

NEWS

FACT discussions have not yet resolved faculty release for semester transition

Representatives of the AAUP and the College administration have been meeting for five months, trying to reach an agreement on appropriate release time or compensation for faculty members to complete tasks related to semester transition.

According to faculty representatives, despite numerous discussions and work sessions of the Faculty/ Administration Communication Team (FACT), including three meetings in the past two weeks, the sides are still far apart.

Another meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20.

"We hope these discussions can be resolved soon, in a satisfactory way," said AAUP Chapter President Paul Davis. "At the moment, though, it's not clear if that's going to happen."

The FACT is a contractually-established forum for ongoing discussion and resolution of concerns that affect College faculty and administrators.

At meetings that began January 7, participants agreed that a topic to be discussed this year was determining appropriate release or

compensation for the work associated with changing all courses, curricula, and other academic information from terms to semesters.

Faculty representatives are Bob Eveslage, Linda Schaffeld, David Simmermon, Diane Stump, Joyce Rimlinger, and Geoff Woolf.

The administration's representatives are Gene Breyer, Tony Cruz, Dr. Marianne Krismer, and Dr. Monica Posey. Chief Financial Officer Mike Geoghegan joined as an administration representative in May.

Geoff said that in late February, the faculty team began presenting proposals for assigning workload units for semester transition activities.

These units would be used for release time to work on semester transition, but could also be provided as overload compensation when necessary.

According to Geoff, the faculty proposals attempt to provide a consistent method for determining release units for all academic programs and areas based on several factors,

such as the number of courses and sections offered; numbers of TAG and Transfer Module courses, majors, and articulation agreements; co-op and clinical placements; and other quantifiable data.

"The faculty team spent a lot of time working out a fair formula," Geoff said.

"We used models that are already described in our contract, such as procedures for calculating program units and for calibrating area chair units. In addition, we consulted with co-op coordinators and others whose transition work has unique considerations," Geoff added.

"The faculty team is aware that semester transition is—as the administration likes to describe it—an 'unfunded mandate,'" Geoff said.

"Throughout these discussions, we have been looking for ways to adjust and decrease costs associated with the transition, without eliminating quality."

"Our most recent proposal would provide a pool of about

FACT / continued from 1

1200 release units to be shared by all faculty over the entire two and a half years of the transition period," Geoff said.

"The administration's current proposal allocates well under 400 units for all of the faculty work of the transition," Geoff said.

"The administration has acknowledged that the change to semesters creates new work for faculty, but they seem to recognize only a fraction of the actual work involved," Geoff added.

Faculty team member Joyce Rimlinger said, "The administration seems to think the work of changing to semesters is limited to preparing new course documents."

"The faculty proposal considers all of the tasks that faculty will need to accomplish during the next two years, on top of existing work."

Joyce added, "This includes jobs such as preparing new lab manuals, training adjuncts to deliver reconfigured courses, renegotiating agreements with co-op and clinical employers, and assisting hundreds or perhaps thousands of students with transition plans for completing the degrees and certificates they started on a term schedule but will finish on the semester calendar."

"As Co-Chair of the Semester Transition Project Courses and Curriculum Committee, I've been talking to faculty about meeting various transition deadlines," Joyce said.

"But if the administration is unwilling to provide appropriate release for completing this work, it's hard to see how the deadlines can be met," she added.

"The most recent FACT meetings have been extremely frustrating," Geoff said. "Either

the administration team doesn't know what faculty members really do, or they know, and simply won't acknowledge our work."

"The first scenario is scary; the second is infuriating," Geoff added.

Paul said the AAUP will schedule a chapter meeting before the end of Spring term to update faculty members on FACT discussions.

"We hope the administration will realize that all of the elements of semester transition work are important to the future of our College and the community," Paul said. "We need time to get this job done right."

"For too long, the administration has not taken seriously the true size of this undertaking," Paul added. "My fear is we will not be able to achieve the quality transition our students deserve."

**CINCINNATI STATE CHAPTER
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS
3520 CENTRAL PARKWAY
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45223-2690**

CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.CINSTATEAAUP.ORG

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