UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
MEMORANDUM

September 10, 2012

To: Emily Dermott, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts

From: Accountability Task Force (Ann Blum, Latin American and Iberian Studies; Neal Bruss, English (chair); Janis Kapler, Economics; Mitchell Silver, Philosophy; and Roberta Wollons, History)

Subject: Interim Report of the Accountability Task Force

Introduction

The shift to a 2-2 teaching load model for tenure stream faculty is potentially the most far-reaching development in the history of the College of Liberal Arts. We are grateful to you for the vision to propose it and the intrepidness to implement it quickly. The Accountability Taskforce began its work by meeting with you and Associate Dean David Terkla. We have also met with Professor Catherine Lynde, president of the Faculty-Staff Union. We have had long discussions among ourselves, and every record of our meetings and every draft has gone through extensive revision by every member through e-mail, creating further opportunities for discussion.

Our charge was stated in the document entitled "Potential CLA 2-2 Initiative, May 18, 2012 As Agreed to Between the UMB College of Liberal Arts and FSU/MTA:"

- The **Accountability Taskforce** will consider and make recommendations concerning accountability mechanisms intended to
    - Assure departments' compliance with the prescriptions of the plan regarding scheduling/class size
    - Hold tenured faculty accountable to the plan's expectations for scholarly productivity

Our first-–and major -- concern, as a taskforce charged to consider matters of accountability, is for the 2-2 model to *succeed*--in enhancing the scholarly achievements of our faculty, sustaining, if not improving, the educational experience of our students, and increasing our contribution to the University and the Commonwealth.

Mindful of the importance of our task, we have worked and met during the summer. We have chosen to report early, issuing an interim report, in the hope that we will benefit from feedback we receive.

By way of an Executive Summary, these are our broad recommendations:

1) In terms of research, scholarship, and creative activity, the test of the 2-2 model will be whether each tenure-stream faculty member has the opportunity to project and realize a research agenda transformed by the course release. Existing review instruments—the annual faculty review, the major personnel reviews, and the Periodic Multi-Year Review, are well-suited to achieving accountability in this area: no new instruments are needed. However, the Taskforce is concerned that teaching assignments for large-enrollment courses be equitably distributed, and that a university-wide infrastructure appropriate to a research intensive university be developed as necessary support for the productive use of the course reduction.

2) In terms of the undergraduate curriculum, the test of the 2-2 model will be whether each and every department can sustain, if not improve, its offering under the anticipated changed staffing patterns and class sizes. In addition to department offerings, department contributions to curriculum include interdisciplinary programs and University-wide graduation requirements programs.[1] Here too the existing instruments—in this case, the review of each term's schedules and the cycle of Academic Quality and Assessment Development review--are well suited to achieving accountability. No new instruments are needed.

3) Because of the highly individual nature of a faculty member's research, creative, and scholarly activity, and the fine-grained nature of department curricula, the Taskforce recommends that the achievement and assessment of accountability be centered in the departments, which best know the faculty member's research area and the needs of its undergraduate program. In particular, the Taskforce recommends that no centralized collegiate faculty body be created to review faculty and departmental plans and progress.

[1] Because we are not experts in interdisciplinary and University-wide programs such as Honors, the

Successful Implementation as the Context for Faculty Accountability

There is no question that the "bottom line" of success in the shift to a 2-2 model should include an elevation of the research profile of the College, qualitatively and quantitatively measured. However, we are principally concerned that the measures of success emphasize an effort to assure both that the benefits for faculty research are as deep and far-reaching as possible, and that the excellence of our undergraduate programs is maintained. In all our meetings and discussions, our primary concern has been the *definition* of success for the 2-2 model, and we have arrived at the following:

- For the faculty, "success" will be that every tenure-stream faculty member will have the occasion to re-envision her/his career at UMass Boston in the light of the prospects for scholarship, research, and creative activity (hereafter, "research") that the new workload will promote, and be supported by her/his department and college to achieve that vision. Out of this process should come each faculty member's vision of her/his best prospects under the 2-2 model. The individual faculty's research program revised in light of the change to a 2-2 teaching load, should be considered in the regular annual AFR review by department personnel committees, chairs, and dean, and, more formally, in the Periodic Multi-Year Review. Faculty members' projection of research, which we expect will be re-envisioned in light of the 2-2 model, should and already does, play a crucial role in major personnel reviews: the fourth-year review, the tenure and promotion review, and the review for promotion to full professor.

- For the undergraduate curriculum, and indeed, for the entire curriculum, "success" will be the construction and implementation of plans[2] by which each department determines what the department's offerings will be under the new model, what the enrollment targets are, where tenure stream faculty's teaching is most needed, and what the teaching and service responsibilities of senior and less senior non-tenure track faculty will be. With such planning, it will be possible for the CLA departments and the dean to look closely at departmental semester-by-semester schedules and determine whether compliance with the plan's enrollment and scheduling benchmarks have been met. Because departments differ greatly in their undergraduate educational missions, department-level plans are the best means of assuring that the monitoring of enrollment benchmarks and curricular cohesion serves the students' best interests. Departments' responses to a set of questions offered below may serve as a framework for

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[2] The Taskforce does not envision the creation of lengthy department plan documents. Rather, the plan could consist of a set of priorities based upon departmental discussion at a meeting of its faculty.

assuring programmatic quality and integrity in the new environment. Indeed, many departments have already done versions of this planning in preparation for the spring, 2013, term. Presumably when the impact of 2-2 on the departments program are "assessed" at the department level, the department can make appropriate adjustments.

- For the College, understood as a faculty, faculty governance, and administration, "success" will be a transition in which existing review procedures and mechanisms are affirmed and strengthened, and progress is unimpeded by procedural or contractual disputes.[3]

Accountability in Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity

The 2-2 model will succeed only if every tenure stream faculty member has had the opportunity to envision a professional life transformed by the new circumstances. We anticipate that the new model will have an uneven impact on faculty. Some CLA faculty have already worked in conditions identical or close to the 2-2 formula: faculty with frequent graduate teaching at a 1.5 rate, faculty with research grant buyouts, and especially assistant professors hired with generous course release packages. Other faculty have consistently taught three-course loads. It is this second group of faculty, with histories of 3-3 teaching schedules, for whom the stakes in the success of the 2-2 model are highest, and for whom the challenge is greatest challenge.

The challenge takes four forms:

1. The 2-2 model should enable faculty to sustain research, scholarly, and creative activity throughout the calendar year, not primarily in the summer and January and minimally during the fall and spring terms. In the most general terms, the challenge is to protect one third of the workweek for research, and prevent the encroachment of teaching and service.[4]

2. In a 2-2 model in which departments hold enrollments constant, there is a risk that the burden of redistributing class sizes will fall unequally. Departments must be particularly sensitive that the distribution of

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[3]As the University seeks to raise its research profile to Carnegie Research 1 status, "success" will require the further development through strategic planning of a research infrastructure capable of supporting that level of research in the College of Liberal Arts and in the other Colleges alike.

[4]A separate taskforce will consider the issue of course load reductions for service under the 2-2 model, but the Taskforce would note that, in its view, CLRs for service assignments historically have not been distributed equally in the College. The shift to the 2-2 load is an opportunity to redress this perceived inequity.

burdens of increased class sizes meets all tests of fairness, particularly to groups and individuals who have carried greater teaching burdens in the past. They must take care that assignments do not follow what may be long-established and unexamined scheduling practices, and insure that courses with increased enrollments are distributed equitably among faculty over time regardless of factors such as seniority, grant-winning record, and gender. These considerations are complicated by the possibility that some faculty do not mind, or are more skilled at teaching large sections.

3. The Taskforce notes that there is no provision for teaching assistants in the 2-2 model. A department's teaching workload is thus redistributed. If teaching assistants are not to be provided for large-enrollment classes, there is risk that it may be redistributed in ways that undercut the research course reduction.

4. Increased scholarly productivity should be linked to support for research not only with increased time but also with funding. Along with a reduced teaching load, a commitment to greater scholarly productivity by the faculty must be matched with increased university support for grant writing and travel for research rather than for conference presentations alone. The Taskforce recommends the development of grant-writing workshops, faculty research seminars, and increased university-funded research support. Transforming a career established under a 3-3 model to one with the research prospects of the 2-2 model is likely to take some time, and the Taskforce members urge that there be a broad effort on the part of the College and university to support this process with practical assistance. When research infrastructure and the unavailability of teaching assistants are taken together, the 2-2 model appears to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for research productivity. Burdening the faculty alone with achieving Carnegie Research 1 status is unrealistic and unfair without an equivalent commitment from the University for contributing the scaffolding to realize these goals.

With these challenges made explicit, the Taskforce turned to the projected outcome of the 2-2 model and its assessment. The Taskforce is concerned whether the 2-2 model will call forth new sets of peer institutions, or "aspirant" peer institutions, for comparisons in AQUAD and other assessment contexts of research productivity for faculty. The choice of peers needs to be made carefully, to avoid linking departments with those at other institutions that have Ph.D. programs in many fields, research libraries, grant-writing support, teaching assistants or graders, and, in general more generous infrastructural resources. Certainly all levels of major personnel review, including the PMYR, will take into consideration the research release, and so these considerations must be explicit in the selection of peers and comparisons. The matter of peer institutions should be discussed during the pilot period.

Your memo asks our taskforce to make a recommendation on an opt-out provision. Our inclination in this report has been that the success of the plan rests on maximum sensitivity to the distinctive goals of faculty and departments. We have discussed the 2-2 model among ourselves in a framework of individual rights. We would not at this point restrict flexibility of individual faculty in planning their work, and hence we would support an opt-out option, but on a term-by-term basis, requested in writing. We are careful to note that the research expectations of a 3-3 teaching load would adhere to faculty members who opt out of the 2-2 load.

Accountability in the Undergraduate Curriculum

The shift to a 2-2 teaching load comes during a period in which departments have already come to rely on non-tenure stream faculty to assist in covering demands from increased enrollments. Some tenure stream faculty are drawn away from undergraduate teaching by the demands of graduate teaching, large service commitments, and in the case of newly-hired faculty, generous research-related course load reductions to support research agendas. Additionally, departments may not have recovered positions lost to retirements and resignations. For small departments feeling these pressures, sabbaticals and grant buy-outs create further scheduling complications. The 2-2 model may have the benefit of regularizing these reductions and give opportunities for departments that have not done so already to assess what undergraduate courses are to be offered and how best tenure-stream teaching may be employed.

In this, as in many other matters the Taskforce has discussed, success of the 2-2 model requires a fine-grained understanding of curricular needs and demands. Taskforce members share these views:

- Each department has a distinct undergraduate educational mission.
- Many departments must fulfill competing demands on tenure-stream faculty teaching assignments for graduate instruction.
- Course offerings may be severely affected by leaves, retirements, and resignations.

Meeting enrollment targets that you set will work best when it is done by departments, which know best the mission, structure and developmental pattern of their undergraduate programs. The Taskforce emphasizes that departments should understand that the risk to the undergraduate curriculum is real: in their planning departments should pinpoint areas in which students might be disadvantaged from this change--by a shift to large sections, or by a reduction in offered electives, for example, or by decreased exposure to tenure stream instructors involved in research--and should assess how their department could avoid or at least mitigate any detriment to undergraduate learning opportunities and curricular depth as they implement a 2-2 teaching load. Hopefully, the forthcoming report from the Taskforce on Large-Enrollment Classes will help with part of this assessment.

The first question we asked is whether departments have sufficient data for this type of analysis. The Taskforce does not presume to understand the pressures on each department's offering and did not wish to conduct a central review. It would emphasize that although the pilot and initial implementation of the 2-2 model are to be revenue-neutral under the 2-2 plan, the model's implementation may highlight areas that require future tenure-stream staffing. The Taskforce therefore urges that departments carefully evaluate their curricular and staffing needs now, to provide a context for position requests that they may feel warranted after the initial phase. The Taskforce suggests that departments review offerings, fall and spring, over the past three academic years, checking actual courses in their major and minor program requirements and electives, at the 100-, 200-, and upper division levels. The Dean's staff has indicated its readiness to help supply the appropriate data. The following questions may guide departments in their planning:

1. What offerings are essential semi-annually, annually, biennially, and on a three-year cycle?

2. What course offerings require the particular experience of tenure-stream faculty?

3. What breadth and depth of offerings are needed for major programs?

4. How does the 2-2 model affect the availability of faculty to supervise honors tutorials, internships and practicums?

5. In a revenue-neutral world, what flexibility is required to accommodate the difference between enrollment caps and actual enrollments? For example, after a pilot semester, what adjustments will have to be made in the number of sections offered if large-enrollment classes do not enroll sufficient numbers of students?

6. How well are pedagogical needs, for example, for writing- or research-intensive instruction, served by changed enrollment caps? This is a particularly important question for departments that offer low-enrollment courses and departments with small, specialized majors.

7. How does the 2-2 model affect the department's capacity to provide courses that satisfy University-wide General Education requirements, First-Year and Intermediate Seminars, courses that satisfy University-wide distribution requirements, or contribute to the Honors Program, and CLA First? How does the 2-2 model affect a department's ability to contribute to institutional

initiatives such as the Transitions and Navitas programs? Another taskforce will address the impact to graduate programs under a 2-2 model.

8. Conversely, what can a department afford *not* to offer every term or year?

In offering these questions, our general concern is to sustain, and even raise, the quality of the undergraduate curriculum and the experience of our students who have come to value the College of Liberal Arts and its commitment to the individual.

Conclusion

We conclude by noting the limited scope of our committee's focus. Many issues are raised by the 2-2 plan, such as its possible effects on NTT's, the fate of interdisciplinary and University-wide programs, the impact on the public perception of the University, and University/faculty legal contractual relations. While we recognize these issues as interconnected, we expect other committees and institutions, in particular, the FSU, to study them and make relevant recommendations.

The Taskforce also strongly affirms the efficacy of existing mechanisms for accountability in these planning and implementation procedures: regular departmental governance; the semi-annual scheduling process, which includes the dean's request for service courses and the dean's review of proposed schedules in consultation with chairs; and especially the AQUAD review process. No new mechanisms are needed.

We believe that implemented thoughtfully, the 2-2 model, with commensurate institutional support systems, can over time significantly improve the productivity of the TT faculty, create more satisfying careers, and enrich the academic life of the entire University. With due care, we think this can be done without detriment to the undergraduate curriculum, indeed perhaps even improving it to the benefit of our students. However, these results will only be, and should only be, realized by attending to all of the rights and needs of every member of CLA's tenure-stream faculty.