

Appendix 2

Faculty Staffing Goals

Updated July, 2002

What follows is a revision of the “white paper” prepared by Phil Hall, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty and distributed to the Rector and Visitors at the meeting held in September 2001. This revised paper is intended to serve as a framework for continuing discussions by the faculty, the President and Board of Visitors, and other Mary Washington College stakeholders regarding the acquisition and allocation of additional teaching positions.

The context for such discussions is a challenge put forward by President Anderson at the July 2001 retreat of the Board of Visitors, during a session in which he outlined for the Board certain long-term trends and goals for the College. The top priority, he said, was to enable the faculty to enhance the quality of the academic experience for Mary Washington students. What students needed, he said, was not only more flexibility and less frustration in scheduling their classes, but also more opportunities for active learning, mentoring, and participation in faculty-directed research and internships. To achieve this, he said, we would need to provide appropriate professional development support for our faculty and also reduce our student/faculty ratio from its current level of about 18:1 (on the Fredericksburg campus) to about 15:1. And that lower ratio would need to be maintained even as student enrollments increased to the long-agreed-upon ceiling of 4,000.

How many additional faculty would the College need to reach a 15/1 Student/faculty ratio? What, if any, other steps would need to be taken besides just hiring more faculty? What would it all cost? How would the new positions be allocated? Some, hopefully plausible answers to questions such as these are suggested below.

In Fall 2001, the gross student/faculty ratio in FTE terms on the Fredericksburg campus was 17.58/1 (3569 FTEs/203FTEf), and that September the College submitted to the State Council of Higher Education a “strategic plan” which, even then, identified as a prime institutional goal the addition of more faculty in order to reduce that ratio to something more in line with the student faculty ratios at Mary Washington’s official peer institutions. These peer institutions are predominantly very well-endowed, high-tuition private liberal arts colleges, most of which have student/faculty ratios in the 11/1 or 12/1 range or even lower; but even the two public institutions on the list enjoy, respectively, 14/1 and 13/1 ratios and none of the 24 on the list is higher than 14/1. This, in part, is the comparative frame of reference underlying the immediate goal President Anderson placed before the Board of Visitors.

It would take 35 additional faculty to reach the 15/1 figure at Mary Washington if student enrollment remained constant at the Fall 2001 level. If student enrollment increased to 4000 headcount (without any change in the ratio of full-time to part-time

students) we would have about 3726 FTEs and need 248 FTEf, or 45 more faculty than currently, to maintain the 15/1 student/faculty ratio. If student enrollment at Fredericksburg increased all the way to 4000 FTEs, our estimated headcount would be 4433 students and a 15/1 student/faculty ratio would require 267 FTEf, or 64 more than currently.¹

Costs

The current total cost (salary plus benefits) of one faculty position, based upon Mary Washington's General Assembly-authorized faculty salary average of \$60,000, is \$79,200. 35 times \$79,200 is about \$2.8M, but the actual cost of new faculty would probably be somewhat less because we would be hiring mostly at the entry level, typically in the low forties. Nevertheless, the actual initial outlay for 35 new faculty, just for annual faculty salary plus benefits, would probably be close to \$2.3M. Add recruiting and relocation costs (about \$5,000 per hire) plus the costs of furnishing and equipping new offices and, sometimes, specialized lab spaces and scientific equipment (could run as high as \$50,000 in individual cases) plus increases in annual operating expenses (perhaps \$2,500 per hire), and the first-year cost for 35 new faculty likely would approach \$3 million. We should plan also to add support personnel as well, plus library resources and extra technology infrastructure. It is not unreasonable to estimate the total cost of increasing the size of the faculty by 35 FTEf at something like \$3.6 million. For 45 FTEf, \$4.6M. For 64 FTEf, \$6.6M. And these figures do not include the capital outlay costs of some major renovations in academic buildings that we would need at some point, converting underutilized classroom spaces into office and lab spaces for faculty.

Benefits

What would the College gain from these large outlays?

The additional faculty would enable the College not only to “catch up” with recent enrollment increases, but also to increase the quality of instruction and provide substantially more opportunities for Mary Washington students to experience enriched faculty mentoring and participate in active learning. Furthermore, it would enable the College, more than just proportionately, to schedule and staff more sections of high-demand courses and thus create more flexibility in scheduling for students. Basically, we are talking about more classes with smaller enrollments plus substantial increases in opportunities for students to engage in faculty-supervised internships, independent studies, and undergraduate research. The allocation plan outlined below would also guarantee faculty that they would never be “overloaded,” either in terms of total student enrollments or in terms of excessive course preparations.

¹ It is interesting to note that just returning to our “customary” staffing level of 17/1 on the Fredericksburg campus would require 211 FTEf (8 additional faculty) at the Fall 2001 enrollment level. Should enrollment grow to 4000 HC, 17/1 would require 219 FTEf (16 additional faculty), and 4000 FTEs would require 235 FTEf (32 additional faculty).

1. **Any faculty with six or more different course “preparations” (5 or more in the sciences and studio art) in year n would be entitled to 3 hours (4 hours for science) of release time in year n + 1.** Eventually, by creating more sections of multiple-section courses, it should be the case that few faculty members would ever be assigned schedules with six or more different course preparations (5 or more in the sciences and studio art) in any single academic year. However in 2001-2002, an estimated 25 faculty were assigned such schedules. To put this “rule” in place at Fall 2001 enrollment levels would require approximately 4 additional faculty positions.
2. **Any faculty who teach 600 or more student credit hours in year n would be entitled to 3 hours (4 hours for science) of release time in year n + 1.** Eventually, by lowering average class-section enrollments, it should be the case that few faculty members would be assigned schedules that might collectively enroll 600 or more student credit hours in any single academic year. However in 2001-2002, an estimated 34 faculty experienced such a schedule. To put this “rule” in place at Fall 2001 enrollment levels would require approximately 5 additional faculty positions.

To support faculty-student mentorships in the form of directed independent studies, undergraduate research projects and faculty supervised internships, the College could create the following “teaching load equivalencies:”

3. **5 student credit hours (“sch”) of Independent Study (IS) and/or Undergraduate Research (UR) supervision equals one “hour” of conventional course teaching.** In 2001-2002, faculty supervised approximately 1168 sch of Independent Study and/or Undergraduate Research (428 student projects), virtually all of it on an “overload” basis with the general expectation that their efforts would be compensated at some undesignated future time with one hour of “release time” per 15 sch of IS or UR supervised. To support the current level of IS/UR activity in the new manner described here would require approximately 9 additional faculty positions, but it would be desirable to increase the number of projects to a number more like 800 annually, which would require 17 additional faculty.
4. **10 sch of Internship supervision equals one “hour” of conventional course teaching.** In 2001-2002 students at the College pursued 176 internships during the regular academic year, averaging about 3 credit hours each. Again, faculty supervise these on an overload basis and then later claim compensation at the rate of one “hour” of release time per 30 sch of internships supervised. To support the current level of internship activity in the new manner described here would require approximately 3 additional faculty positions; but again, a significant increase to, say, 300 or so internships annually would be a reasonable goal, requiring 5 additional faculty.

The idea behind these new equivalencies is that faculty should not need always to supervise student projects as overloads but rather take them on as part of their regular twelve-hour load, in lieu of a conventional 3- or 4-hour course. Typically that would entail supervising the IS or UR projects of five students, or the Internships of ten students, or some equivalent mix of projects and internships, plus three instead of the usual four conventional courses (two instead of three in the sciences). Often, the students might be working on projects in teams rather than individually, as is common now in the Psychology Department, for example, and faculty could earn their course equivalencies while directing just one or two separate projects. Faculty with fewer 3 or 4 hours worth of projects and/or internships to supervise in a given semester would still supervise them as “overloads,” but would accumulate credit toward eventual release time at a much faster rate than is currently the case. Under these circumstances, it is anticipated that many more Mary Washington students would be given the opportunity to experience this very rich sort of mentored learning than is currently the case. Indeed, it might become feasible for the College to explore the establishment of a universal degree requirement that all students undertake an independent study, undergraduate research or other faculty-guided project, or internship. As it is currently, only four Mary Washington majors have such a requirement (History, Historic Preservation, Psychology, and Religion). In order to support such a requirement at current (Fall 2001) enrollment levels, using the faculty load equivalency scheme described above in items 3 and 4, it would just about require the 22 new faculty positions projected for 800 projects plus 300 internships.

Altogether, the four-element “plan” outlined above would require 21 additional faculty to support just the current level of instructional activity at the current (Fall 2001) enrollment level. If the IS/UR/Internship requirement were made universal, the plan would require 31 additional faculty.

The remaining four to fourteen faculty we would have at the 15/1 student/faculty ratio staffing level could be deployed in several ways.

A bit of this remainder should certainly be deployed to further decrease dependence on adjunct (part-time) faculty. For Fall 2002, the College will employ 85-90 adjunct faculty members (over 22 FTEf on an annualized basis) to teach between 14 and 15% of the course sections offered. That is better than in Fall 2000, but still too many. At least six “adjunct conversions”² remain justified, in six different disciplines. In FTEf terms, this would require only 1.8 additional faculty positions (one FTEf faculty position occupied by adjunct faculty teaches 30 credit hours per year whereas the same position occupied by a full-time faculty member teaches only 24 credit hours per year). It would reduce our dependence on adjunct faculty to less than 20 FTEf and less than 12% of the offered course sections – a much better number, well below the statewide average for 4-year colleges and universities. Indeed, the College should consider doing these six adjunct conversions even before any major appropriation for large numbers of additional

²Full-time faculty teach a twelve-hour (per semester) load – usually eight courses per year. Thus, whenever in a single discipline 8 or more course sections per year (twenty four credit hours worth) are taught by adjunct faculty, the work load justifies hiring a full-time faculty member instead, to replace 8 course sections worth of adjunct faculty. This is an “adjunct conversion.”

faculty positions is secured. In budget terms, twenty- four credit hours of adjunct teaching costs a total of between \$14,400 and \$26,000, whereas the total compensation for a new entry-level tenure-track faculty hire this year will be approximately \$54,000 in most disciplines (albeit up to \$79,000 in some). So the net cost of six adjunct conversions would be somewhere between \$168,000 and \$388,000. \$250,000 might be a reasonable estimate.

Another need is the creation of additional sections of new or existing high-demand courses, especially courses meeting various general education requirements. To put that in context, in 2001-2002 MWC Fredericksburg offered approximately 1300 course sections, total for the year, almost half of which served general education “Goal” areas. Every faculty position we could add would create 8 (or six in the case of the natural sciences and studio art) new course sections. A conservative estimate of the minimum need here is 3 FTEf, but even more could be employed to advantage.

Last but by no means least, there is much need for release time to support individual faculty scholarship and professional development. One form this takes is sabbatical leaves, for which faculty are eligible after they are awarded tenure, as often as once every seven years. The number of tenured faculty in Fall 2002 is 119. One seventh of 119 is 17. But currently we have the resources to award only eight leaves a year. Leaves are not as expensive as actual new faculty positions. Each leave “costs” 0.5 FTEf and up to \$20,000 to “hire behind” a temporary replacement faculty member. A good estimate of the current total annual need for sabbatical leaves is 14 – six more than we currently have. But note that if we were to add 35 or more faculty positions to the current 203, the eventual need for leaves would grow proportionately. Possibly, support for leaves should be pursued separately, beyond the support needed to move to a student/faculty ratio of 15/1.

In addition to occasional sabbatical leaves, many of our faculty are active scholars and they need time to pursue their individual scholarly projects. To be sure, the summer months meet some of that need, and the College’s Faculty Development program provides a number of faculty with financial support for their summer research projects. However, there is also real need, currently totally unmet, to provide some release time from teaching to support faculty scholarship during the academic year. This would take the form of one-course teaching load reductions which individual faculty could apply for through Faculty Development proposals, just as they now apply for summer support. The cost of each such release-time grant would be just the cost of the adjunct faculty “hire-behind” compensation – currently averaging \$885 -- and 0.033 FTEf per credit hour. A minimal estimate of current need is 2 FTEf, and 5 FTEf would be better. And again, we should plan for future proportional scale-up, if and when we add new tenure-track faculty lines.

The “plan” outlined above could be implemented within the constraints of a 15/1 student/faculty ratio, but choices would need to be made to stay within the 35 “new” positions which 15/1 would bring. To re-cap, at current (Fall 2000) student enrollment levels, the position allocations are as follows:

Relief from excess preparations	4 positions
Relief from excess enrollments	5 positions
IS/UR support	9 - 17 positions
Internship support	3 - 5 positions
Adjunct conversions	2 positions
Additional sections of high-demand courses	3 - 6 positions
Release time for faculty scholarship	2 - 5 positions
Sabbatical leaves	<u>3 positions</u>
Total	31 - 47 positions

An Alternative Approach

Four years ago, when the General Assembly allocated 30 additional faculty positions to the College and eventually provided funding for approximately nine of those, we deployed six of the nine positions to support the so-called “pass-around” program under which all faculty would have one opportunity during six upcoming semesters for a one-course teaching load reduction. The “pass-around” plan was a recommendation of an *ad-hoc* committee, convened by the dean of the faculty for the purpose of examining possibilities for teaching load reduction at the College. When the committee examined the situation, it concluded that if the College really had 30 new faculty positions it might just be able to support an across-the-board “4,3” teaching load for Mary Washington faculty, in place of the current “4,4” standard. The “pass-around” plan, deploying six positions mostly in the form of adjunct “hire-behinds,” would take the faculty one-third of the way there, and the goal would be to reach “4,3” when the remaining 21 of the authorized positions were funded, even if that required some squeezing in the end, in the form of slightly larger class sizes in places. (It appeared, to the Committee, that it might take as much as 25 positions to achieve a “4/3 load” or its equivalent across the board, assuming conversions to full-time positions when possible rather than relying so heavily on adjuncts as is the case with the present pass around plan.) The faculty endorsed the committee recommendation and the College agreed to implement the “pass-around” plan.

But now, here we are talking not about 21 new positions or even 30 but 35! Even though our enrollments have grown some during the four intervening years since the *ad hoc* committee made its recommendations, it is clear that 35 new positions would take us to “4,3” and then some. Why not just do that?

One response to that question is that the plan described above could indeed move many (if not most) faculty to “4,3” loads or even “3,3” loads of conventional courses. But be that as it may, there are at least two major shortcomings of a straight, across-the-board teaching load reduction.

One shortcoming is that it would leave in place many of the existing inequities that characterize the teaching that our faculty currently does. Some faculty teach many more students than others. Some have many more preparations than others. Some

faculty load up on independents studies, internships, and the like. Others never supervise any. Some faculty invest many hours during the academic year in their scholarly work. Others do not. A plan that addresses these inequities is better than one that ignores them.

The other shortcoming of an across-the-board teaching load reduction is that it provides nothing specific in the way of gains in the quality of the academic program. To be sure, one can argue in a general way that faculty members teaching six or seven courses a year can do a better job for their students than they could teaching eight a year. But a plan such as the one presented above does more. It promises specific good things for students such as mentorships and active learning, more flexibility in scheduling classes, the real likelihood of many smaller classes, and faculty who are less likely to be resentfully burning their candles at both ends in order to pursue their scholarship.

If we were to adopt a plan such as the one proposed above, what would happen to the pass-around plan? Beginning in 2002-03, the College began a second cycle of pass around course reductions which will provide one course off to roughly one-third of the full-time, continuing faculty on the Fredericksburg campus in each of the next years. This year we will be committing 4.24 FTEf and \$100,000 (funds formerly used for Jepson Funds for Excellence Grants) to provide adjunct faculty hire-behinds for 40 “pass-around” course releases. Adding those resources to the new plan would certainly get us closer to realizing all of its potential benefits. We have seen that the new plan could use as many as 47 new positions, and the 15/1 student/faculty ratio would provide only 35.

When presented with the opportunity (in a meeting in October 2001) to move forward on some features of the “15 to 1 plan” instead of a new cycle of pass around reductions, the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Teaching Loads clearly supported the continuation of the pass around plan, rather than any of the new approaches involving more sabbaticals or course reductions based on compensation for excess teaching preparations or individual study projects. With the budget axe looming and facing a year without faculty salary adjustments, the College ultimately decided to launch a new cycle of the pass around plan in an effort to address, however partially, frustrated faculty morale. Its faults notwithstanding, we at least had experience managing the numerous details of the pass around plan and were hence in a better position to move to a second cycle of pass arounds than we would have been in trying to determine how to quickly implement some parts of the “15 to 1 plan”. The decision-making process leading up to the continuation of the pass arounds caused anxiety, confusion, and some mistrust among some members of the faculty, and these concerns were expressed by the Faculty Affairs Committee in its final report for 2001-02 to the Faculty Senate meeting in April 2002. This recent history strongly suggests that any moves in the interest of advancing and/or eventually implementing the “15 to 1 plan” (or some other similar proposal) need careful planning and on-going faculty participation in the process.

Timetable

Given the discouraging state of the current revenue situation in the Commonwealth and the continued gloomy prospects regarding any near-term turn-

around, it seems unlikely that the General Assembly could be persuaded any time soon to approve a special appropriation to fund additional faculty positions for Mary Washington College. However, there is little doubt that if “15 to 1” is ever eventually to be fully realized, much of the wherewithal will need to come from just such an appropriation. So we must continue to explain the need for it to our friends in the General Assembly and continue annually to make our formal requests for the funds, even in these tight fiscal times. Meanwhile though, there is little we can say about when the funds might actually be forthcoming.

On the other hand, whether General Fund appropriations come sooner or later, we can guess that they are more likely to come gradually rather than in a lump sum. We can also guess that in order to get all the way to 15 to 1, we may have to supplement General Fund appropriations with money from other sources; that is, from tuition increases and/or endowments created by major gifts. Perhaps we can get a start on “15 to 1” even before any new General Fund money enters the picture. In any event, we need a plan which spells out how we would allocate the new positions even if we had to do it one position at a time. Attached below is the skeletal outline of such a plan, in spreadsheet format. The College administration needs to work with the faculty leadership to fill in this outline and present it to the Board of Visitors in the form of a concrete proposal. Then, the timetable will be a simple straightforward function of the rate at which enabling resources are identified.