RIT

NTID Faculty Congress
Rochester Institute of Technology
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Lyndon Baines Johnson Building
52 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623
https://www.rit.edu/ntid/committees/nfc

September 5, 2023

To: Gary Behm, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
        Jessica Cuculick, Associate Dean for Academic Administration
        Matthew Lynn, Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs
        Kelly Davis, NTID Workload Guidelines Committee Chairperson

Re: Proposed Workload Guidelines Feedback from NTID Faculty

The NTID Faculty Congress (NFC) would like to express its deep appreciation for your unwavering dedication and the exceptional work carried out by the Workload Guidelines Committee under the leadership of Mrs. Kelly Davis. The primary purpose of this letter is to convey the valuable feedback we have gathered from our esteemed faculty members.

On April 25th, 2023, the NFC received the final iteration of the proposed Workload Guidelines from the administration. We were made aware that multiple revisions had been made subsequent to the Committee's completion of their work. Without delay, we disseminated these guidelines to our faculty members through our representatives and collected feedback. Rather than attributing this feedback to specific departments, we present it as a unified voice, representing the collective sentiments of our faculty body.

Furthermore, in addition to the feedback, we recommend removing the appendix from the proposed workload guidelines. Although we appreciate the inclusion of examples in the document, we find it unnecessary and potentially confusing. If an appendix is deemed necessary for the guidelines, it suggests that the guidelines themselves may not be clear from the outset. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to clarify the proposed workload guidelines to ensure their clarity for all faculty members.

While we acknowledge the importance of expediting the completion of the workload guidelines for the Provost's review, we stress the vital necessity of prioritizing the input from NTID's faculty. This is crucial to the development of comprehensive and resilient workload guidelines for the years to come.

Following this letter, you will find feedback received from various departments, all of which have raised valid concerns regarding the workload guidelines. We have chosen not to pinpoint specific departments, as these concerns resonate across a spectrum of academic units. Although you may discern recurring themes, it is imperative to recognize that these issues transcend departmental boundaries. Therefore, we kindly request the administration, including Dr. Matt Lynn, Dr. Jessica Cuculick, and Mr. Gary Behm, to meet with the Workload Guidelines Committee by September 18, 2023. This meeting would serve as an opportunity to address and provide responses to these concerns.

The guidelines must be prepared for distribution no later than October 2nd, 2023. Additionally, we ask that you provide a report to highlight all changes made to the revised workload guidelines at that time. Following this, we will host open forums on October 4th and 5th, 2023 to allow NTID faculty an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have with the revised workload guidelines.

In the spirit of fostering open and transparent communication, we earnestly request your presence at our forthcoming meeting to present any changes and updates to the workload guidelines. We are receptive to receiving your feedback in any form, whether it is presented comprehensively or in fragments.

This letter stands as a representation of the collective voice of the NTID Faculty, as conveyed by the NFC.

Sincerely,

Brian Trager, NFC Chair
Patrick Graham, NFC Vice-Chair

Faculty Feedback

1. Classroom and office hour contact are both shown as a range, but the total student contact hours are shown as fixed numbers.

   a. Is it the expectation of NTID that these fixed numbers are the semester targets for each rank? If so, that should be noted in the "**" footnote.

   b. If not, a range should also be shown for the total student contact hours per semester

2. There needs to be specific conditions in place to move a T/TT faculty from a balanced portfolio to a teaching portfolio when their research isn't deemed sufficient. Otherwise, the system could easily be abused and opens the university to future lawsuits.

3. I would also like to see a research portfolio brought back for T/TT faculty who are supervising graduate students in RIT PhD programs. As we move to an R1 University, NTID continues to be behind RIT. T/TT faculty in RIT PhD programs have 1-1 teaching loads. We should do the same for the few faculty here who are actively doing research and supervising graduate students in PhD programs.

4. With two portfolios for tenure-track, it needs to be made clear who is on which (not names, but how to determine. Research productivity?)

5. The math doesn't add up. Balanced people should be 4-4.5 courses per year, not 4-5. I don't think it's OK to round up in these cases. So generally, a faculty on the balanced portfolio should be teaching 2 courses per semester, with some rare exceptions.

6. The lecturer column should be split. There are clear percentages for lecturers, but it becomes confusing with both in one column.

7. Not including preparation as contact hours is extremely unfair and harmful to tutoring faculty and mixed model faculty. Those who tutor invest SIGNIFCANT amounts of time in preparing practice questions and doing feedback on assignments/projects/presentations/studio assignments/labs for DHH students enrolled at RIT colleges. This effort should be counted, because most of this work is not done in front of the student. If a faculty invests 3 hours into making great practice questions, but only sees the student for 20 min to check the answers, how is that fair?

8. The tutoring guidelines on page 10 seem very, very heavy. Three tutoring courses will equate to one three credit course. For tutors who tutor 300 or 400 level COS courses, there is a A LOT of prep that goes into those courses. So, to expect a lecturer who has 28 hours to tutor 12 courses seems very, very high.

9. I would include a statement that indicates faculty tutoring that occurs through asynchronous means (i.e., emailing, developing a short tutorial) should be counted as direct instructional activities. The time the student engages with the material cannot be measured, but the tutor should record and document the time they put forth constructing emails or other educational resources to tutees.

10. Indirect instructional activities: I am aware of a practice that some faculty tutors count contact hours for appointments that students skip. I would add a statement here that clarifies that skipped tutoring appointments are "indirect" instructional activities.

11. On page 5, "General factors to consider in setting workload for faculty with tutoring responsibilities" should have a few added/modified bullets:

    a. "Concurrent assignment of direction instruction responsibility" should be replaced with "Concurrent assignment of direction instruction responsibility will be associated with a 10% workload release as defined on page 2."

12. It only seems to have helped the Tenure Track.

13. Tenure track is used vaguely throughout the document, please solidify. *note that the heading on the draft still uses the term "tenured," while that was recently revised in the table.

14. The communication portion mentions a week-long intensive sign class at the beginning of the contract year. I have never even heard of this. What is this?

15. Administrators: Is it assumed that all NTID faculty entering administrative portfolio have minimum SLPI of Advanced? If that is the practice, that's fine. A footnote should be added.

    a. All faculty hired into lecturer lines will have minimum SLPI of Advanced? Clarify this in document or refer to a policy that states this.

    b. What about senior lecturers currently at NTID with less than Advanced? Do these individuals still exist? If not, a footnote should be added. If yes, these individuals should have the opportunity to increase Communication/Diversity to 10% to work towards an Advanced rating.

16. If a percentage range for Communication/Diversity is deemed appropriate for any NTT faculty, the Teaching/Tutoring will need a corresponding range too.

17. Communication/Diversity and Service hours: a total of 30-120 hours per semester based on rank should be achieved to satisfy the faculty's POW based on their rank and workload guideline requirements. - This is a VERY BROAD range. This is very, very unclear. 30 hours is around 2 hours per week, while 120 hours is around 8.5 hours per week (both over 14 weeks). More clear guidance here is appreciated.

18. If service is deemed necessary for lecturers at ALL ranks, clearly delineate, with an additional table column, how those service expectations should differ between lecturers and promoted lecturers.

19. There is one inconsistency between the proposed workload guidelines and the examples in the appendices. For the teaching/tutoring portfolio example, the total for direct instructional activity for teaching/tutoring is only 16 hours a week, when the guidelines state that it should be 21 hours a wk.

20. There is also a lot less specificity in the document for scholarship compared to teaching – these should be considered to be of equal value and weight for balanced portfolio TT faculty, but that is not apparent given the disparate attention they receive in the document.

21. The idea that grading and course development do not count towards academic year effort is a little galling. It definitely should be!

22. The workload committee were told not to touch scholarship, but that is wrong as it should be considered and looked at. It should be part of the workload guidelines and be on par to the other

universities in terms of scholarship.

23. It's clear that administration doesn't really understand what is involved in scholarship – overlooking scholarship makes it worse for them. They need to be mindful of this.

24. It should be made clear in the document that negotiations can be made with your department chair in terms of workload (class size, classes you teach, etc)

25. Guidelines for NTID shouldn't divert too greatly from what other colleges are doing as we don't want our students to be looked down upon more than they already are.

26. Promotion, POW, and guidelines are NOT in alignment. Curriculum is not valued in promotion. Why is this not carried as much as scholarship peer reviewed scholarship, shouldn't just be limited to that.

27. How much does NTID spend on overloads or adjuncts? Is there any language regarding overloads? Can we do this in the middle of the semester? How can we support faculty who have unanticipated workload increases?