



# To Strive, To Seek, To Find, and Not to Yield

Supporting Mid- and Late-Career Faculty Productivity and Engagement

David A. Attis

# A Perennial Topic with New Urgency

## *Renewed Focus on Faculty Productivity*

### Recent Trends Put Increased Pressure on Faculty Productivity

- **Financial stresses** forcing institutions to look for ways to reduce costs and increase productivity
- Heightened **external scrutiny** of faculty productivity as the public looks for explanations for the rising cost of higher education
- Faculty **hiring freezes** requiring existing faculty to take on more responsibilities
- **Slow down in faculty retirements** reducing the ability to replace late career faculty with new hires
- **Ambitious institutional research goals** that depend on higher levels of faculty productivity

#### No Way Out?

*“I can’t afford to keep paying faculty who are not productive. But what else can I do with them?”*

Provost, Private Research University

# The Myth of the Faculty Leisure Class

Faculty Shouldering More Hours, More Demands, In More Areas



3



## Faculty Work Hours Comparable to Higher-Pay Professions

Cardiologist



Full-Time Faculty<sup>1</sup>



Associate,  
Corporate Law Firm<sup>2</sup>



### Teaching

Political pressure to increase undergraduate throughput without new funding

Popular enthusiasm for non-traditional modalities or “competency-based” learning

Outcomes assessment increasingly time-consuming



### Research

Stagnating grant funding makes grant administration increasingly high-stakes

Decline of the tenured professoriate and elimination of mandatory retirement raises P&T standards



### Service/Administration

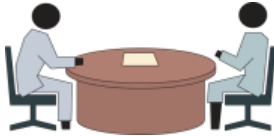
Department chair and dean jobs increasingly professionalized, high-skill (especially as RCM spreads)

Source: NCES National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty, “Background Characteristics, Work Activities, and Compensation of Instructional Faculty and Staff: Fall 2003; *The American Lawyer*, 2005 Midlevel Associates Survey; Medscape, 2013 Physician Compensation Report.

- 1 Anticipating Productivity ‘Stall Points’
  - 2 Engaging Faculty in Student Success
  - 3 Data-Informed Approaches to Instructional Productivity
  - 4 Supporting and Incentivizing Research Productivity
-

# Why Traditional Post-Tenure Review Doesn't Work

*Little Evidence That It Improves Faculty Productivity*



- Review happens years after the problem first occurs
- Administrators have few levers to punish under-productive faculty
- Punishing faculty does not make them more productive
- Department chairs rarely willing to impose punitive measures
- Assumes the problem lies entirely with the faculty member

## The Empirical Evidence

“The majority of respondents were neutral on questions related to policy effect [on faculty work, professional development, and career planning]... This result matches previous reported findings by researchers:

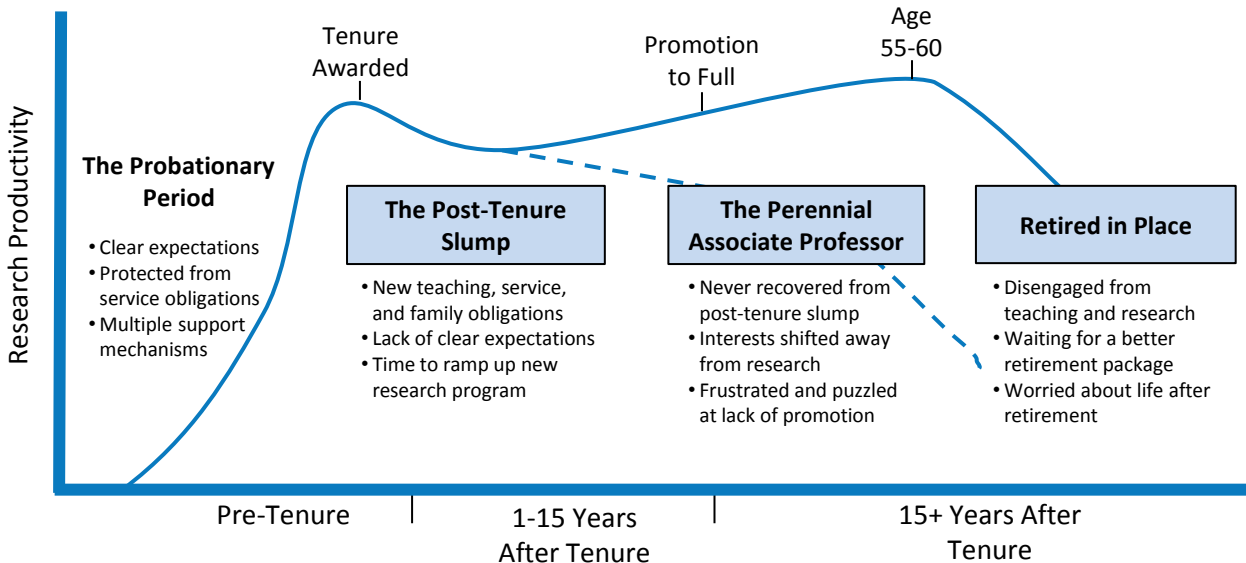
- post-tenure review does not directly improve faculty performance
- is least effective with low-performing faculty
- and has little measurable impact on the institution or value to faculty.”

Licata, Christine M. and Joseph C. Morreale. *Post-Tenure Faculty Review and Renewal III: Outcomes and Impact* (2006)

# Anticipating Productivity Challenges

## *Common Issues Across the Typical Career Lifecycle*

### Faculty Productivity “Stall Points”



# The “Post-Tenure Slump”

## Challenges

### Distractions from Research

- Increase in administrative responsibilities (committee work)
- Increased national service opportunities (disciplinary societies)
- Increase in teaching responsibilities
- Increased family responsibilities

### Loss of Focus

- Need to recover after intensive effort required for tenure
- Lack of formal mentoring
- Lack of clear expectations for promotion to full professor and annual performance

### Time to Ramp Up New Research

- Takes time to get new research to publication stage
- Need to apply for new grants
- Need resources to restart research
- Need new skills for new, often interdisciplinary research

## Solutions

### Reduce Distractions from Research

- Associate professor training (Michigan State, Yale, Michigan)
- Guidelines for how to choose (and decline) opportunities for service (Chicago)
- Conference Travel Childcare Grants (Northwestern)
- Post-Tenure Sabbatical (Yale)

### Set Clear Expectations

- Create development plan and set date for promotion in first year after tenure (Chicago and Michigan)
- Peer support groups (UNC Charlotte and UNC Chapel Hill)
- Mentoring networks (UNC Chapel Hill, Michigan, Brown)

### Provide Research Resources

- List of resources for new associate professors (Brown)
- Associate Professor Fund (Michigan)

# The “Perennial Associate”

## Challenges

### **Never Recovered from Post-Tenure Slump**

- Took a few years to decide on next research project
- New research project never took off
- Unable to keep up with changing field
- Little progress made on overly ambitious project

### **Interests Shifted Away from Research**

- Focused on teaching
- Focused on increasingly time-consuming administrative work
- Focused on public service/ outreach

### **Lack of Clear Expectations for Productivity**

- Chair failed to communicate expectations for promotion
- No feedback from colleagues on progress
- Annual reviews all positive despite lack of progress

## Solutions

### **Give Credit for Non-Research Activities**

- Flexible workload assignments
- Alternative routes to full professor (USC)

### **Set Clear Expectations for Productivity**

- Full professors review all associate professors annually (Chicago, Notre Dame)
- Link post-tenure review process to application for development grants (UMass- Amherst)



# The “Retired in Place” Professor

## Challenges

### **Gradual Disengagement from Research and Teaching**

- Failure to keep up with changing field
- Failure to update courses
- Unable to maintain excitement after so many years of teaching the same courses
- Lack of connection with students, younger scholars

### **Resistance to Retirement**

- Lack financial means to retire
- Concerned about having nothing to do after retirement

## Solutions

### **Plan for the End**

- Start planning for retirement just after promotion
- Create annually updated five year plans (Michigan)
- Phased retirement (Yale, UNC Chapel Hill)
- Retirement contact outside the department (Brown)

### **Reduce Financial Incentives to Wait**

- Standing buyout packages (Yale)
- Retirement packages that reduce with age (Yale)

### **Preserve Social Ties Post Retirement**

- Office space for emeriti
- Emeritus faculty social club (Michigan State, Yale)

# A Critical Component– Effective Reviews

## *Principles from HR 101 Rarely Applied to Tenured Faculty*

### Essential Elements of Effective Post-Tenure Reviews

Typical Reviews for Tenured Faculty	More Effective Alternatives
Vague or shifting productivity expectations	Clearly defined, discipline-specific performance targets
Backward-looking performance reviews	Annually updated five year development plan
Little constructive feedback from peers	Full professors review all associate professors
Perfunctory reviews from department chair	Training for chairs, review input from broader committee
Few consequences for poor reviews	Explicit outcomes with tasks for both the faculty member and the department chair
Limited resources to support research or faculty development	Small development grants linked to review process
Research output the only path to promotion	Consideration of teaching, service, and outreach
Little feedback from senior administrators	Input and support from deans and other administrators

1

Anticipating Productivity 'Stall Points'

2

**Engaging Faculty in Student Success**

3

Data-Informed Approaches to Instructional Productivity

4

Supporting and Incentivizing Research Productivity

---

# Top-Down Changes Rarely Stick

## Faculty Buy-In and Compliance Critical to Organizational Improvement

Reduce and standardize number of credits required by majors for graduation

Create new professional advising roles to help high-risk students navigate early years

Implement early warning system to track attendance and early performance

Hire instructional design staff to help faculty improve assessment design

*Program heads perceive as threat to reputation and rigor*

*Units fear loss of control over curricular advice*

*Faculty either unaware or view as busywork*

*Non-innovator faculty feel redesign not worth effort*

**4-year graduation rate stagnant,** students struggle with aid limits and major changes

**First-year and undeclared students drop out** at high rates, pursue poor-fit programs

**Preventable issues go unaddressed,** and many students aren't contacted until withdrawing

**High-failure courses hamstringing first-year students,** forcing repeats and remediation

*Unable to enact change without buy-in or approval*

*Changes enacted, but aren't complied with or embraced*

# Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

## Individual and Collective Responsibilities to Guide Institutional Change



### Collective Decision- Making

#### 1 Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion

*Considering student success in each stage of curricular decision-making*

#### 2 Redesign Academic Policies

*Garnering support for student-facing rule changes that promote persistence to degree*

#### 3 Support Evolving Advising Models

*Building buy-in for, confidence in, and collaboration with central and professional advising staff*



### Individual Contribution

#### 4 Enhance the Learning Experience

*Evaluating and scaling high-impact learning innovations across courses and disciplines*

#### 5 Flag Signs of Student Risk

*Equipping faculty with the right tools and techniques to maximize early warning systems*

#### 6 Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups

*Targeting faculty engagement efforts toward students lacking a strong connection to campus*

---

### Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives



*Determining the right metrics, organizational structures, and incentives to encourage improvement among central administrators, deans, department chairs, and frontline faculty*

# Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success

## Individual and Collective Responsibilities to Guide Institutional Change



### Collective Decision- Making

#### 1 Remove Curricular Barriers to Completion

1. DIY Enrollment Analysis Platform
2. Enrollment Impact Audits
3. Task-Based Retention Teams
4. Guided Project Management

#### 2 Redesign Academic Policies

5. Academic Policy Audit

#### 3 Support Evolving Advising Models

6. Faculty-Led Advisor Training
7. Advising Career Ladder
8. Unit Liaison Roles
9. Distributed Support Balancing



### Individual Contribution

#### 4 Enhance the Learning Experience

Scaling Learning Innovations

#### 5 Flag Signs of Student Risk

10. Early Warning Design Requirements
11. Adjustable Alert Parameters
12. Effectiveness-Focused Feedback

#### 6 Mentor Rising-Risk Student Groups

13. Targeted First-Year Mentor Matching
14. High-Flyer Transfer Intervention

---

### Sustaining Momentum Through Structured Accountability and Incentives

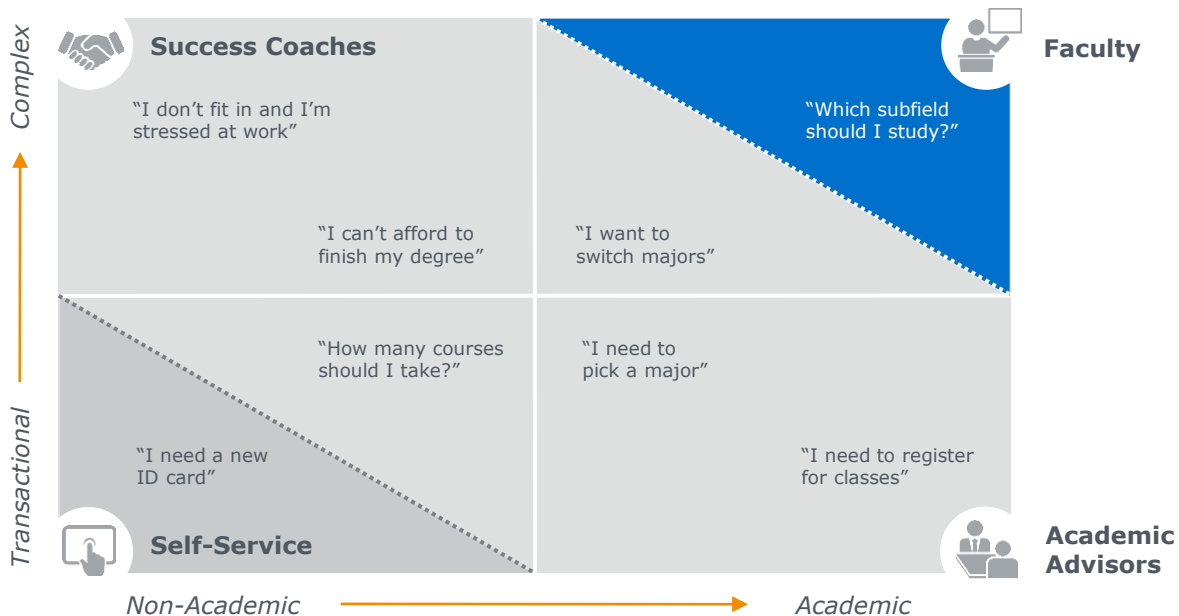
15. Leadership Scorecards

16. Performance-Based Bonus Funding

17. Departmental Performance Dashboard

# Unbundling the Advising Process

Dozens of Discrete Problems Require Variety of Roles on Campus



# Despite Growing Comfort, Hesitation Remains

Most Faculty Familiar with Innovations, But Avoid Trying Them Out

## A Growing Comfort with Tech-Enhanced Teaching

**60%**

Of faculty say the LMS is a critical tool to their teaching

**78%**

Of faculty have a growing interest in using tech in teaching

”

### A Form of Empowerment

“Faculty are starting to see their own embrace of technology as a form of empowerment.”

*Matthew Rascoff,  
University of North Carolina*

**C**

**“Professors Know About High-Tech Teaching Methods, but Few Use Them”**

Technique	Not Familiar	Familiar but haven't tried	Tried	Adopted
Clickers and other real-time feedback	11%	<b>64%</b>	10%	12%
Interdisciplinary team-teaching	13%	<b>63%</b>	12%	10%
Hybrid courses	8%	<b>58%</b>	11%	20%
Fully online course	9%	<b>57%</b>	7%	24%
Online collaboration tools	9%	<b>56%</b>	12%	20%
Experiential or service learning	14%	<b>49%</b>	13%	23%
Flipped classroom	6%	<b>47%</b>	17%	29%



# Creating Departmental Accountability



## Mission-Adjusted Performance Bonuses Push Units to Improve



### Strategic Accountability Matrix

Department	Student Success Metric			
	Example: Student Credit Hours lost to DFW			
	Weight	Expected	Actual	Score
Biology	2.0	381	518	↓ 0.74
Anthropology	1.0	201	173	↑ 1.16



Student success metrics include both outcomes and unit programs / investments



Ratio of actual to expected performance determines share of annual bonus funds (\$400,000 pool)

**Metric weight adjusted** according to unit characteristics (Philosophy judged less on internship placements)

Negotiated by chair, dean, and provost to avoid unjustified alterations to formula

### Department performance evaluated across 18 strategic priorities, including:

#### High-Impact Practices

1. Internships
2. Intercultural immersion
3. Freshmen degree plans
4. Advisee satisfaction

#### Student Progression

1. Credit hours lost to DFW
2. Midterm grade reports
3. 30 credits first year
4. 60 credits first two years

# Measurement Spurs Grassroots Innovation

## Departments Quick to React to Now-Visible Performance Gaps

### 1 Local Curricular Reforms

**Aligning pre-requisites with local community colleges:** Biology department adjusted introductory curriculum to better suit transfer students

**Revitalizing first-year instruction:** Low-enrollment science programs shifted from “weeding freshmen out” to more engaged pedagogy

### 2 Greater Investment in Student Support

**Increasing instructional support for at-risk groups:** Psychology department added supplemental instruction to address noticeable achievement gap

**Requiring four-year degree plans:** Share of all first-year students with complete degree plans grew 45% in first two years of assessment

### 3 Lasting Cultural Change

**Clarifying each unit’s role in contributing to institutional performance goals:** Unprecedented awareness of how the actions of each department add up to ultimate success or failure

**Preempting performance-based funding:** Faculty, staff, and unit leaders acclimated to culture of evaluation and focused on continuous improvement, without top-down system dictate

1

Anticipating Productivity 'Stall Points'

2

Engaging Faculty in Student Success

3

**Data-Informed Approaches to Instructional Productivity**

4

Supporting and Incentivizing Research Productivity

---

# Breaking the Trade-off Between Cost and Quality



## Identifying Opportunities to Reallocate Low Impact Resources



### Space Utilization



### Course Offerings



### Course Success



### Curricular Complexity



### Faculty Workload

- Identify course access bottlenecks
- Better leverage existing space

- Consolidate underutilized sections
- Reduce number of small courses

- Expand bottleneck courses
- Limit high-DFW courses

- Simplify degree requirements
- Reduce niche course offerings

- Maximize capacity utilization
- Differentiate faculty workloads

**50%**

*Classroom Utilization*

**33%**

*Underutilized Sections*

**20%**

*Attempted Credits Not Completed*

**30%**

*Students Graduating with Excess Credits*

**60%**

*Faculty Teaching Less than Standard Load*

# Why Haven't We Done This Already?

## Four Roadblocks to Improved Academic Resource Management

### 1 Incomplete, Inaccurate Data



Data related to academic resources spread among multiple ERPs and shadow systems of varying quality

### 2 Ad Hoc Allocation Processes



Even when metrics are available, unit leaders struggle to design policy interventions to advance their goals

### 3 Lack of Unit-Level Incentives



Heads (and some deans) skeptical that departments will receive benefits from their efficiency gains

### 4 Few Reallocation Options



Difficult to reallocate specialized faculty from areas of low demand to areas of high demand

# Clarifying and Enforcing Expectations

## Academic Resource Utilization Opportunity Analysis

### Sample Analyses (Illustrative)

Resource	Target	Options
<b>Classroom Scheduling</b>	> 30% of depts courses outside of prime time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule more courses off-peak</li> <li>• Obtain waiver from dean</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Standard Class Meeting Pattern</b>	One of six approved meeting patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use approved meeting pattern</li> <li>• Obtain waiver from dean</li> </ul>
<b>Class Size</b>	> 15 students for undergraduate course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cancel small course</li> <li>• Reduce frequency of course offering</li> <li>• Reduce prerequisites</li> <li>• Obtain waiver from dean</li> <li>• Teach off load</li> </ul>
<b>Section Fill Rate</b>	> 60% for multi-section course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate non-essential sections</li> <li>• Obtain waiver from dean</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty Utilization</b>	Departmental avg $\geq$ 360 SCH/faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassign adjunct courses to FT faculty</li> <li>• Obtain waiver from dean</li> </ul>
<b>Credits Required for Major</b>	= 120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce non-essential requirements</li> <li>• Obtain waiver from dean</li> </ul>

- 1 Anticipating Productivity 'Stall Points'
  - 2 Engaging Faculty in Student Success
  - 3 Data-Informed Approaches to Instructional Productivity
  - 4 **Supporting and Incentivizing Research Productivity**
-

# Aligning Faculty Effort with Institutional Goals



Supporting the University's Most Precious Resource

## Four Key Challenges to Aligning Workload Assignments with Mission



**Improved Assessment:**  
Giving faculty credit for all they do



**1**

**Multidimensional  
Productivity Analysis**



**Research Releases:**  
Targeting releases to the most productive faculty



**2**

**Strategic Research  
Release Allocation**



**Admin/Service Releases:**  
Reducing time on non-critical activities



**3**

**Specialized  
Admin/Service Roles**



**Specialized Teaching:**  
Ensuring quality teaching while supporting research



**4**

**Expansion of "Clinical"  
Professoriate**



# Multidimensional Productivity Analysis

Holistic Reports a Starting Point for Workload Allocation, Assessment



## Defining Key Indicators...



Teaching

- Courses taught / assigned load
- Undergraduate SCH
- Master's / PhD SCH
- Independent study SCH
- Lab SCH



Scholarship

- Books, book chapters, & reviews
- Journal articles
- Research expenditures
- Release time (in \$)
- Creative compositions
- Exhibitions, performances, keynotes
- Conference/ poster presentations
- Editing books or book chapters
- Independent lectures



Service

- Admin. release time

## ... For Holistic Assessment

### Annual Review of Total Productivity



Dashboards provide single version of the truth for departmental “contribution to mission” meetings with provost’s team deans, chair, and interested faculty.

### Avoids Measuring “Hours” or “% Time”



Moves productivity conversation away from irrelevant factors (time inputs) to value-driven factors (outputs, outcomes).

### Department-Driven



Central facilitates discussions of dashboard metrics, but departments use local knowledge to decide appropriate workload adjustments.

**\$1.7M**

Adjunct funds re-allocated in A&S based on contribution-to-mission dashboards (~4% of total budget)



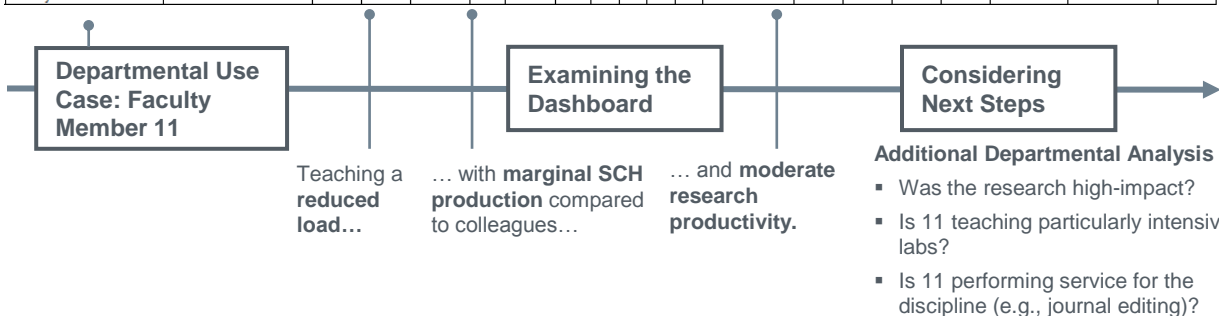
# From Insight to Action



Dashboard Enables “Spot Checks,” Highlights Areas for Further Analysis

Tenure-Track Contributions to Mission

Name	Comment	Semesters Available	Sections Taught	Section SCH	MS & PHD Thesis SCH	Independent Study SCH	Lab/ Activity SCH	Book	Book Chapter	Book Review	Journal Article	Conference Pub, Encyclopedia Entry, Creative Composition, Translation	Editor of a Book or Book Chapter	Conference or Poster Presentation	Individual Lecture, Reading	Keynote, Exhibition, Performance, Curator	Release Time	Research Expenditures	Total Credit Hours
Faculty Member 1	F Sab	1.00	1.00	964	9	68					3			12	1		12,000	285,496	1,041
Faculty Member 2		2.00	2.00	122	14	49	36					1		8					221
Faculty Member 3		2.00	2.00	156	2	40					1			6				5,885	198
Faculty Member 4		2.00	2.00	180	4	45	118							4					347
Faculty Member 5	Exec Asst position	0.00			4	14			1		2			7					18
Faculty Member 6		2.00	2.50	461	8	17			2		2			6			2,001	390,767	486
Faculty Member 7		2.00	3.00	160	13	90					3			5	3			112,027	263
Faculty Member 8		2.00	4.00	1,388		13													2,764
Faculty Member 9	Chair	1.00	3.00	687	6	48					3			6				59,249	741
Faculty Member 10		2.00	1.00	68	3	98								14		2	11,997	768,283	169
Faculty Member 11		2.00	1.00	34			78				3			4					112



# Bringing Rigor to Research Releases



## Two Key Questions to Increase Value of Release Time

### ✘ Traditional Allocation



#### Departmental Benchmarks

- **Scattershot:** High-performers often teach same workload as colleagues
- **Prospective:** Based on promised, not demonstrated, productivity



#### Chair Supervision

- **Reallocation Culturally Difficult:** Semi-permanent nature of releases makes chairs unwilling to cut them
- **Lack of Clear Expectations**  
Releases not tied to efficiency or quality standards

### ✔ “Metric-Informed” Allocation



#### Demonstrated Productivity

- **Targeted:** Guides scarce release time to high-productivity researchers
- **Reactive:** Reduces uncertainty of “betting on” increased productivity



#### Renewable Agreements

- **“Off-Ramps”:** Frequent renewal provides opportunity to reallocate
- **Performance Standards:** Grantees expected to produce within a window of time or to a certain quality

How Do We Allocate Releases in the First Place?

What Accountability Measures Exist for Releases?



# Faculty-Driven Metrics in Action

## Course Release Incentives Can Emphasize Quality Over Quantity



### Data-Driven Research Release Policy



Points earned for every publication over last 5yrs, modified by journal quality...

- **A+:** 18 points
- **A:** 13 points
- **A-:** 10 points
- **B:** 8 points
- **C:** 3 points



... and converted into course releases for the coming year.

- **15 Points:** 1 release
- **24 Points:** 2 releases
- **36 Points:** 3 releases
- **48 Points:** 3 releases + monetary award

Total Articles

**2009**      **2012**

**131** → **124**

Although **total publications declined** slightly...

"A" Articles

**22** → **38**

... **high-quality publications increased** by >70% through 2012.



#### Metrics for Ranking "A" Journals:

- Acceptance rate (e.g., A+ = <13%)
- Impact factor
- Peer-reviewed journal rankings
- Other university journal rankings
- "Reputation" of editorial board members

#### Faculty Establish Journal Rankings:

Faculty advisory committee assigns ranks based on self-selected principles (e.g., acceptance rate, impact factor)



# A Shift in the Model

Multiple Tracks for Tenure Creates Tensions, Limits Research Intensity

## Initial "Specialized" Model (All Tenure-Track) (2000)



**Teaching-Track:**  
4/4 load

**1/3**

*Planned Faculty Breakdown*

**1/4**



**Full-Time Non-TT  
Clinical Faculty:**  
4/4 load



**Balanced Track:**  
3/3 load

**1/3**



**Research Track:**  
2/2 load  
(2/1 before tenure)

**1/3**

**3/4**



**Asst.  
Professors:** 2/2  
load (2/1 before  
tenure)



**Political Tensions:** Multiple standards for tenure create resentment, research faculty still dominant in admin



**Less Specialization, Lower Research Productivity:**  
Balanced track taught less than teaching track, but too much to compete for high-potential researchers



## Refined Model (2010)