**Academic Affairs Guidelines**

**Learning Communities, Paired Courses, and Grants**

**December 8, 2016**

**Introduction:**

Academic Affairs recognizes the growing importance of learning communities, paired courses, CTEA funds and grants in contributing to the success of a wide range of students. One concern is that many of these initiatives require faculty reassigned time in English, math, sciences, and other impacted disciplines, and the reassigned time for coordination is having the unintended consequence of removing teachers from the classroom at a time when they are badly needed. Therefore, the procedures below are being implemented. Exceptions to these procedures must be approved by the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs.

**Procedure for Learning Communities**

1. **Rationale.** Learning Communities must have an identified purpose aligned with the Strategic Plan and academic or student services goals; for example the purpose could be to improve success rates and close the achievement gap. Examples include Umoja (African American), APASS (Asian American), Puente (Latino/a), Connections (Latino/a & low income), Athletes, or Basic Skills learning communities.
2. **Formation.** The formation of a learning community must be approved **in concept** by the Senior VPAA or designee in **advance** of formation and regardless of the funding source (email approval preferred). An email should be sent describing the benefit, rationale for District Need (if any), and job descriptions for coordinators (below).
3. **Job Description**. All learning community coordinators will have a VPAA or designee approved job description (either the standard one or a specialized one).
4. **Eligibility**. Both regular and adjunct faculty are eligible to participate in learning community coordination. Probationary faculty in tenure review require the approval of the VPAA.
5. **District Need.** Per Article 16, some learning communities may be designated as fulfilling a “District Need,” such as fulfilling the terms of a grant or a special program. Those District Needs may override the “established load” provisions of Article 16; for example, the learning community may be staffed first rather than being made available to all faculty in a department. The District Need will be included in any announcements and shared with the department chair.
6. **Announcement, general**. For a learning community that could potentially involve a number of different disciplines, the Office of the VPAA or designee will send an announcement of the opportunity for Coordinator reassigned time all faculty, including adjunct faculty, using the faculty email distribution list.
7. **Announcement, Discipline Specific**. For a learning community in which only one or two specific disciplines are involved (such as a first year learning community of English and Counseling), an announcement will be sent by the chair to all faculty in the departments and a copy of the announcement will be sent to VPAA to verify that the opportunity was announced. The District Need (if any) will be specified in the announcement, such as “interested faculty must demonstrate sensitivity to diversity and be able to teach multicultural themed courses at the basic skills level.” Departmental faculty will express their interest to the chair, and the chair will recommend forward faculty member(s) to the Supervising Administrator (if any). Approval is not final until the Senior VPAA signs the PAF. As per the Contract, the Supervising Administrator and VPAA have the right to make the assignment.
8. **Length of Assignment.** Assignments will be for one semester or one year as appropriate to the program. In order to increase faculty commitment and provide continuity for learning communities, incumbents will be given first consideration for subsequent years. The VPAA or designee will be notified if an incumbent is to continue.
9. **Personnel Action Form (PAF).** Learning communities may have various funding sources, such as general fund, grant funded, or categorically funded. In all cases, the approval path for the PAF is the same as for any other faculty assignment: department chair, Dean II, Dean III (if any), and. VPAA or VPSS. In addition, the PAF should go to the individual overseeing the funds for signature after a VP’s approval.
10. **Overload or Hourly.** In order to avoid losing instructional time, below is the preferred way to schedule reassigned time or special assignments.
11. First, could the faculty member carry the workload as an overload? (Note – this may not work if the individual wants to load bank their overload or needs an established hourly load.)
12. Second, could the faculty member perform the work as part of their contract load, but then request an overload assignment to avoid losing instructional time?
13. Third, check with the VPAA to determine if the load could be part of contract load due to special circumstances or if the faculty member is already at the 140% maximum allowable load.
14. Some grants and Child Development funds specify how funds must be paid. Salaries paid as greater than a 100% load do not count for STRS credit, but rather for a supplemental STRS account.
15. Stipends. Generally speaking, faculty doing work other than teaching and allied services should be paid at the base hourly rate of pay for a specified number of hours, not a flat sum.
16. **PAF and timesheets**. PAFs and timesheets are submitted in the usual manner to Academic Affairs.
17. **Ancillary Duties**. Learning community coordination of typically 20%, (15%) is considered an ancillary activity, but the remaining 5%, if it involves collaboration in aligning the content of the course, will be considered instructional. Other load distributions are possible.

**Paired Courses**

1. Paired courses must be paired a reason for being that aligns with the Strategic Plan and Academic Affairs goals, for example increasing retention or success of students. Typically each partner in a paired course receives 5% for development. Student Equity funds may be able to provide 5% for ongoing alignment and professional development.
2. Paired courses must be approved by the appropriate dean(s) and VPAA in **advance** of development. If the paired course represents a District Need (per Article 16), a rationale must be provided with any unique qualifications, such as, “Must have sensitivity to diversity and must have expertise to teach developmental Math.”
3. Once approved to move forward, the assignments for paired courses will be recommended by the chair and approved by the Supervising administrator. The assignment is not considered final until a PAF is signed off by the VPAA.
4. If reassigned time is involved, the standard job description for paired courses must be followed or a unique job description submitted to the VPAA or designee.
5. Paired courses are linked in the class schedule. If the pair does not reach the class limit, the Supervising Administrator may unlink the sections to additional enrollments to fill it.

**Grants or Categorical Funds**

1. Grants or categorical funds may involve reassigned time or hourly assignments for faculty members.
2. Both regular and adjunct faculty are eligible to serve.
3. The VPAA must be notified in **advance** of any new reassigned time in grants or categorical funds.
4. As with learning communities above, try to avoid pulling contract faculty away from instruction, especially in impacted areas.
5. For adjunct faculty, the duties may be ancillary. If so, note that on the PAF.
6. For contract faculty members, If possible, schedule the reassigned time as an overload. If scheduled as part of contract load, determine if the faculty member could accept an instructional overload.
7. Exceptions need to be approved by the VPAA.