

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

To: The Faculty
From: Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs
Date: May 16, 2024
Subject: Pathways to support jointly-appointed faculty

Background

How do joint appointments enhance the academic experience at Bowdoin? Most Bowdoin faculty are appointed to one department or program; however, we currently have roughly thirty-five faculty at the College who are jointly-appointed to a department *and* a program or to *two* departments or *two* programs. Joint appointments allow us to expand our curricular offerings, provide curricular stability to academic programs, and recognize the inter- or multi-disciplinary nature of faculty members' professional guilds and their own expertise. Courses taught by jointly-appointed faculty or offered by interdisciplinary programs also allow our students to discover new areas of interest and illuminate intersections and overlaps between them.

What is the purpose of this document? All faculty contribute to curricula, pedagogy, advising, mentoring and department/program stewardship, but they may approach or experience this work differently depending on whether they are singly or jointly-appointed. Although we cannot achieve full equivalency in workload, the goal of this document is to make faculty roles and expectations more transparent and to develop practices that foster greater equity. *We appreciate and acknowledge the work departments and programs already do to account for and accommodate differences in faculty workload and have incorporated our learning from their practices into this document.*

What is the structure of joint appointments? The faculty handbook does not offer clear guidelines for the workload of jointly-appointed faculty, noting only the following, in part, regarding tenure and promotion: "Faculty members hold appointments either singly in a department or program or jointly in two. When joint, one department/program will be identified as primary. . . ." The faculty handbook goes on to note "standard compositions" of review committees of jointly-appointed faculty as "all tenured members" of the primary department or program and "two tenured members" of the secondary department or program. However, some jointly-appointed faculty were hired prior to this designation in the faculty handbook and, as such, are not aware of their primary designation.

As we developed this document, with input from six faculty members (see acknowledgments), it became clear that without an adequate definition of or guidance for what it means to be jointly-appointed at Bowdoin, jointly-appointed faculty may assume and/or experience their roles and expectations differently. For example:

- a. Even though most jointly-appointed faculty have a primary and secondary designation, many experience the designation in two units as fairly equivalent, particularly with respect to service

and stewardship (e.g., search committees, review committees, and decennial reviews). Notably, the equivalent service they provide is in tension with the primary and secondary designation and differential representation of colleagues on reappointment, tenure, and promotion review committees.

- b. Others experience the primacy of one appointment even where service and stewardship are concerned. As such, one department/program truly serves as the faculty members' primary department; curricular and administrative work and service take precedence in this department/program over contributions to the secondary department/program.

How may the workload of jointly-appointed faculty who experience their appointments as fairly equivalent differ from that of singly-appointed faculty? Faculty who experience equivalent joint appointments ("a", above) may perform additional labor compared to singly-appointed faculty. They may be part of two sets of department meetings, events (e.g., welcome to the major events, research information sessions, social events), faculty searches, chair rotations, decennial reviews, and reappointment, tenure, and promotion reviews; they also likely have obligations to two sets of students for independent studies and honors projects as well as advising and summer research.

Given the reasonable confusion around joint appointments, it is important that we align our practice and the faculty handbook with our values and expectations. As such, we hope to soon initiate conversations with chairs, directors, and jointly-appointed faculty to bring clarity to roles and expectations of jointly-appointed faculty generally, and primary and secondary designations in particular. Then we will work with GFA and the faculty at large to make necessary changes to the faculty handbook. This will take time.

In the meantime, to acknowledge and address faculty labor, facilitate transparency, recognize effort, and work toward equity, we offer the following guidance for departments and programs with jointly-appointed faculty. As noted earlier, we draw on work that departments and programs already do in offering these suggestions.

Current Guidance for Supporting Jointly-Appointed Faculty

(pending development of policy changes and faculty handbook revisions noted above)

I. Share expectations across departments and programs

It is helpful for chairs and directors of each jointly-appointed faculty to discuss with one another the expectations of their respective departments and programs, focusing specifically on the topics noted below. While these topics are organized by semester, chairs and directors are invited to schedule the conversations in ways that are most useful to them.

Fall Semester

- *Discuss mentorship of jointly-appointed pre-tenure faculty:* decide how you will check in on consistent messaging, share mentoring without overwhelming the jointly-appointed faculty member, and ensure that expectations from the two departments/programs do not contradict each other, especially around reappointment and tenure reviews.
- *Make explicit the priorities of both departments and programs:* check in to understand curricular and service needs of both departments/programs and how to support faculty in navigating these demands. For example, if a faculty member is appointed to multiple searches as well as review

committees across two units within a given semester, how might the department and program alleviate this faculty member's service load?

- *Determine the need for leave replacements for jointly-appointed faculty:* discuss how the faculty member's courses will be covered in both departments/programs when they are on leave – will one visiting professor/instructor search cover both curricular areas, will this leave gaps?

Spring Semester:

- *Determine sabbatical obligations of jointly-appointed faculty:* When assistant professors and recent associate professors are given an option to participate in department/program service activities while on sabbatical (e.g., writing an external review self-study and/or the response, or participating in reviews for reappointment, tenure and promotion), they often agree to everything as they are not sure how to weigh these choices as good departmental/program citizens while protecting time for scholarly and artistic work. To address this proactively, hold a meeting with the jointly-appointed faculty member and both chairs/directors prior to a sabbatical to brainstorm together and come to a shared understanding of an appropriate overall level of participation, noting clearly that no participation is often the best option.

II. Make workload visible and account for faculty obligations

The following are ways to bring transparency to curricular and service obligations and workload of all faculty.

1. *Use a centralized tool to facilitate transparency and recognition in an efficient manner.* [The Bowdoin Faculty Workload Equity Dashboard Pilot](#)¹ (dash), available on Canvas, was created for departments/programs to use and modify. Engaging with the dash recognizes the work of singly-appointed faculty and helps make visible the labor of jointly-appointed faculty to all members of the department/program. When a jointly-appointed faculty is chair, it may be awkward to advocate for reducing their own workloads, either with the department/program they chair/direct or with the chair/director of the jointly-appointed unit. The dash can help. If your department/program uses the dash, information relevant to curricular (e.g., teaching of introductory or core classes, or a specific elective and timing of offerings) and stewardship (e.g., searches, reviews, chair/director roles) obligations in both units can be listed in the audit of faculty "Interests and Obligations" tab. Please note that a dash can help departments/programs:

- *Understand and acknowledge the advising, independent study (IS)/honors workload of jointly-appointed faculty.* The work of advising majors (and if applicable, minors) in two different departments and/or programs may involve advising more students as well as learning two different sets of requirements for those majors, grant/fellowship/graduate school opportunities, study abroad programs, and more. Jointly-appointed faculty may have to double their knowledge base in this regard, even if they have the same number (or even fewer) advisees as

¹ This pilot dashboard was inspired and informed by the FOC_IF Working Group report recommendation (Section B.2) and subsequent requests to expand the recognition, rewarding, and redistribution of invisible labor and other workload inequities; the publication *Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now*, authored by Kerryann O'Meara, Dawn Culpepper, Joy Misra and Audrey Jaeger, and published by the American Council on Education; and feedback from chairs and directors on an initial draft of the dashboard and accompanying material. Importantly, the dashboard is intended to be modified and used at the departmental/program level and is not designed to be shared with the Dean's office.

that of a colleague who is singly-appointed. Whether you are using the dash or not, please consider arriving at a policy within your department or program that takes into consideration the advising effort and the total number of major/minor advisees and IS/honors students in both units. Out of respect for all faculty, singly- and jointly-appointed, please avoid using student requests as the primary guide for advisee and IS/honors allocations.

- *Account for history of service as chair/director in both departments or programs in your deliberations on the next chair/director.* Most departments have a “queue” of tenured faculty in consideration for chair/director. Again, whether you are using the dash or not, we urge departments/programs to move faculty who have served as chair/director in their jointly-appointed department or program behind those at their rank who have not served as chair/director. Consider the following examples as you develop your own practices:
 - *Faculty who have not previously served as chair/director in your department or program:* Three faculty, A, B, and C, have never served as chair, and based on years of service at the college the queue is A, B and C. However, A has served as a program director in their jointly-appointed program. In this case, the queue may change to B, C, A.
 - *Faculty have previously served as chair/director in your department or program:* Three faculty, X, Y, and Z, have previously served as chair and based on time of service the queue is X, Y, and Z. If X has in the interim served as chair/director of another unit, after also considering years of service, X may be moved to a lower position in the queue.

If your department/program is not using the equity dash, chairs and directors can create opportunities for quick check-ins with jointly-appointed faculty (perhaps, at the end of each semester/academic year) to learn about their upcoming work in both units (searches, external review, dossier reviews, etc.). Please prioritize pre-tenure faculty in this outreach. This gesture will validate and make visible faculty labor and help chairs/directors (and departments/programs) calibrate expectations each semester.

III. Alleviate Service Loads for Jointly-Appointed Faculty

Faculty searches, reappointment, tenure and promotion review committees, and decennial reviews often require participation of all faculty, singly- and jointly-appointed. There may be semesters/academic years in which jointly-appointed faculty are serving on multiple searches and review committees; in these cases, please consider the following options for alleviating service loads:

- Collaborate with the Office of the Dean for Academic Affairs to find out whether your jointly-appointed faculty are involved in another decennial review the same year or in adjacent years. If there is some flexibility with the timing of reviews, please incorporate these considerations or provide other modifications to ease their workload.
- If your jointly-appointed faculty are involved in another faculty search the same year and there is some flexibility with the timing of the search, please incorporate these considerations or provide other modifications to ease their workload.
- Eliminate a category of departmental/program service for jointly-appointed faculty, including those currently serving as chair. Examples of approaches used by some departments².
 - Faculty jointly appointed in a program are not expected to advise majors in the department.

² Examples were included at the suggestion of chairs/directors. We acknowledge that the first three suggestions were provided by a chair of a department with jointly-appointed faculty (via an anonymous form).

- Try to make sure jointly-appointed faculty understand that they do not need to attend all department student events.
- Emphasize that if jointly-appointed faculty will be chair of their program, they would not be chair of the department within X years of each other.
- In deciding honors theses supervision and readers and in assigning major advisees, account for load they carry in the program (or secondary appointment) to ensure that the overall load for all members of the department is equivalent (i.e., they carry a reduced load in the department).
- Use the equity dashboard (or equivalent) as a guide to consider the overall service load of all members, including jointly-appointed faculty, before delegating tasks on *special projects* (e.g., nature of their role in formulating/writing external review self-study or response, reappointment/tenure/promotion reviews, allocations of faculty positions, and others)
- Exempt jointly-appointed faculty from responsibilities for working with students on study away transfer credit approval.

The redistribution of faculty work, where appropriate, will allow all members of the department/program to secure critical time for scholarship and artistic work.

IV. Share the onboarding of new jointly-appointed colleagues

At the time of appointment and during onboarding we strongly encourage chairs and directors to collaborate on such plans as the office location of a new jointly-appointed colleague, mentoring and retention plans, service workloads, and expectations arising from department/program cultures. Please keep in mind that campus location of a new colleague's office influences the visibility of the faculty member in one department or another (both to colleagues and to students), the kind and amount of mentoring that takes place, and ultimately the ability of that faculty member to participate in departmental culture and informal decision-making.

Sincere Gratitude: Barry Logan, Belinda Kong, Brian Purnell, Danielle Dube, Erika Nyhus, and Sakura Christmas provided important, thoughtful, and wise input and feedback. In addition, six chairs reviewed the close-to-final draft and provided important additional feedback. The collective input of these colleagues significantly improved and strengthened this document and will inform future conversations with all our jointly appointed colleagues and GFA, as well as faculty handbook revisions.

If you have questions, concerns or could use support with the equity dashboard, please contact Dharni Vasudevan, dvasudev@bowdoin.edu.