseling) and attempt to quantify these activities in terms of points. We expect many of the single-person departments will have grounds to argue for additional resources.
- If you already get release time for things you're doing, you can't claim points as well, but you need to clarify exactly what the expected duties are for your reassigned time.

4th: The point system should allow you to say NO. This may seem obvious, but to reduce your workload you have to actually NOT do things. Withholding one's labor is a fundamental right and an important part of maintaining your own health. Because we are professionals and we have some control over the boundaries we set on our work, it is our responsibility to set our priorities and balance those with our obligations. The points system gives a tool to draw clear limits around those things.

5th: You're not Alone! If you're wondering how to account for your points, and you're feeling confused or stressed about it, please reach out to close colleagues in your department or division and then to your union representatives if there are still questions.

If a conflict arises with a Dean regarding your allocation of workload points, the matter will be passed up to a workload pilot review committee comprised of Steve Lehigh (AFT rep), Kate Browne (Academic Senate rep), Aaron McVean (Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Planning) and David Feune (Director of Human Resources).

6th: You can help us shape how this system is implemented! Since this is a pilot we will be monitoring the ways this does or does not work and trying to refine it. Before the pilot program sunsets, we expect to renegotiate this specific point-system and incorporate all that we learn during this pilot period.

In Solidarity,

M Hoffman, AFT Co Chapter-Chair and Cañada Math Professor
and the AFT Executive Committee