

Balancing Courseloads Among Full-Time Faculty

Planning for Fall 2020 COVID-19 Enrollment Scenarios

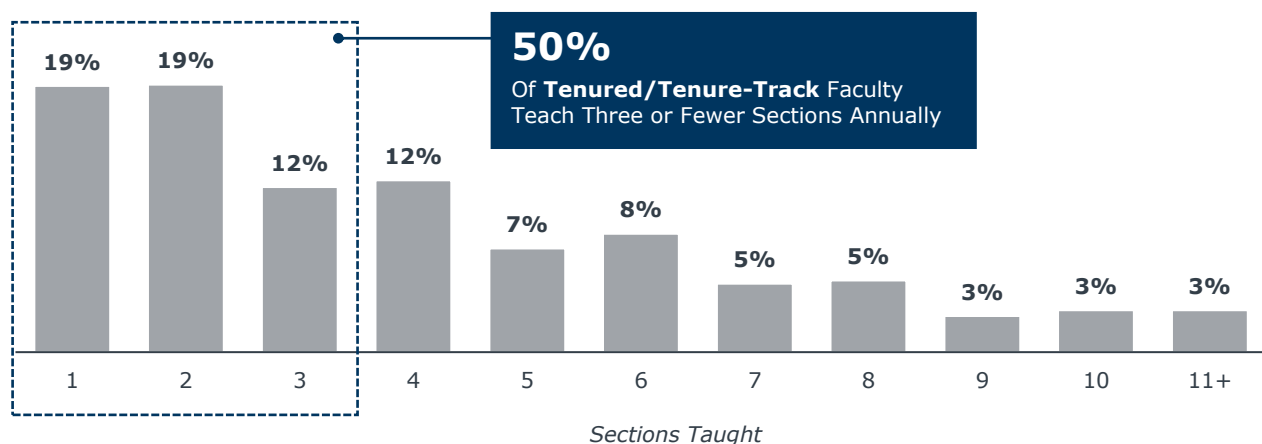
The COVID-19 pandemic has turned higher education on its head. The financial impact of the pandemic has been felt across institutions of every type in various ways and the likelihood of declining fall enrollments combined with added expenses managing the pandemic have pressured institutional leaders to evaluate budgeting and reduce costs where possible. Grappling with difficult decisions in times of uncertainty and being asked to do more with less is a daunting endeavor. Leaders who leverage data to inform decisions can better support instructional staff and students, as well as institutional goals and efficiency in response to COVID-19.

Financial Pressures Require More Scrutiny of Faculty Workload Disparities by Discipline

Over the past decade, changes in student demand, as well as growing research and service requirements, have resulted in unbalanced workloads. While most institutional policies have a 'standard' course load and distribution of effort (across teaching, research, and service) in reality, faculty workloads vary enormously. Faculty in units with growing enrollment often struggle to keep up with demand, while faculty in units with declining demand may teach well below the standard load. Increase transparency, flexibility, and unit accountability to support departments in developing more balanced workload allocations. Comparing data on actual course loads and student credit hour production by department can reveal which units are under- or over-resourced. Setting clear expectations is critical, though disciplinary differences mean that each department may require a unique set of targets.

Distribution of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty By Sections Taught¹

n=41 institutions



This guide is designed to help academic leaders determine how much instructional capacity will need to come from adjunct or contingent instructors and how much a department may have to adjust its historical workload to come into balance with institutional expectations and needs, using Academic Performance Solutions (APS) analyses to plan for Fall 2020 and beyond.

When setting Fall 2020 teaching loads, a critical component to consider is the number of necessary sections you will offer. For guidance on calculating this value, please use our resource [online](#).



Reach out to your APS dedicated consultant with any questions.

¹) Includes data from Fall 2014 and Spring 2015; Individual Instruction course types were excluded.

Strategy 1: Compare Actual Typical Teaching Loads with Expected Loads

While many institutions “know” how many sections each instructor type is expected to teach annually, there is often a significant discrepancy between that theoretical expectation and how much teaching instructors do in practice—frequently for good reason. Nonetheless, the current climate necessitates revisiting teaching loads to ensure resources are used thoughtfully and deliberately to support today’s urgent needs.

1 Using the **Assigned Department Name**, **Course Type**, and **Instructor Type** filters on the Instructional Staff tab of the APS Analytics dashboard, apply relevant attributes you wish to investigate.

- Select the department for which you are conducting the analysis.
- Exclude course types that do not count towards load, such as independent studies or theses.
- Optionally, select one instructor type at a time. Alternatively, if you prefer to see more data at once, choose all instructor types to enable comparisons.

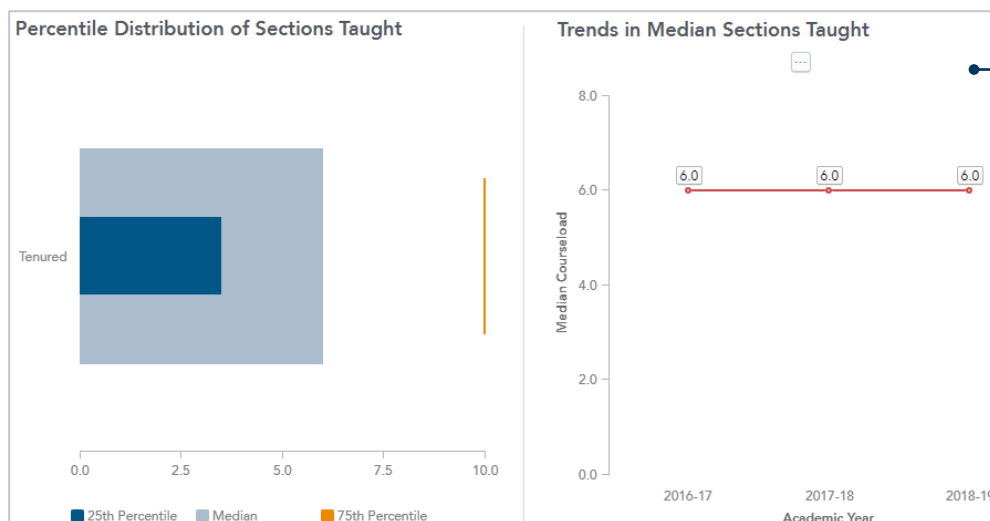
Time Period	University Attributes	Course Attributes	Staff Attributes
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-19	ASSIGNED COLLEGE NAME* All	COURSE DIVISION All	INSTRUCTOR TYPE All
TERM All	ASSIGNED DEPT. NAME* All	COURSE TYPE All	INSTRUCTOR RANK All
		COURSE PREFIX All	EMPLOYEE CLASS All
		COURSE CODE All	

2 Scroll down to the middle of the Instructional Staff Tab to find the distribution of sections taught.

Key reports: Percentile Distribution of Sections Taught; Trends in Median Sections Taught

Location: APS Analytics dashboard, Instructional Staff tab

Goal: Identify the typical distribution of sections taught by each instructor type



1. Left report: What is the median number of sections (light blue bar)? What is the range between the 75th percentile (orange stripe) and 25th percentile (dark blue bar)?
2. Right report: What are the highest and lowest median number of sections annually?

If you want to compare section taught across departments, use the Department Scorecard tab. The same filters apply as before, except for Assigned Department Name.

3 Based on these data, summarize the department’s typical actual teaching load by instructor type. How does it compare with stated policy?

Questions for Consideration

1. Could instructional loads be increased for Fall 2020?
2. What would the consequences of increasing the teaching load be (in terms of lost research productivity, decreased capacity for service, etc.)?
3. Are courseloads equally distributed among your full-time faculty? Is there a large difference between the 25th and 75th percentiles?
4. If courseloads have decreased over time, was that an intentional choice?

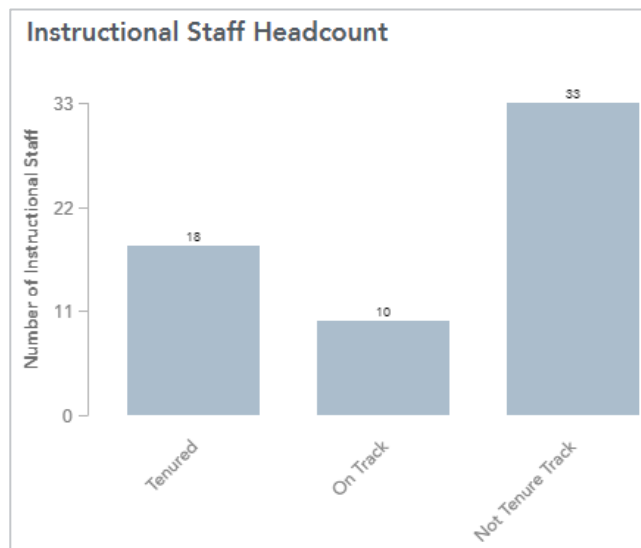
Strategy 2: Size Your Need for Contingent Instructors in Fall 2020

- 1 Determine your expected headcount of non-contingent instructors for Fall 2020. Use last year's headcount as a starting place, then adjust to reflect known changes (sabbaticals, retirements, new hires, etc.).

Key report: Instructional Staff Headcount

Location: APS Analytics dashboard, Instructional Staff tab

Goal: Identify the number of instructors available by instructor type



- 2 Using the input from Strategy 1, set your teaching load expectation for each instructor type. Then, calculate the number of sections that can be taught with your available number of instructors, assuming each instructor teaches a full load. An [Excel workbook is available online](#) to support these calculations.

Example

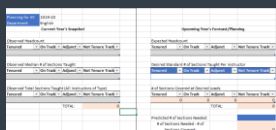
Instructor Type	Headcount		Load		# of Sections Covered
Tenured	18	X	8	=	144
On Track	10		6		60
Not Tenure Track	33		10		330
				TOTAL	534

- 3 Compare the number of covered sections you calculated in the previous step with the total number of sections you'll need to cover in Fall 2020. For guidance on calculating the total number of needed sections, download our resource [online](#) or contact your dedicated consultant. For comparability, ensure you include the same course types in both sets of calculations.

Example 540 sections needed – 534 sections covered = 6 sections not covered

Any sections not covered by your non-contingent faculty teaching at load will need to be covered by contingent instructors or over-load non-contingent instructors.

Downloadable Resource



Use the **Instructional Staff Planning Excel Workbook** template to follow along with this guide and organize your analysis in a pre-formatted Excel workbook.

[Click to Download the Resource Online](#)