

Response of the Faculty Senate Personal Committee to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate referencing the Chapter 9 response President Dawson and Provost Curtis.

The President and Provost returned Chapter 9 of the Faculty Handbook passed by the Faculty Senate suggesting the removal of three items. One was a specification that faculty may be able to “buyout” a class for 20% of their salary, rather than for 40% of their salary, second was the removal of the specification that a faculty member may only buyout for 3 out of four semesters, third was the removal of the limitation that faculty be able to obtain graduate degrees in programs that they are currently teaching in. The three relevant sections of Chapter 9 of the Faculty Handbook are included at the end of this response.

The President and Provost also supplied PDF versions of Memorandums written by President Frank Franz and Provost Louis Radonovich. Relevant sections of these Memorandums are included at the end of this response and are marked as 1a-b for Provost Radonovich, or as 2a-e for President Franz.

President Franz’s Memorandum is a forward looking document after UAH had experienced several years of proration in less than a decade. In his Memorandum President Franz lays out steps forward for UAH in terms of both the severe budget situation that UAH, and Higher Education, was in at the time, but also understanding that UAH had/was changing to a research heavy institution.

In both of these Memorandums the use of grant-contract funds to buyout the research allotment (20%) for a faculty member prior to buying out a class (20%) was explained. However, as President Franz explains UAH at that time was transitioning to a Research University and state funding was very limited. President Franz recognized that the growth of classes and a research focus would require additional support of graduate teaching assistants, and that support was pledged. Since these Memos were written several fiscal parameters have changed. First, was that fringe benefits and overhead (F&A) at UAH were approximately 25% and 37%, respectively. Currently, fringe benefits at UAH are 37% and F&A is 48%. Assume a 20% buyout is \$10,000/semester in 1990 the total cost to a faculty member would be approximately \$17,125, in 2021 that same buyout would be \$20,275. Buying out under the current fringe benefit and F&A rates for three semester is approximately the cost of ½ of a graduate research assistant. It should also be noted that the number of funded GTA’s at UAH has not increased with the increase in student enrollment and with the rate of increase of fringe benefits and F&A. As President Franz stated in his Memorandum, it is to the advantage of UAH to have as many graduate students as possible. A personal survey of faculty at high-intensity research universities supports a 20% buyout for class, rather than the current 40%. It is the opinion of the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee that a 20% class buyout represents the best interests of UAH both currently and for the future.

It should also be noted that at the time of the Memorandums of President Franz and Provost Radonovich that “effort certification” was a different process and under different rules. Given an understand of the current set of effort certification rules, buying out the 20% research effort would not allow faculty to cost-share their research time, or would it allow faculty to write proposals that were not directly related to existing funding.

Finally, UAH is in a substantially different financial situation than it was 30 years ago. Proration has not occurred for at least a decade and in spite of the fact that UAH overspent its undergraduate scholarship budget by \$20,000,000 over two years, it was still able to add to the University’s fund balance.

President Franz's Memorandum also notes that UAH needs to recruit, retain, and graduate students. As correctly noted in the Memorandum, this is done by having excellent teachers in the classroom, as well as more support in the way of graduate teaching assistants. It is the opinion of the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee that research active faculty interacting with students is critical to achieving this goal. Faculty must be in the classroom. Teaching a "full load" of classes one semester out of four should not be a burden for a faculty member interested in the retention and graduation of students. It is the opinion of the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee that this requirement restriction be in Chapter 9.

The President and Provost requested that the limitation of pursuing a graduate degree from a department that a faculty member is teaching in be removed from the Faculty Handbook. It is a common statement in all Faculty Handbooks, including those of UAB and UA, that faculty may not obtain graduate degree in the department in which they are teaching. At UAH with limited graduate programs, the suggested ability to obtain a graduate degree in a program where the faculty member is teaching would apply to a small minority of faculty and represents a significant professional and fiscal advantage to a limited number of individuals, with no mechanism to similarly reward faculty who already have obtained a graduate degree. It is the opinion of the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee that this stipulation remains in the Faculty Handbook.

Thus, the language that Personnel thinks is appropriate follows:

9.3.5 Reduction of Teaching Load due to External Research Contract Funding

Faculty are encouraged to seek external research funding from a wide-range of funding sources. Large research projects may require extensive faculty involvement. Academic-year Faculty who have sufficient exterior funding to pay for 20% of their salary during a given semester may apply to have their teaching load reduced by one course: e.g. "buyout". Faculty may eliminate their teaching obligations no more than three semesters during four semesters. Applications for teaching load reductions are through the Department Chair, Dean, and Provost. If an application for a teaching load reduction is turned-down the Faculty member may appeal to the President.

9.7 Tuition Assistance

Members of the faculty with the rank of instructor or above may not pursue work toward an advanced degree or other program of study in the department or related unit in which their appointment is held.

Referenced items in this response follow.

Memorandum of Provost Radonovich:

1a. Faculty workloads at UAHuntsville are based on a typical 3-credit hour course being approximately 20% workload on a semester basis. There are some exceptions to this, for example, to allow for unusually large classes and numerous other factors such as teaching two small classes of the same

course in a given semester and teaching laboratory/clinical/studio courses where contact hours are much larger than credit hours awarded.

1b. If a faculty member is working with Ph.D. students, then supervision of these students and their research counts for approximately one of the 3-credit hour courses.

Memorandum of President Franz:

2a. Many faculty and students complain about the lack of graduate student assistants to help provide teaching support through discussion sections, tutoring, grading, etc.

2b. An expansion of the number of graduate student teaching assistantships to assist in discussion sections, teaching, grading, etc.

2c. There is another even more important enrollment initiative to which all of us can contribute. Students who come to UAH are among the brightest in Alabama. They ought to do well here, and they ought to remain here for their entire collegiate careers. Whether or not they do so, however, depends strongly on the quality of the instruction they receive, the courtesy, respect, and encouragement accorded them; the availability and usefulness of tutorial and counseling help; and the general responsiveness and helpfulness of the faculty and staff members whom they encounter. We need to become even more of a place that has the welfare and success of its students as its highest priority, and that demonstrates that commitment daily.

2d. The probable origin of the specification in our Faculty Handbook now becomes clear; four courses of three credits each semester, a typical teaching responsibility at a non-research college, yields twenty-four semester hours per year. As a university emerges into a research university, however, it becomes appropriate and necessary to recognize the equivalence of effort spent in research, and supervision and mentoring of graduate students, to that spent in offering traditional courses. That sort of evolution has occurred at almost every research university, and it has occurred also at UAH.

2e. Part of the success of the enrollment initiative, and of the rationalization of the faculty work load, depends upon filling more of our sections to their current upper limits, and teaching somewhat larger sections in those instances in which increased class size is consistent with maintaining the quality of instruction. Any extra burden associated with larger sections, either for the faculty or for the students, can be ameliorated by providing more graduate student assistants or discussion sections, tutoring, or grading. Expansion of the number of graduate student assistantships also bolsters graduate education, helps the research mission of the University, and ultimately is reflected advantageously in the "need" calculations for UAH by the ACHE formula. Additional graduate teaching assistantships represent a highly leveraged investment that is an advantageous one for the University to make; it is an investment that ultimately more than pays for itself.