

## DEPARTMENT POLICIES

### Introduction:

This document addresses policies which affect department functioning and which are not directly addressed in the IFO/MNSCU Contract. This limited number of policies guides the department when facing both routine and difficult decisions. Department policies that affect students (applications, admission to the BSSW and MSW programs and practica, etc.) are spelled out in the respective Student Handbooks and supplements and on the department website.

Departmental decision-making model: Meetings will be conducted in an informal manner focusing on information sharing and consensus building, reverting to Robert's Rules of Order only as needed to resolve disagreements, take votes, and maintain progress through the agenda. Departmental decisions and policies can be proposed or revised at any full department meeting with advance notice and room on the agenda; decisions/policies may be approved, amended or replaced by a simple majority vote of faculty members at a full department meeting when more than half of the department faculty members are in attendance. Requests for review of a policy may come from faculty members or the Chair, or in response to requests from administration (e.g., the Dean). When the agenda does not allow for discussion of an item, that item will be considered as a priority at the next meeting. Efforts will be made to solicit input from faculty members who know in advance that they will not be able to attend a scheduled meeting, and such faculty members are encouraged to provide their responses in advance to any items that are on the agenda.

### Department Policies:

#### 1) Department funded alternative assignment time:

Internally funded release time is available in some departments based on excess credit hour productivity, combined sections, or unbalanced workload. Constraints on the generation of internal release time include availability of resources, maintaining essential course offerings to meet student needs or demand, and fulfilling essential administrative activities. Faculty members requesting department funded release time for research or course development should present a plan to the department through the department chair describing how they will use the time and how they will document their productivity. The department may expect some form of presentation or other internal dissemination. The following are three possible reasons for department funded alternative assignment time:

1a) Excess Credit Hours: If the department produces FTE's above the predetermined "target" level as set by the Dean, the department may consider strategies to generate an internal research reassignment. Such strategies may include canceling a small section or combining two sections into one larger one, while maintaining the department's contribution to General Education and the coherence of the curriculum.

1b) Alternative Assignment: Within a professional program there are many administrative roles that must be performed; while some of these roles are contractual, others are necessitated by accreditation requirements or programmatic needs. Such continuing or episodic roles as chairperson, graduate director, graduate and undergraduate admissions coordinators, graduate field director, junior internship coordinator, and accreditation coordinator will be assigned workload credit as administrative functions covered by Criterion I of the Contract.

During accreditation efforts, additional faculty members may have writing or development alternative assignments.

1c) Unbalanced Workload: Due to the variety of credit hours across department courses (from 2 to 10), it is likely that some faculty members will not have the typical 12+12=24 credit workload. Totals in excess of 24 credits per year require overload pay by contract, and thus will require permission and funding from the Dean. Totals less than 24 per year require justification to the Dean in terms of alternative assignment, as part of each faculty member's annual workload plan. In particular, research or course development release time can be assigned by the Chair (with the Dean's approval) in order to balance workload when a faculty member's course load totals 10 or 11 credits in any given semester and their yearly total is also less than 24.

2) Externally funded research and teaching opportunities:

Research: Faculty members are encouraged to seek external funding sources to release them from teaching for research (Criterion II) activities. As much notice as possible shall be given to the department chairperson to facilitate the search for replacement instructors. For College and other campus releases, such replacements normally will be adjunct faculty due to the limited funds provided to the department.

Teaching: Faculty members may also decide to seek external funding for overload teaching (e.g., semester or summer teaching via Extended Learning) within the contractual constraints and as long as such overloads do not interfere with their normal workload responsibilities and do not have negative impacts on students or the department.

Other Article 22 Activities: Faculty members may also seek external opportunities that support other Article 22 activities such as advising or community service as long as such releases do not interfere with their normal workload responsibilities and do not have negative impacts on students or the department.

3) Access to internal overload and summer opportunities:

The department will follow a transparent and collegial process, within the constraints of the contract and the budget, for assigning overloads that may become available during the academic year and for meeting summer teaching needs. All interested probationary and tenured faculty members will have an opportunity to be in the pool of candidates for overload funding. Factors including the source and amount of the overload funding, the expertise necessary to teach the course, the program in which the course resides, and past experiences and performance teaching the course, will be considered once a pool of volunteers is established. Due to funding constraints, most released courses will be replaced by use of adjunct faculty; when the nature of the course or the unavailability of adjuncts suggests that an overload be offered, the Chair will seek funding approval from the Dean and then will follow the action in this section. After soliciting faculty members' interest in such teaching opportunities, the Chair will consult with the appropriate Program Director and present a joint plan for staffing overloads or summer session to the department for approval. Any conflicts will be resolved by a vote of the department. For summer teaching, every effort will be made to insure that all interested faculty members receive at least a partial position.

4) Coherent and Integrated Curriculum:

Given the CSWE Standards for programs at both the undergraduate (accredited) and graduate (in candidacy) levels, it is essential that the integrated and coherent plans for each

curriculum be reflected in the appropriate course design and content. Each required course in both programs plays an important role in the sequential development of the students' knowledge, values and skills and is carefully linked to department objectives, goals and mission. Therefore the department and, in particular, the programs play the determining role in many aspects of course prerequisites, sequencing, syllabi, content and delivery. When multiple faculty are teaching multiple sections of the same course, it is incumbent upon them to reach agreement upon a common primary text and standardized course objectives that contribute to meeting program goals and objectives. Faculty members retain significant freedom to choose among effective alternative teaching methods, assignments and evaluation tools (within program constraints around designated assignments for assessment); however, they do not have the option of overriding departmental decisions regarding core course content, course sequencing or curriculum design.

#### 5) Agenda and Minutes:

Faculty members will be notified at the beginning of each semester of the schedule (subject to change) of department and program meetings for that semester. Prior to each meeting faculty members will receive notice of any significant issues to be discussed at the upcoming meeting. Faculty members are encouraged to submit agenda items in advance of the meetings. As time permits, faculty members may raise new business items at each meeting. A draft agenda will be distributed electronically in advance of each meeting and a final agenda will be distributed at the meeting if there have been any changes.

Minutes will be taken at each meeting of the programs and of the full department, addressing at a minimum the results of any decisions made and where possible the gist of the discussion. These minutes will be distributed electronically within a reasonable time following the meeting to all faculty members in attendance for review and correction as needed and then will be distributed to the entire faculty.

#### 6) Professional Development Funds:

Contractual Professional Development Funds are distributed each year to the department on a per capita basis in the amount determined by the IFO/MNSCU Contract. Each fixed term, probationary or tenured member of the faculty will retain discretion over the use of those funds during their employment. Faculty members may allow funds to accumulate from one contract year to the next, based on their intent to use those funds appropriately in the future. Within the constraints of the budget system, the department will keep track of each faculty member's balance and also of any departmental surplus funds.

Surplus funds that were allocated to the department on behalf of faculty who are no longer employed may be used to facilitate a variety of professional development activities as specified in the Contract. The Chair will inform faculty members of any existing surplus amounts and faculty members may submit a proposal to be reimbursed for professional development activities/resources out of that fund balance. Faculty members should have first expended their own accumulated allocation prior to requesting funds for their own use from the department. Faculty members may also make proposals for the good of the department in general. As the departmental surplus will generally be quite small, proposals should be modest in scope to avoid consuming the entire balance. Proposals should include a brief statement of the purpose of the expenditure, a budget, and a statement of how the expenditure will contribute to

either to faculty development or the good of the department. The department as a whole will review any proposal(s) and vote on whether to provide complete, partial or no funding.