Department of Chemistry and Physics – Course Release Guidelines for Undergraduate Research Credit

Undergraduate research is an integral/high-impact activity within the Department of Chemistry and Physics. This is reflected in the current College of Science and Technology Workload Document (Approved November 2013 and outlined in appendix 1 of this document).

As such, prioritization for receiving workload reduction, due to accumulated hours of research credit for supervising undergraduates, should be established. It is important for faculty to note that workload is an administrative decision, implying that any reduction from the standard teaching of 12 contact hour average is at the discretion of the Department Head. It is not simply assumed that if you accumulate the requisite hours that you will automatically receive a workload reduction.

The requirements for a workload reduction due to accumulating 15 student credit hours are completion of one of the following expectations prior to a course release

1. A recent publication or accepted manuscript which includes undergraduate research students as co-authors and is research primarily conducted at Armstrong.
2. An externally funded grant which positively impacts the program and/or our student success.

Caveats:

a. Faculty can “bank” externally funded grants and publications towards future course reductions.
b. Faculty in their first two years of teaching at Armstrong can get a one-time waiver of the publication/grant requirement listed in 1 and 2 above.
c. An expected outcome of a course release is an external submission of either a full grant proposal or a manuscript for peer review.

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(Sept. 12, 2014)
Appendix 1

- **Course releases granted as a result of undergraduate research or independent study hours**

*Faculty in CST are encouraged to engage in scholarly pursuits with their students.*

Programs in CST will count undergraduate research supervision in overall workload by a banking mechanism. The hours are banked at a rate of 5:1; when a faculty member has supervised five registered credit hours of undergraduate research, this equates to one contact hour of release time. A faculty member who has supervised any combination of students registered for 1, 2 or 3 credit hours of research that adds up to a total of 15 credit hours would therefore be eligible for a 3-contact-hour reduction in a subsequent semester.

Banking course release hours is subject to the following rules:

1.) The course releases are limited to one three contact hour reduction in a semester (i.e. faculty cannot bank 12 contact hours and take off an entire semester).

2.) Because each department has a different name for their research courses, the courses that count toward these banked research hours must be approved by the Dean’s office in consultation with the department head. A list of qualifying courses and numbers must be on file in the Dean’s office to allow for tracking and checking of the banked hours.

3.) The faculty member must be the instructor of record in SHIP to accumulate hours and the faculty must produce and provide to the department head a clear syllabus that outlines the requirements of the research course and the student’s research project.

4.) Hours banked must be submitted to the Dean’s office at the end of each semester by the Department Head. The Department Head must confirm with the faculty member that the student completed the course (i.e. received a grade; a grade other than W or WF) and Department must also develop a mechanism to assure that the student-faculty collaboration produced a measureable output (e.g. presentation, paper etc. as defined in the student’s course syllabus).

5.) Both Department Heads and Faculty should retain records of their independent study and undergraduate research hours for confirmation.

6.) When requesting the release based on banked hours, faculty must submit a request to the department head that indicates the work product from the research activity (conference proceedings, manuscripts etc.) and a statement on what the faculty member is planning to use the release time for. Requests will be honored only if the Department Head can adequately cover the courses with minimal impacts.

7.) Faculty may not receive overload compensation for supervision of undergraduate research students in any semester.

8.) A faculty member who receives a course release in a semester may not simultaneously receive an overload compensation for teaching an extra course in that same semester. For example, a faculty member receives a release, bringing their semester teaching load to 9 contact hours. They cannot then be assigned another course or lab to bring their load back to 12 hours and receive extra compensation for that teaching duty.
9.) Release hours are banked over a 5 year rolling period. Faculty may accumulate research supervision credits beginning with the fall 2013 semester. No credits for previous student supervision will be given.

- Other

Other situations may be considered for course release provided that there is adequate coverage for courses. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require the approval of the Dean. In most cases, the Provost will need to approve these releases. The Department Head will work with the Dean to determine whether the release should be granted. Releases must be requested each semester as approvals do not carry over.

For releases where the faculty member requests time to work on a specific project, the faculty member must request the release from his/her Department Head and provide documentation of the work to be accomplished. The burden of proof is on the faculty member to show that this work is “above” the amount of time available to the faculty member as part of his/her regular scholarly and service pursuits (i.e. more than the 15 total workload hours per semester). A final report of the work must be submitted to the Dean’s office.

Other types of releases may be granted under special circumstances, in consultation with the Dean’s office. In general, no more than 1-2 releases of this type will be granted in the entire College each semester. Some possible examples (not inclusive):

- Serving as a PI on a grant where course releases have not been directly requested but it is judged at a later time to require work during the academic year (i.e. PI or Co-PI is no longer at AASU)
- Serving as an editor of a national journal with significant responsibilities