

The Faculty Workload and Rewards Project

FAQ from Conference Calls

Can more than one department from the same university apply to participate in the project?

Yes, we encourage any and all eligible academic departments to apply from any public higher education institution in MD, NC, and MA. We hope and expect to include multiple departments from the same university in the study.

How will participating and control departments be selected?

This project is funded as an experiment, so half of the academic departments that submit full applications (letter of intent and surveys) will be enrolled as participating departments; half of the academic departments that submit full applications will be assigned as control departments. Departments will be randomly assigned to both groups after being matched by institution type, department type, department size, and other possible factors in order to ensure comparison groups are as equal as possible.

Does the study include NTT faculty as well as TT?

Tenure track and full time non-tenure track faculty should be included.

Are you limiting participation solely to STEM and Social Sciences?

This project is funded by the National Science Foundation (Advance Award: 1463898) as a three-year experiment among STEM and Social Science departments. At this time, only NSF approved STEM and Social Science departments are eligible to participate. However, the list of eligible STEM and Social Science departments has been expanded to include a more comprehensive list that has been approved by NSF. This list can be found on page 4 of the Call for Applications document, or on our website under the 'Call for Applications' tab:

http://facultyworkloadandrewardsproject.umd.edu/call_for_applications.html

Our department does not fit neatly into the list of eligible departments. Does this mean we cannot participate? Could joint departments such as Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry and the Department of Biology apply?

Joint departments also are eligible to apply. In addition, if you belong to a small department (less than 6 faculty) that works closely with an allied department, you may apply together.

How many hours each week would participating faculty expect to spend on the project?

We cannot say for certain how many hours per week one will devote to this project. However, once the Letter of Intent has been submitted, departments commit their department chair and a critical mass of their faculty (4-6, depending on department size) to attend (a) a 1.5 day meeting in June 2016, 2017, and 2018, and 1 full day meeting in January 2017, 2018, and 2019 of the project, (b) quarterly 1 hour webinars on workload issues and strategies during the academic year, (c) completion of the four interventions, and (d) completion of admission and completion surveys.

What are the interventions that will be completed by participating departments?

These interventions include: (1) the creation of workload dashboards by department faculty to enhance transparency (year one); (2) workload and reward system adjustments to remedy inequitable workloads by gender, race and career stage (year two and year three); (3) individual career training and peer support for management of workload (across 3 years) (4) department-wide faculty training on how unconscious bias and department organizational practices can affect workloads and careers (year one).

Who from the department will need to participate in the four interventions?

We know not all members of all departments will be able to attend every meeting or participate in all of the interventions. We ask that a minimum of 4-6 members of participating departments agree to participate in the state meetings (with more encouraged and welcome), including the department chair. All department members will be invited to participate in an individual workload module. We ask that 75% of department members participate in these modules in some way (there will be several options for participation). We also ask that a liaison be identified from each department to participate in quarterly interactive webinars with peers and project PIs.

What will the first intervention, the workload dashboard components look like?

Departments participating in the project will specifically obtain workload information on their department faculty campus service, teaching and mentoring activities from annual faculty activity reports, institutional research, and other campus reporting mechanisms to produce their own working dashboards. The University of Maryland's ADVANCE Office created a dashboard to increase the availability, accessibility, and transparency of data related to faculty careers in each of the academic colleges. Examples and tools for how to create these will be shared at the first meeting of participating departments in June, 2016.

In a recent *Nature* article on women scientists and committee service work, PI KerryAnn O'Meara and Co-PI Elizabeth Beise and UMD ADVANCE are highlighted for research into annual faculty reports on the average number of faculty campus service activities by rank and college. The full article can be found [here](#).

A repository of dashboard templates, workload organizing strategies, and resources will be created over the course of the project, based on all of the different approaches departments in this study take, and shared during the meetings and webinars with the treatment departments. All of these materials will be made available to control departments after submission of the spring, 2019 survey.

Would a department be ineligible if they anticipate a change in leadership during the project period (i.e. end of a chair's term)?

We understand that department leadership could change over the course of the project. Because there is a core group of faculty from the department that will be involved in the project, not just the department chair, a department will not become ineligible if a change in leadership occurs. Hopefully the new department chair will see the value of the department's continued participation in the project. We will have "catch-up" sessions for new participants just before the beginning of each June and January meeting.

Will there be a consideration of union definitions of workload?

As a faculty led project, workload will be defined by faculty in each department, which we expect will be informed by any relevant faculty unions. In Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Society of Professors union wrote a letter of support for the project. We will encourage departments to collaborate with both union reps and administrators in developing organizing practices.

We report only teaching workload to our system; how might we use this study to inform and influence system officials and legislature?

We hope to help improve how departments and faculty explain the varied nature of their work, using a portfolio approach to the public. In year three of the project the PIs will work with departments to create electronic portraits of their collective work and impact for audiences inside and outside their college and institution. This portrait will take into account all forms of faculty work, not just teaching. We are hopeful the more nuanced and integrated view of faculty work that we will show can be useful to state systems in considering reform to workload policy.

What if we already receive general guidelines of workload (e.g., 10% service, 20% research, 70% teaching), even though everybody (admin, faculty, etc.) knows our work does not match those guidelines? How will this help?

This project provides tools for faculty to reduce workload and ensure equitable rewards for work. Faculty can assess their own workload data and reach their own conclusions about ways to organize workload that fits with departmental and disciplinary goals, but informed by best practice research. The intervention strategies also enable the department to identify areas where workload allocations are unfair, and put in place ongoing systems to ensure more equitable workloads moving forward.