MEMORANDUM

TO: All Holders of Mississippi State University

DATE: October 25, 2003

SUBJECT: AOP 13.23 – Faculty Workload

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to establish the responsibility and general guidelines for the assignment of workloads for the following faculty members: tenure-track faculty, tenured faculty, and instructors. Furthermore, it will serve to ensure communication and mutual understanding of responsibilities between faculty and their department heads and also provide institutional accountability for the use of university resources. This policy does not apply to faculty with specific research professor, extension professor, or clinical professor appointments.

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require an earlier review by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Faculty workload consists of a combination of three activities: teaching, research/creative achievements, and service/engagement activities. These occur in varying proportions depending on such factors as faculty talents and interests, unit and institutional needs and strategic plans, and IHL requirements. The workload assignments are the responsibility of the department head in consultation with the faculty member, with the concurrence of the college dean and the provost. First and foremost in this consideration are the needs of the students and quality of the individual academic degree programs. Faculty time distribution must be consistent with the policy outlined in this AOP, although deviations from the policy may occur in times of exigency.
In assigning individual teaching loads for faculty on a single budget, a department head usually relies upon what has become the nationally accepted norm for universities with primarily a baccalaureate mission. Teaching workload is based on the equivalent of eight courses (about 24 hours) per academic year. As a general rule, in disciplines that offer only an undergraduate degree, the average teaching load of a faculty member with an active research agenda is usually equivalent to six courses (about 18 hours) per academic year. In disciplines that offer a master’s degree, the average teaching load of a faculty member with an active research agenda is usually equivalent to five courses (about 15 credit hours) per academic year, and for faculty with an active research agenda in disciplines that offer a doctoral degree, the average teaching load is usually equivalent to four courses (about 12 credit hours) per academic year. The teaching load for an instructor with a full-time appointment is usually equivalent to eight courses (about 24 credit hours) per academic year. The assigned number of courses and corresponding credit hours, however, may be reduced, depending upon a number of factors that include the nature of the course (e.g., studio courses), size of the classes being taught, rank of a faculty member, experience of a faculty member, number of course preparations, number of graduate students, number of directed studies, development of new courses or other curricula, demands of the individual faculty member’s research agenda, and level of university, professional, and/or public service. Adjustments to the teaching load of any individual faculty member may be made in any semester or depending upon the activity of that faculty member and/or the needs of the program at that time.

The previous descriptions of teaching loads assume that a faculty member is funded solely from E&G funds. When the workload is funded by more than one budget, as in many of the agricultural units, it is necessary to differentiate between those funds designated for research and those designated for teaching. The proportion of the workload allocated for both teaching and research is determined by the proportion of the individual salary funded by these designated budgets. Service activities may be funded by either of these budgets.

Deciding the sufficiency of an active research agenda is the responsibility of the department head with input from the individual faculty member. The specific scholarly/creative achievement/outcome expectations during a specified period of time must be prescribed in the annual review. In situations where a faculty member is awarded external grant funds for research, adjustments will be made in teaching and/or research and/or service responsibilities proportional to the level of funding received.

Service contributions are considered to be part of the teaching and scholarly activities. Significant contributions to the service of the department, college, or university may result in the allocation of release (from class or research) time. Given that service is operationally different among departments, qualitative and quantitative components of service must be defined by colleges and departments.

Each year, during the annual review process, the department head will address each faculty member’s teaching load relative to productivity in research and/or service.
activities, as well as the teaching needs of the department. A written record of this
discussion should be made for subsequent reviews where an assessment again will be
made of any differences between expectations and realizations.

Departments should reach an agreement with their deans on overall average teaching
loads expected for their department, and the deans and the Provost should reach a similar
agreement at the college level. Comparisons of workload data with peer institutions are
desirable in establishing standards. In some cases, the development of ‘departmental’
peers may go beyond the MSU peer group to include institutions with programs that best
compare with a department’s particular program, goals and objectives.
**RESPONSIBILITIES**

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<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Provost for Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>2012</td>
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**RECOMMENDED:**

/s/ Jerome Gilbert  
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs  
Chair, Associate Deans Council  
09-03-08

/s/ Peter Rabideau  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
09-04-08

/s/ David Nagel  
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate  
09-08-08

**REVIEWED:**

/s/ Don Zant  
Director, Office of Internal Audit  
09-19-08

/s/ Charles Guest  
General Counsel  
09-25-08

**APPROVED:**

/s/ Vance H. Watson  
President  
09-30-08