Research Intensive Semester (RIS)
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Overview: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences offers all junior faculty members in good standing a reduced teaching responsibility at some point during the faculty member’s pre-tenure employment. Faculty members will be released from classroom teaching duties for one semester, depending upon the relevant unit teaching expectations, and will be expected to concentrate on research intensive activities.

Implementation: Faculty members are eligible for a research intensive semester assignment up to and including the spring semester before their publication dossiers are sent out to external reviewers in June (in anticipation of fall semester P&T review in the unit). The latest possible Research Intensive Semester (RIS) assignment would typically be the second semester of the fifth year. Faculty members in good standing who have stopped their tenure clock remain eligible for a RIS assignment.

The actual decision of which year/semester the individual is assigned a research intensive semester will be made in consultation with the unit chairperson/director. We recognize the timing of these semesters will vary by disciplinary career cycles, but we recommend they occur after the first year if at all possible. For faculty members with split appointments, the decision about when to assign a research intensive semester must be made in consultation with both units.

Once the unit chairperson/director approves the RIS for the junior faculty member, the details concerning the RIS should be confirmed to the faculty member in writing. The unit chairperson/director also provides a copy of this authorization to the College Dean’s Office so that RIS data can be tracked.

Expectations: Faculty members who are granted a RIS are expected to continue to meet their usual duties regarding unit advising and other service activities.

Units are expected to absorb this adjustment in teaching capacity from within their faculty ranks without losing significant enrollment capacity. It is important that units continue to offer courses that students need to maintain normal progress and/or graduate.

Faculty mentors are urged to make special effort to help junior faculty maximize the value of a research intensive semester.

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