How to be Equitable in Faculty Workloads

1. **Encourage transparency and the use of data in how your department allocates teaching, mentoring and service positions.** That means working with colleagues to get basic data about faculty workload made into transparent tables or charts and accessible to all the faculty. Encourage the leaders and program directors who make requests of the faculty for service or advising to use such data to help ensure some faculty members are not overburdened relative to others. If any service positions are particularly coveted by virtue of their visibility or compensation, promote policies that allow all faculty members in the department to know how they can obtain those positions.

2. **Be a vigilant bystander in your department, college, research teams, labs and other work-group meetings.** If you see people shifting less desirable work to others, engaging in “social loafing” or shirking their way out of doing their fair share, intervene as you would in other cases where bias occurs. For guidance on how to intervene, we recommend the excellent work of Stephanie Goodwin and her colleagues on confronting biases by questioning or inviting clarification, arousing dissonance, challenging respectfully and expressing emotions.

3. **Encourage accountability.** If it is clear someone in the department is not doing their share of department work, ask them to do so. They may say no, but at least you’ve tried and reinforced a social norm that people in the department are aware (via data) of who is doing what. Showing that each faculty member is expected to participate helps promote the benefits of sharing the burden for the collective good: satisfaction, retention and productivity. Work with colleagues to create benchmark expectations for key areas of service work and make them public.

4. **Acknowledge differences in contexts and promote flexibility.** We should recognize that faculty members have different responsibilities and create flexibility approaches and policies in response. A faculty member setting up a new funded research center might receive a teaching release, for example. It is also crucial to recognize that a faculty member from an underrepresented group is disproportionately more likely to be asked to serve on search committees or diversity commissions and advise students of color, which may require adjustments to their other service expectations. Both situations need to be acknowledged in fair and transparent ways.

5. **Ask.** Ask colleagues, especially women and underrepresented minority faculty members, how their work is going and if they are challenged in particular areas. Even though all faculty members are pushed to work harder and more hours, there are well-documented differences in the experiences of women and underrepresented minority faculty, who will be asked more often to serve on search committees, chair diversity councils, mentor minority students and clubs, and do a greater share of committee work.