To: COFA chairs and directors

From: Doug Dempster

Subject: Faculty research assignments and teaching loads

Date: April 25, 2015

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The Regents Rules of the University of Texas (Rule 31006) define a “minimum workload equivalent of 18 semester credit hours of instruction in organized undergraduate classes each nine-month academic year.” Reduced teaching assignments are allowed for a variety of considerations including research.

The College of Fine Arts policy on Teaching Load and Course Enrollment says that “tenure-track faculty with modest or no documented professional activity or minimal service will be asked and expected to teach more than the minimum load” of 2 + 2 organized courses.

While the College of Fine Arts encourages tenure-track faculty to achieve a productive balance of research, teaching and service activities, that balance can tip toward one concentration of duties and efforts rather than another. If a faculty member’s research productivity diminishes over time, teaching and service should take a greater share of that faculty member’s efforts and assignment of duties.

Research productivity can admittedly be difficult to measure and evaluate. That’s the purpose of the promotion and tenure review process, which also evaluates teaching and service productivity. The annual Faculty Activity Report process is also meant to evaluate these efforts.

One clear indication of diminished research productivity is an associate professor with more than ten years in rank and poor prospects for imminent promotion to full professor.

You should be mentoring associate professors with ten years or more in rank toward a promotion review in the very near future or into more productive assignments of their efforts in teaching or service. A 3 + 3 teaching load of organized courses, or its equivalent, should be the norm for associate professors in the College of Fine Arts with small likelihood of promotion. At your discretion, appropriate adjustments to teaching assignments should of course be made for large-enrollment course instruction, graduate advising, administrative service, or other service to the department, college or university.

Modulations in a faculty member’s assignment of duties should not be punitive. A tenure-track faculty member with a large teaching responsibility and diminished research expectations should still be able to look forward to merit salary increases and other honors that reflect proportionally his or her success in teaching or service.