

April 26, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Academic Transformation Update: Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Workload Response and Recommendation

Dear President Kreider and Dean Douthitt,

As part of the ongoing Academic Transformation initiative, the Provost's Office has completed its review process for the ad hoc committee on faculty workload's report.

### **Key Findings**

The report argued that adopting a reduced workload as proposed would improve faculty quality of work and life, allow for more time to develop and prepare innovative pedagogical and instructional techniques, and increase faculty ability to support student success activities.

The central concern with this proposal as presented is that it is cost prohibitive at this time given current budgetary realities. The plan as presented also is unclear about course overloads and therefore ties a reduced workload to an increase in faculty compensation.

There were additional questions and concerns that the review team wished to pass on to the committee. In general, the review team felt that the report suffered from a range of logical and factual inconsistencies, some of which are detailed below.

- The report seems to argue less for a 4-4 workload and more for retaining a 5-5 teaching load at a higher pay rate (through overload) which undercuts arguments made about the change supporting student performance and increasing faculty ability and time to devote to curricular innovation and student success activities.
- The report was inconsistent in its claim that only six new faculty hires and additional overload assignments would be necessary to account for the reduced instructional capacity of moving to a 4-4 workload. However, the table presented on disciplinary impact summed to 16.55 FTE and that number is likely higher given that workload assignments would be made only in certain intervals.
- The report does not account for the impact to instructional capacity due to a reduction of maximum overload hours. The current maximum number of contact hours is 22.5 on overload but would drop to 18 under the proposed new workload.
- The section on credit hours / contact hours is difficult to reconcile with a *course-based workload*.
- The report does not address *at a course level* what the replacement of institutional instructional capacity would be, only through disciplinary aggregation.
- The report does not address how low enrolled courses could potentially be cancelled, nor how many would still be required to be offered for degree completion and the likely impact on instructional capacity.

- The report is unclear in how 8-week and/or hybrid courses would save money to fund the reduced workload.

***Recommendation***

After considering the report produced by the ad hoc committee and consulting with the campus' institutional leaders, the Provost's Office has decided that it cannot support an adjustment to the workload of faculty at Potomac State College at this time. Further work on this topic should not resume until after new presidents are in place at WVU Morgantown and Potomac State College, the WVU system is in an improved financial situation. Once work resumes, the faculty of Potomac State College should clarify the goal for the proposal, whether that is increased faculty compensation, reduced faculty workload, or improved student success.

Sincerely,

Maryanne Reed  
Provost