



Faculty Workload Equity:

Why it matters and what
department chairs can do

September 19, 2024



Sponsored by the IFWEL Project (NSF ADVANCE Adaptation Grant
“Innovating Faculty Workload through an Equity Lens”)



Provost Karyn Scissum Gunn



Dr. Sabrina Alimahomed
Professor of Sociology




Dr. Margaret Merryfield



Dr. Sergio Mendez

CSULB NSF ADVANCE TEAM

Your presenters

- Sabrina Alimahomed, Professor, Sociology
 - Margy Merryfield, Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry
 - Sergio Mendez, Associate Professor, Chemical Engineering
- 
- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.



Innovating Faculty Workloads through an Equity Lens

The goal of the NSF ADVANCE program is to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers.

Focused on institutional and culture change to retain, promote, and advance women.

Our project is an adaptation grant developed from University of Maryland's "Faculty Workload and Rewards Project" which worked with 50 departments at three universities.

The IFWEL project

- Working with individual departments to:
 - Identify critical workload issues
 - Explore the data that's available and identify data that should be collected
 - Identify priorities for improvement
 - Develop Equity Action Plans
- Working with the University to develop dashboards that show key components of workload
- Professional development for individual faculty members and chairs
- Identification of opportunities for systemic change and improvement

What is the problem we are trying to solve?

An assistant professor meets with her department chair because she is concerned that she may be on more university and college committees than other assistant professors and it is hurting her research time. Her department chair says it is hard to know; everyone is working hard. The chair does not offer to help her mediate the situation. She is not sure what to do next.

What are the problems with this scenario?



What the research shows...

Women spend more time on teaching and service activities, and less time on research (pronounced at Associate rank)

Women of color report more mentoring and diversity related work

Women & faculty of color asked more often and & for non-promotable tasks

Women of color are less likely to see their work as “counted” in rewards systems

Lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to report higher stress from their workload.

Faculty Surveys

Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011; Eagan & Garvey, 2015; Hurtado et al., 2012; Link et al. 2008; Misra et al. 2011, 2012; Mitchell & Hesli, 2013; Winslow, 2010; Misra et al. 2021

Faculty Activity Reports

O'Meara, Kuvaeva & Nyunt, 2017; Guarino & Borden, 2017

Interviews & Focus Groups

Acker & Armenti, 2004; Misra et al. 2011, 2012; O'Meara, 2016; Hanasano et al. 2019

Experiments

El-Alayli et al., 2018; Babcock et al., 2017

Lack of inclusion of non-binary faculty in research

Why should department chairs care about workload equity?

Perceptions of unfairness in the distribution of work can impact morale and invite suspicion and distrust.

Work allocation systems with concrete, objective criteria mitigate the operation of bias and inequity .

Working conditions perceived as *inequitable/unfair* can negatively affect retention and job satisfaction.

The more faculty agree that fair workload practices have been enacted in their department, greater satisfaction with teaching and service rises in all groups

Workload is not just an individual issue – it's also structural.

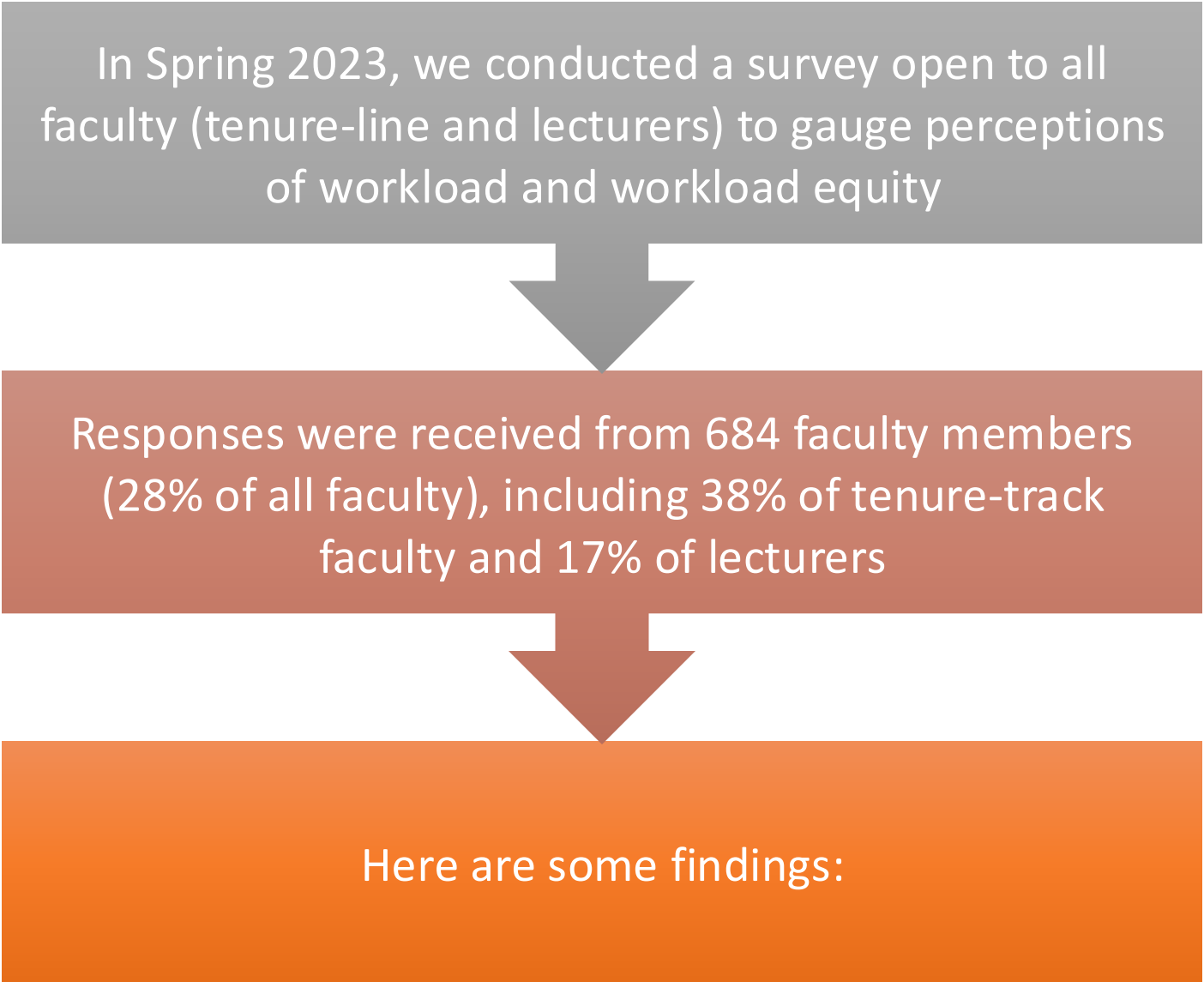
Departments with transparent data, planned rotations, clear benchmarks, commitment to fair workload produce better outcomes

Tell us
about your
experiences



What do CSULB faculty think?

In Spring 2023, we conducted a survey open to all faculty (tenure-line and lecturers) to gauge perceptions of workload and workload equity



```
graph TD; A[In Spring 2023, we conducted a survey open to all faculty (tenure-line and lecturers) to gauge perceptions of workload and workload equity] --> B[Responses were received from 684 faculty members (28% of all faculty), including 38% of tenure-track faculty and 17% of lecturers]; B --> C[Here are some findings:];
```

Responses were received from 684 faculty members (28% of all faculty), including 38% of tenure-track faculty and 17% of lecturers

Here are some findings:

Table 3. Perceptions of Workload Equity, Department Commitment to Equity, & Fairness in Evaluating Workload (questions adapted from Misra et al., 2021) N= 555-617

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I think most people in our department feel work is distributed fairly.	23%	28%	19%	19%	11%
There is a strong commitment within our department faculty that workload be fair.	18%	19%	19%	22%	22%
The most important teaching, mentoring, and campus and community service work I do is credited within my department reward system.	24%	24%	21%	17%	14%
Our department has transparent information about faculty work activities for all department faculty to see (e.g., no of advisees, committees, size of classes).	26%	24%	17%	16%	17%

Table 3. Perceptions of Workload Equity, Department Commitment to Equity, & Fairness in Evaluating Workload (questions adapted from Misra et al., 2021) N= 555-617

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Our department has transparent information about compensation for key roles (e.g., support for taking on specific administrative roles.)	32%	27%	17%	12%	12%
Our workload decisions tend to be informed by data that is visible and widely available to everyone.	33%	28%	20%	10%	9%
There are clearly identified benchmarks for expected campus service contributions.	36%	28%	17%	12%	7%
Our department has consensus on a clear set of priorities for faculty time.	27%	29%	20%	14%	10%

Qualitative findings: Workloads are high, and cultural/identity taxation adds extra burdens

- "Workload for faculty at CSULB is oppressively high."
- "Additionally, faculty of color, and women of color especially, face cultural and identity taxation on a routine basis and although the university purports to support equity it routinely implements and protects policies that exacerbate the inequitable workload that faculty of color women of color face on campus."
- "There are certain types of work that tend to be feminized in that women do the work, and the work is invisible and undervalued (e.g., mentoring, internship supervision, oversight of student clubs, advising). I am tired of shouldering more than my share of "administrative housework" only to hear that this type of work does not warrant resources or recognition."

Qualitative findings: Invisible labor is not rewarded

- “There is a lack of understanding about how time consuming my service work is and more institutionalized forms of committee work tend to be more highly valued.”
- “I am in a unique position where 40% of my responsibilities are only partially accounted for through the RTP process since they lie outside the three boxes of Research, Teaching, and Service. For this reason, a good portion of my work is "invisible" to the RTP process, yet it is work that takes away from my research efforts (which I end up doing on "my own time"--evenings, weekends, holidays, etc.)”
- “Overall, there is a culture of critique in faculty evaluations. Certain faculty, especially faculty of color, are often critiqued and not praised for non-traditional contributions to the Department, College and University.”

EXERCISE: THE HALLWAY ASK

Imagine you are a department chair who has just found out that you need to identify someone to represent the department on a College task force on student success. The position needs to be filled immediately. You walk down the hallway of your department, and you see the office doors of six faculty members.

The doors of the first three offices are open. These offices belong to the following faculty members with the associated characteristics:

- Dan is an associate professor who does good research but tends to say “no” to protect his time for research when he is asked to take on additional teaching or service tasks.
- Amanda is a full professor who has a strong research agenda. She is known as a somewhat abrasive teacher and committee member but is also detailed and good at getting things done.
- Elizabeth is an associate professor with strong research who everyone likes. She will likely say yes and complete the work well.

The other three doors, which belong to faculty members Marian, Damian, and Josh, are closed. You do not know if these faculty members are in their offices or not.

As a department chair, who of these six faculty members would you ask to take on this important role?


Food for thought

What is the role and responsibility of the Chair in ensuring fair workload?

What tools do chairs have in influencing the workload of their faculty?

What specific role can/should chairs play in supporting junior faculty regarding their workload?

Equitable Workload Conditions



Transparency & Clarity	Widely visible information about faculty work activities available for departments members to see; clearly identified benchmarks
Fairness	Fairness in assigning workload, taking into account faculty preferences; workload is equally distributed
Credit	Recognition and rewards for faculty members who are expending more effort in certain areas.
Context	Acknowledgment that different faculty members have different strengths, interests, and demands that shape their workloads.
Accountability & Norms	Department has clear norms around sharing workload equitably; mechanisms to ensure faculty members fulfill their work obligations

Wrapping up: fostering equity in your department

- Build trust
- Be as transparent as possible and share data
- Engage your faculty in discussions, even if the issues are challenging
- Look out for vulnerable faculty (especially those in the RTP pipeline)
- Seek opportunities to formalize processes (e.g. RTP policy, norms and expectations for service, policy for allocating assigned time, class scheduling practices)
- Apply an equity lens to your actions

Discussion



Thank you!

