

Standard 6. Unit Governance and Resources

6.3 Areas for Improvement Cited in the Action Report from the Previous Accreditation Review

Summarize activities, processes, and outcomes in addressing each of the AFIs cited for the initial and/or advanced program levels under this standard. [12,000 characters]

Areas for Improvement related to Standard 6 cited as a result of the last NCATE review:

1. Heavy workloads of unit faculty impact time to meet the university's scholarly productivity expectations for promotion and tenure in both initial and advanced programs.

Resources have been constrained since 2010, causing the University's three college deans to carefully review and shift (in some cases) faculty workloads to maximize efficiencies. Initiatives to lighten workloads include explorations of course redesign models and the incorporation of technology to minimize time required for course management. Blended course models have shifted some of the required face-to-face time to infield project study and online learning support. This has lessened the load in some ways for faculty as they serve students in newly formulated quality learning experiences.

Policies permit and encourage faculty to participate in professional activities, including teaching, scholarship, and service. Online class instruction is included in teaching load as with any class. The unit's use of part-time (adjunct) faculty is purposeful and used to strengthen programs. Practitioner faculty members are included in the unit as valued colleagues in preparing educators. (ex. 6.4.e.17 Practitioner Faculty Member Handbook).

Faculty workload at Northwest is guided institutionally by the policy detailed in the Northwest *Faculty Handbook* (Chapter Two, page seven, ex. 6.4.h.2 Faculty Workload Policies) which identifies a full load annually as "24 to 26 hours." In practice, a full load is typically 12 hours each trimester, with 24 spread out, across the academic year. Faculty members are provided release time for program coordination responsibilities, leadership of new efforts requiring significant time and effort, and service as department chair, curriculum director, program director, etc. (ex. 6.4.h.4 Faculty Workload Summary). The workload for teaching distance learning courses is guided by these same policies. As a result, faculty release time in the unit equated to 52 hours in the fall of 2012 and an average of 57 across the three-year period.

Loads for those faculty members assigned as university supervisors for clinical experiences is calculated at a load ratio of 18 student teachers for a 12-hour load, or at the rate of 1.5 student teachers per hour of load credit.

Northwest has dedicated additional resources to help lighten workloads and to lessen some additional responsibilities that significantly impact faculty time. The university is currently at record enrollment overall and in the numbers of students engaged in our elementary education programs (700+ students). To meet the needs of students and lessen the load for faculty who advise these students we hired two adjuncts for a total of a 0.5 FTE; they work as advisors to students not admitted into the professional education program. These two adjunct faculty meet in

large groups for advising purposes and utilize social learning theories to support the students in this advisement function. In 2013-2014, we will hire one adjunct to cover this 0.5 FTE position and continue this advisement model although we will not be serving the same high numbers of students at this time as enrollments have dipped somewhat. We are spreading advisement duties throughout the Professional Education Department and all department members will be engaged working with elementary majors. Spreading the advisement load over an increased number of faculty will help alleviate some time commitment issues during advisement periods (ex 6.4.h.1 Personnel).

Northwest also takes pride in providing university faculty as the instructor in the classroom, Graduate assistants work under the direct supervision of a qualified faculty member. With that in mind, the PEU has been particularly conscientious about maintaining coherence in programs where adjuncts (practitioner faculty) are employed as classroom instructors. A fulltime faculty member on campus is identified as the lead instructor for each such course; the lead works with the adjunct, either individually or at scheduled meetings, to ensure that class direction is solid and that guidance is provided for developing and instructing the course. Many adjunct faculty teach the same course over multiple trimesters, thereby creating a “learning community” that links them to full-time faculty members in preparation seminars. Their connections to the department are strengthened even further through regular materials provided on the eCompanion website and in continued interactions with the faculty mentors.

The PEU provides support personnel to assist faculty in the completion of their work with provision of a departmental secretary in all offices of the unit and graduate assistants providing additional support. Work-study students are also provided in many departments and a 0.5 FTE secretary is provided for NCATE and the Cooperative Doctoral Program. Additionally, in the past year, a full time Assessment Coordinator for the PEU has been hired and he has two student workers and a graduate assistant.

The Outreach centers, (St. Joseph and Kansas City) are well staffed and able to carry out quality programs consistent with those that are offered and supported on Northwest’s main campus in Maryville. Each Center had a director and one full time secretary; additionally, a 0.75 FTE educational specialist is located at the Kansas City for educator advisement and coordination. A dual credit coordinator is located at the Kansas City Center and supports work of the dual credit programs. In spring of 2013, a review of Outreach Center positions was conducted, leading to some positions and responsibilities being revised. Now one Director oversees both Outreach Centers and a marketing position serve both centers (ex 6.4.a.9 Outreach Organizational Chart). Other positions at the centers also include technology assistants to assist professors in ITVing classes to other sites and/or being available as technology support for trouble shooting. The Northwest Regional Professional Development Center (NWRPDC) had a full time director, a professional staff position, two part time and seven full time staff members in 2012-2013; in 2013-2014, these positions will be shifted to include the director and her secretary, while the staff will consist of one part time person and eight full time staff members (ex. 6.4.j.7 Outreach Centers Website).

Given the financial constraints of the institution and the prescription for work load within the Board of Regents-approved Faculty Handbook, the PEU has also addressed pressures by

strengthening strategies through faculty development. Expert guidance, peer mentoring, and annual consultations with department chairs all provide assistance to faculty in identifying means by which they may work both effectively and efficiently. The unit has made significant and focused efforts to deliver high-quality faculty development programs that meet the identified needs of faculty members and address the goals of the PEU and the departments within the College of Education and Human Services. This is in addition to the strong support provided to faculty members throughout the university and monies provided for attendance at professional association meetings at the state and national levels.

Other avenues for professional development provided through university and PEU efforts include programs through:

- The Center for Information Technology in Education (CITE) office including individual and collective faculty development around eCompanion, eCourse and other forms of technology;
- The Northwest Regional Professional Development Center;
- conferences and workshops provided through shared expertise;
- The University's new Teaching and Learning Center (opening in Fall, 2013); and
- Northwest's endowment-funded Ploghoft Lectureship Series (Standard 5 5.4.g.1 Professional Development Available to and by the PEU).