

Monitoring Faculty Course Loads

Background

Faculty have many responsibilities in addition to teaching, including advising students, completing administrative tasks, and conducting scholarly activities. While the composition of faculty workload varies greatly depending on the area of study and institution's mission, monitoring course loads as one key way to understand how students are interacting with faculty.

Examining course loads includes understanding not only the number of sections taught, but also the student level and size of the class. Academic leaders should use this information to ensure that expectations are met for how faculty spend time, as well as to ensure that students are exposed to different teaching styles and curriculum.

Key Metric Definition

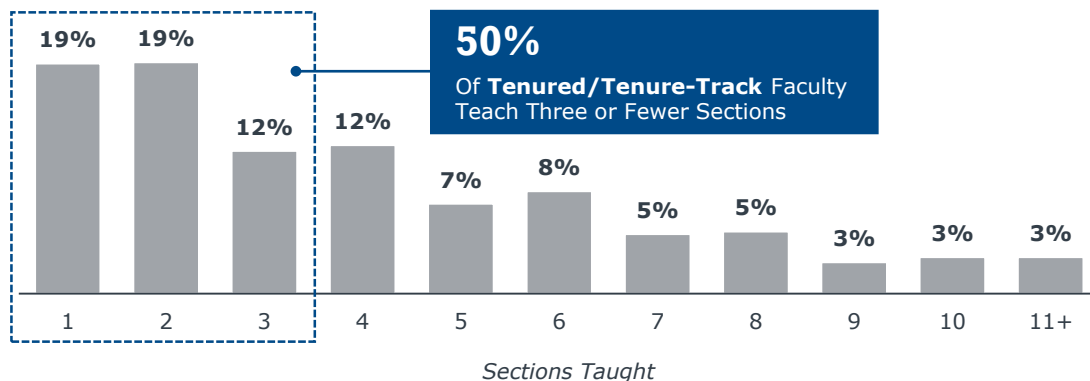
Course Load: The number of sections taught by individual faculty member per academic year

Faculty Course Loads: What's Normal?

APS analysis of faculty course loads revealed that half of tenured and tenure-track faculty teach three or fewer sections per academic year. While faculty have many responsibilities outside of teaching, this strays from typical. Many institutions actually target six to eight courses for full-time faculty.

Distribution of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty By Sections Taught²

n=41 institutions



Monitoring faculty course loads allows academic leaders to identify opportunities to reduce or add sections, as necessary. Academic leaders should also consider the other components of faculty workload, such as institutional mission and student demand, when determining the ideal course load.



Inside this Resource

Learn how APS supports your goals to maximize faculty resources

- Page 2-4: How to: View and Analyze Faculty Course Loads
- Page 5: Best Practice Resources

1) Includes data from the 2015 academic year.

2) Includes data from Fall 2014 and Spring 2015; Individual Instruction course types were excluded.

How to: View and Analyze Faculty Course Loads

Use the steps below to monitor faculty course loads in your department and find potential opportunities in the APS Platform.

1 Getting Started: Set Your Filters

In the **APS Dashboard**, click on the **Faculty Tab** and use the filters at the top of the page to refine your analysis.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2016	ASSIGNED COLLEGE NAME All	COURSE DIVISION Lower Division	INSTRUCTOR RANK All
TERM All	ASSIGNED DEPARTMENT NAME All	COURSE TYPE All	EMPLOYEE CLASS All

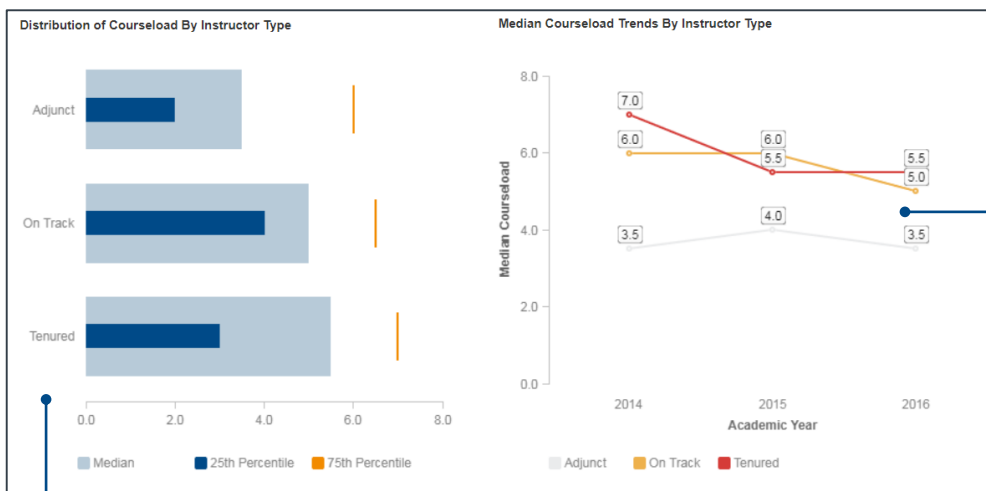
Recommended filters: Assigned College Name, Assigned Department Name, Course Type, Instructor Rank.

Helpful Hints

- If you're a Dean, use the **Assigned College Name** filter to view departments and courses in your purview.
- If you're a Department Chair, use the **Assigned Department Name** filter to view courses in your purview.
- Remove course types that might skew course loads, such as *Independent Study*.
- Use the **Instructor Rank** filter to prioritize monitoring full-time faculty.

2 View the *Distribution of Courseload By Instructor Type* and *Median Courseload Trends By Instructor Type* Charts

Scroll to the *Faculty Workloads* section of the page. Use the chart on the left to identify the 25th percentile, median, and 75th percentile workload of faculty by type. Use the chart to the right to see median faculty course loads over the past three years by instructor type.

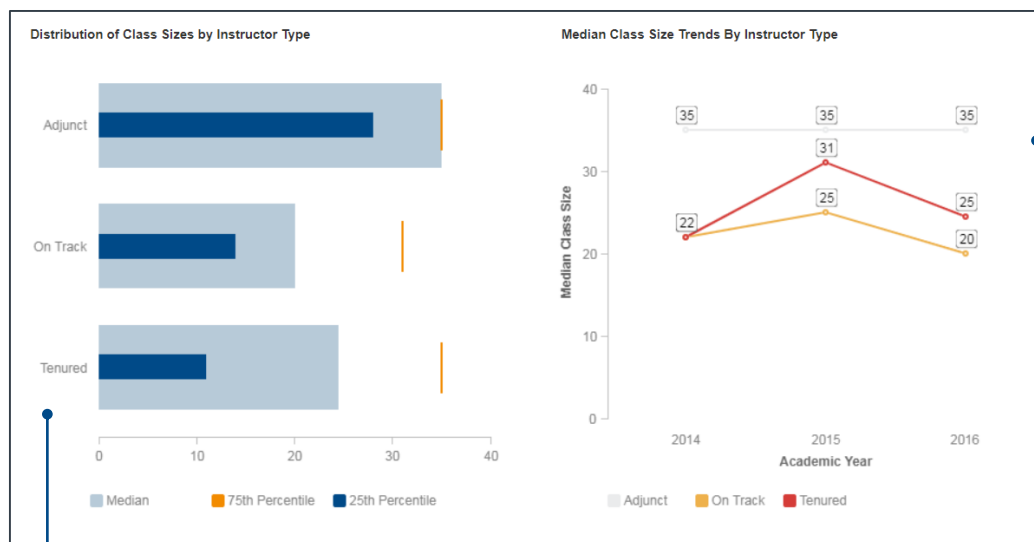


Many reports on the **Faculty Tab** are organized by instructor type. These labels are based on your institution's selections and may differ from the sample.

Look for changes over time, such as a reduction in overall course load, or a shift to relying more on part-time instructors.

3 View the *Distribution of Class Sizes by Instructor Type* and *Median Class Size Trends By Instructor Type* Charts

After viewing the changes in course load, scroll down to the *Course Completion and Class Sizes* section of the page. Use the chart on the left to view the 25th percentile, median, and 75th percentile class size of faculty by type. Use the chart on the right side to see median faculty class sizes over the past three years by instructor type.

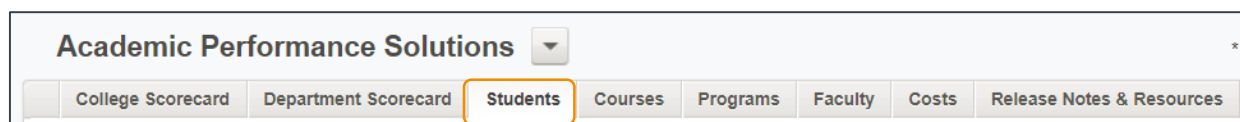


Use the analysis of change in class size over time in conjunction with the analysis of course load over time to fully understand how loads are changing. Instructors may be teaching fewer courses, but reaching more students through larger classes.

Use the distribution of class size to understand which instructor types have the most contact with students. Remember to update your filters if you are interested in focusing on a specific student level, such as undergraduate, or course type, such as lecture.

4 Click on the Student Tab

Scroll to the top of the page to select the **Students Tab**. Use analyses on this page to view trends in student demand for courses. Your filters will not be carried over from the Faculty Tab, so be sure to set your department or college name.



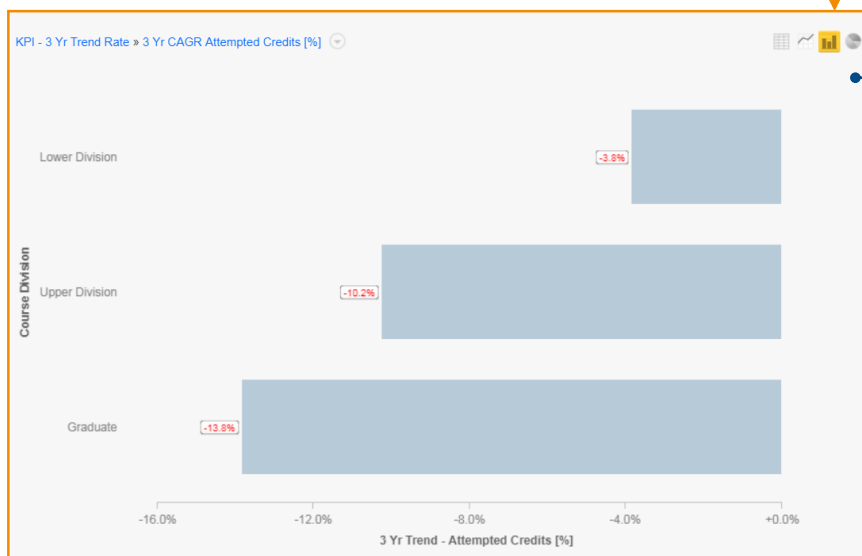
Helpful Hints

- Filters on the Students Tab differ from the Faculty Tab due to the underlying data sources.
- On the Faculty Tab, the Assigned College Name and Assigned Department Name filters correspond to the college and department where the instructor taught the largest share of sections.
- On the Students Tab, the College Name and Department Name filters correspond to where a student took a course.

Source: Academic Performance Solutions.

5 View the 3 Yr Trend Rate - Attempted SCH

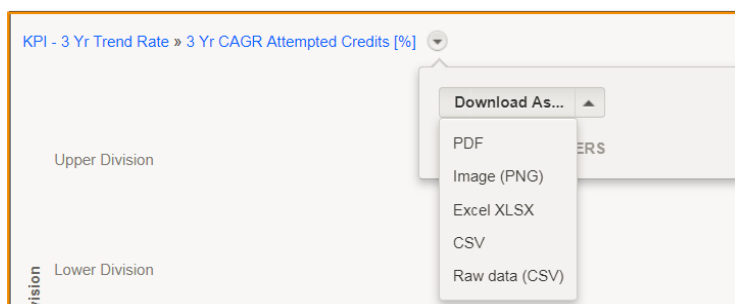
Scroll to the *Enrollments* section of the page to view the growth rate of attempted credit hours over the past three academic years. Then click on the percentage to drill down to the course division. This analysis will help you understand the student demand and provide context for the previous faculty analyses.



In this example, the decline in attempted credit hours coincides with the declines in course load and class sizes identified in the previous tab.

6 Optional: Download and Share the Data

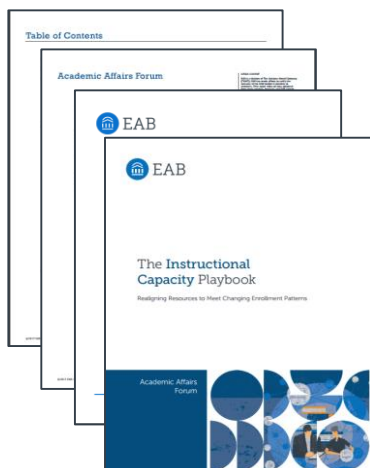
Select on the arrow next to the heading to open a drop-down menu to download and save the data in PDF, Excel, or CSV format.



Best Practice Resources for Monitoring Faculty Course Loads

Resource Available on EAB.com

Toolkit: The Instructional Capacity Playbook



As academic leaders work towards optimal resource allocation, balancing faculty workloads with student demand is a critical step. Research from the Academic Affairs Forum identifies two promising practices to support developing better balanced faculty workloads, which include:

- *Faculty Activity Dashboard*: Tracking all faculty activity within a dashboard to allow for comparisons and to reveal disparities in workload.
- *Differentiated Instructional Roles*: Creating new instructional roles dedicated to specific tasks within a department.

In addition to these two practices, *The Instructional Capacity Playbook* details other best practice strategies for efficiently using faculty and other instructional resources to meet changing enrollment patterns across colleges and universities.

Download [here](#).

Case in Brief: Faculty Activity Dashboard at Binghamton University

From *The Instructional Capacity Playbook*

Binghamton University created a dashboard to provide comprehensive view of faculty activity. The dashboard includes several key indicators for teaching, scholarship, and services. Metrics include course load, count of journal articles and conference/poster presentations, release time (in \$), and independent lectures.

Defining Key Indicators...



Teaching



Scholarship



Service

...For Holistic Assessment



Annual Review of Total Productivity

Dashboard serves as single form of truth for departmental "contribution to mission" meetings



Avoids Measuring "Hours" or "% Time"

Dashboard focuses conversation on value-driven factors, such as output and input, instead of irrelevant factors, such as time inputs, when assessing productivity



Department-Driven

Dashboard informs departmental decisions on appropriate workload adjustments

Source: The Instructional Capacity Playbook, Academic Affairs Forum.