

Faculty Salary and Workload Task Force
Preliminary Salary and Workload Recommendations
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I. Executive Summary of Taskforce Salary Recommendations

1. Faculty salaries at Dickinson College should be based on number of years at rank.
2. Benchmark Assistant, Associate, and Full faculty salaries to an external target group. We recommend the 90th percentile of AAUP Category IIb.
3. Benchmark Instructor, Lecturer, and Visiting Assistant Professor salaries to the salaries of starting tenure-track Assistant Professors. Visiting Assistant Professors should be benchmarked at 75% of starting tenure-track salaries. Lecturer salaries should be benchmarked at 90% of starting tenure-track salaries; upon promotion to senior lecturer, the salary should be benchmarked to 90% of starting Associate Professor salaries. Newly hired instructors should be benchmarked to 80% of starting tenure-track salaries; when instructors have reached ten years of service, they should earn 90% of starting tenure-track salaries.
4. Establish a system of term chairs, fellowships, prizes, and awards that reward outstanding faculty accomplishments in all aspects and at all stages of the career.
5. Create a workload equivalency model that measures teaching load in a more nuanced way than current FTEs allow. The model should include class size, contact hours, and possibly other elements. Formal advising should also be measured by this model.
6. Overwork in teaching/advising identified by the workload equivalency model should be compensated over time with course releases. Fellowships awarded to faculty in recognition of outstanding mentoring and advising should also be compensated over time with course releases. Providing time relief to both quantifiable and invisible forms of faculty labor are twin practices, both critical to an equitable workload system.

II. Charge and Process of Faculty Salary and Workload Task Force

In August 2025, Provost Renée Cramer tasked Senior Associate Provost Amy Steinbugler with forming a task force to examine faculty salaries and workload. This request followed two recent salary studies at the College—a 2023 [study](#) about faculty salaries in relation to gender; and a 2023 [report](#) from a Salary Subcommittee of FPC.

Provost Cramer posed five charges to the Faculty Salary and Workload Task Force (hereafter, “task force”).

1. Should salary recommendations move from the chair of departments to FPC?
2. Should we institute a true merit system, a benchmarking system, or a combined system?
3. If benchmarked or hybrid, what should our peer group be and what expectations should faculty have regarding where they will be, in relation to peer group median (or other market), at particular years at rank?
4. How can we best identify, standardize, and compensate faculty workload that falls outside of the usual 3:2 teaching load (independent studies, advising, lab time, student research, theater and dance productions)?
5. Is the sub-committee satisfied that we are able to address any concerns about gender equity, disciplinary equity, and market-driven demands on faculty salary, via the processes being recommended?

The task force is chaired by the Senior Associate Provost of Academic Affairs and includes the current chair and senior member of the Faculty Personnel Committee, two authors of previous salary analyses, three at-large members of the faculty, and a non-voting data specialist.

Our principal task for the fall semester was to identify and evaluate compensation strategies that best align with Dickinson’s culture and values. We reviewed literature on merit-based compensation practices and considered variations in approaches to salary benchmarking.

Conversations around faculty workload began in fall, amidst salary discussions, but became the primary focus of the task force’s attention in the spring semester. The task force held six information-gathering sessions focused on teaching and advising, organized around key themes: identity-based connections; collaborative research and creative work; creative co-curricular labor; extra and extended sessions; the work of junior faculty, and an open session. Thirty-five faculty members attended these sessions and 29 submitted electronic responses, indicating that almost one-third of the entire faculty shared experiences with the group.

III. Background and Context

Faculty Salaries: Stagnation, Compression, Lack of Recognition of Achievement

An institution's compensation system reflects its values. Dickinson College's academic handbook affirms a commitment to "providing a rigorous and exceptional education in the liberal arts" (Chapter 1, page 1). Critical to this mission is our capacity to offer competitive salaries to recruit, retain, and support a diverse community of faculty and staff (Strategic Plan 4, 2022). However, in recent years, higher education has faced a series of disruptive events that have negatively affected faculty compensation at many institutions, including Dickinson. During this period, the College responded in a variety of ways:

Annual raises were limited, and on average were below rates of inflation during most years. There were no increases to the salary pool in FY 10 and FY 21 due to the global 2008 financial crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, respectively.

The College declared financial stringency and temporarily suspended faculty and staff retirement contributions for 10 months in FY21.

The College also suspended the salary step system, which allocated "merit" pay (see below).

Between 2018 and 2023, the College removed salary differentials between retiring senior faculty members and incoming junior colleagues from the faculty salary pool, resulting in an overall loss of funds for salaries and raises.

To its credit, the College weathered these challenging times without layoffs, realized impressive growth of its endowment, and maintained a healthy position in college rankings. Though faculty continued to achieve in their fields and to deliver to students a world-class education, faculty salaries fell in real dollars, salary compression worsened to a point of crisis, and there was a lack of reward or incentive for high performance.

Challenge 1. Salary stagnation

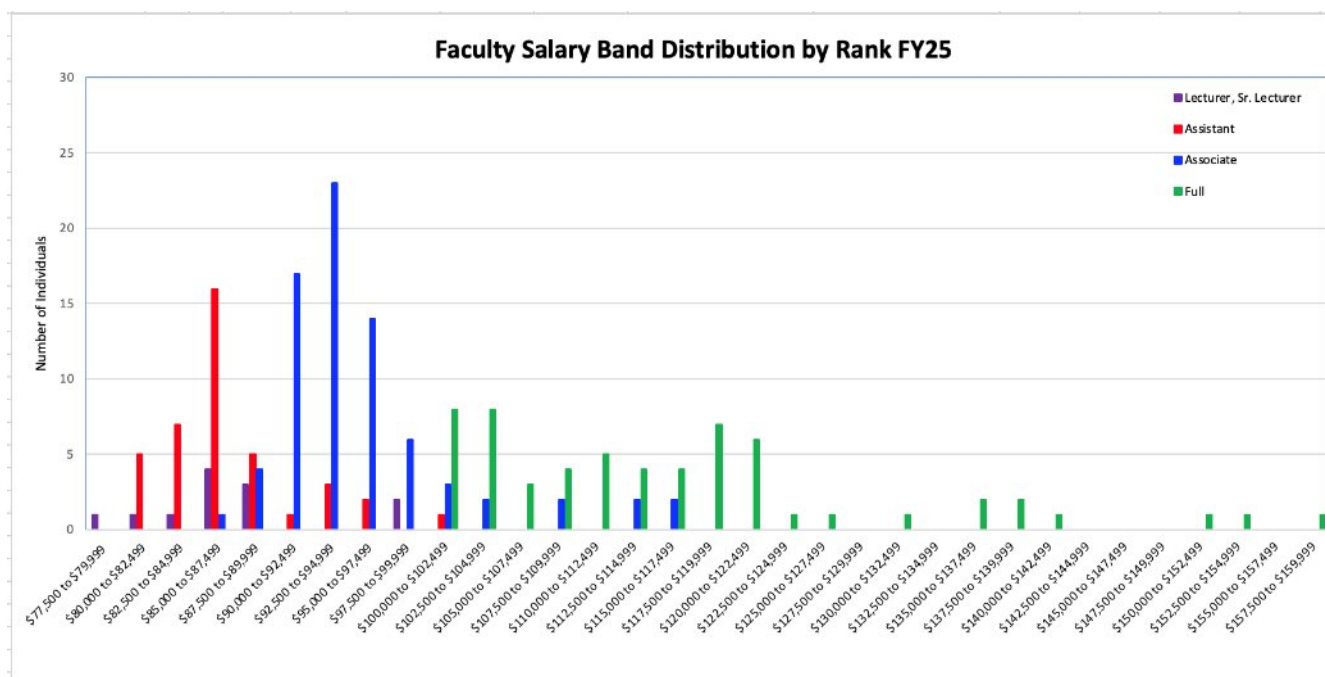
Over the last decade, faculty salaries have not kept up with rates of inflation. From FY 11 (2010-11) to FY 24 (2023-2024) the average annual rate of Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was 2.7% while the average annual increase in the faculty salary pool during this period was 2.1%. Most recently, from FY 18 to FY24 the average annual inflation rate was 3.7% while the faculty salary pool increased, on average, 1.6% annually. The real purchasing power of Dickinson faculty salaries has eroded substantially over the past decade and that erosion has accelerated over the past six years.

Among tenured and tenure-track faculty, salaries at all three ranks have fallen further behind the long-standing goal of 90% of AAUP IIB institutions (see Figure 2 from [2023 salary study](#)). Salaries of Associate and Full Professors have remained flat for over a decade.

Salaries for non-tenure-track faculty, including adjunct instructors and lecturers, have also stagnated over this period and are currently lower than those at many peer institutions in the region (see recommendations on adjunct stipends below). Less competitive salaries have made it challenging to recruit and retain a high-quality and diverse faculty and, as the task force’s listening sessions confirmed, severely dampened faculty morale and belief in the institution. In listening sessions and narrative summaries salary and compensation issues were often cited as contributing to low morale.

Challenge 2. Salary compression

Salary compression is the pattern that results when starting salaries increase more aggressively (to competitively recruit talented new colleagues) than the year-over-year increases of faculty already employed at the College. Salary compression is evident in overlapping salary bands of faculty at different ranks (see below), but other patterns contribute to this overlap as well. Unequal salary “bumps” at promotion to Associate and Full Professor create different entry salaries at Associate and Full. Also, faculty spend varied lengths of time at each rank, but differences in years spent at the rank of Associate Professor (with uniform cost-of-living increases) create significant overlap between salaries of Associate and Full Professors. Finally, over the past ten years, elevated starting salaries (of about \$5,000) in market-driven fields have contributed to Assistant Professor salaries that outpace those of Associates.



Incremental efforts have been made to alleviate salary compression. For example, in several years a small percentage of the salary pool has been targeted to specific bands of faculty, e.g. those at particular ranks or those who missed out on standard promotion raises in lean years. However, salary compression will continue to worsen as long as the

salaries of Associate and Full Professors grow less aggressively than entry salaries (for Assistant Professors) increase.

Challenge 3. A lack of performance-based rewards and incentives

Up until a few years ago, the College employed a step-based compensation system for faculty salaries. Junior faculty received annual one-step increases, as long as they continued to meet or exceed expectations during their semi-annual reviews on the tenure track. Senior faculty members in good standing could expect to receive a one-step increase every other year. These one-step raises were termed “merit” raises.

The first signs of strain in this system became evident during the Great Recession of 2008. Ensuing financial pressures triggered a pay freeze for AY 2009-2010 and for nearly a decade the step salary system remained in name only, with faculty receiving no merit raises whatsoever, until it was eventually abandoned. By this time, the past routinization of an every-other-year increase in faculty salaries based on faculty “merit” had already produced a sense that the institution did not value faculty achievement and excellence.

As highlighted in the FPC Subcommittee on Faculty Salaries [report](#), department chairs have historically had a role in evaluating faculty performance as a part of the periodic review process. Department chairs offered recommendations to FPC regarding faculty performance in the form of “X’s” (a step raise) and “O’s” (no step raise) with the understanding that tenured faculty who are well performing should expect to receive a step raise in alternate years. The report highlights several problems with this practice including: 1) department chairs typically rotate every three years ensuring that as Chair one will be making recommendations of a colleague who will, in the future, likely be making salary recommendations for the current Chair; 2) for context, Chairs are provided with historical salary recommendations (include for themselves). In practice this level of transparency means that colleagues can deduce which individuals offered recommended for (or against) step increases establishing the potential for *quid pro quo*. The report concluded that Chairs should not be asked give recommendations for faculty compensation, and we echo that recommendation.

Faculty Workload: Promoting Equity Amidst Growing Pressures and Structural Challenges

Three core principles have guided the task force’s work this academic year. We urge the College to affirm these principles:

Faculty workloads should be sustainable. Faculty should have the resources and time necessary to succeed in teaching, scholarship, and service. A reasonable workload ensures that the college can hire and retain high-quality and diverse faculty who offer excellent instruction to our students.

Faculty workloads should be fair and equitable. Everyone should contribute, with the understanding that these contributions may differ over time and based on institutional needs as well as the talents and interests of individual faculty.

Faculty contributions should be understood and credited by the College. The College should track faculty contributions and actively manage workloads so that they do not become excessive or inequitable. Teaching and service, in their varied dimensions, should be recognized—and, in the broad terms we elaborate below, credited—as faculty workload.

In recent years several patterns have challenged principles of reasonable, equitable, and visible workload: increasing service workloads, changing and generally increased student needs, unequal advising, and uncredited or under-credited teaching and mentoring. We address them below.

Challenge 4: Increasing Service Workloads

In recent years the size of the faculty has decreased, but the number and size of committees and subcommittees as well as the number of departments and programs have remained the same or increased. As a result, half of all faculty members are currently serving either on an all-College committee or as the chair of a department or program. Despite well-intended policies aimed at preventing overwork, it is not uncommon for faculty to serve as a department chair and on an all-College committee (including Faculty Personnel Committee) simultaneously, or to serve on two different all-College committees in back-to-back years. In the past, the college has deemed such workloads unsustainable and established policies to prevent them from becoming commonplace (Dickinson Academic Handbook, Chapter 3). These policies have failed.

Committees. In listening sessions, colleagues reflected on the increased number of all-College, divisional, and department committees, advisory committees, steering committees, task forces and working groups, and safety committees as well as other leadership roles. The size and complexity of some committees have increased, as have the number of subcommittees. With the reduced size of the faculty there are fewer faculty to do important service work. Currently 1 in 4 faculty serve on an all-College committee. This poses challenges for the system of shared governance that faculty and the college deeply value. For example, in recent years, the Nominations Committee has found it difficult to identify enough faculty available to serve on all-College committees. In order to run elections, that committee must often set aside academic handbook recommendations designed to prevent excessive service, e.g. that faculty should not, whenever possible, be nominated for all-College service when they are serving as chair of an academic department or program or have had recent all-College or faculty committee service. It is even more difficult to track and manage service at the department level or on advisory,

steering, and safety committees. Within departments and programs, or across campus, faculty may be assigned to these roles or seek them out based on their skills and interests. There is no centralized database of this service, and departments have their own cultures and norms regarding service loads. Service is reported in faculty professional activities statements and discussed as an important part of the review process, yet institutionalized forms of service outside the all-College committees remain a potential source of significant workload inequity.

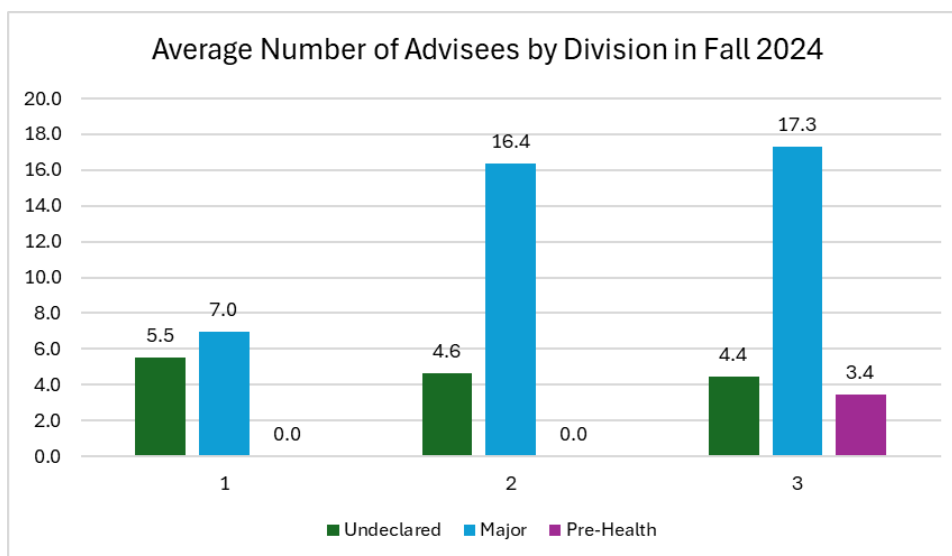
Chairing of departments and programs. Colleagues at listening sessions voiced concern, too, about the sheer increase, and the increasing complexity, of chairs' duties. Over time the College has added departments, programs, minors, and certificates, e.g. Data Analytics, Food Studies, Health Studies, and Neuroscience, among others. This has increased the number of faculty chair (or advisory) positions on campus. As a result, there are currently over 45 faculty, almost 1 in 4 faculty, serving as chair of an academic unit. Especially but not exclusively since the pandemic, the role of chairs has become increasingly complex. Sources of this complexity include new and changing student support needs, tenure line losses and faculty retention challenges that increase demand on remaining faculty and imperil departmental equity, and the difficulties of scheduling and distributing teaching assignments fairly in the College's ever more crowded academic schedule (see Section V: Recommendations for Adjacent Structural Reforms).

It is important to note that committee and chairing workloads are often even higher when faculty are affiliated with multiple departments and programs. This is also the case in smaller departments, where faculty may chair for a significant portion of their careers at Dickinson.

Challenge 5: Unequal advising loads

There are clear and persistent inequities in advising loads, both within and between departments. For example, while the average number of advisees for faculty who are eligible to advise is nineteen students, some faculty routinely advise over 30 students.¹ Advising load varies greatly depending on a faculty member's division, department, and program affiliations and by and how students in their departments are assigned or choose advisors. Advising loads vary over the course of a sabbatical cycle and spike when faculty teach a First Year Seminar. Nonetheless, inequities are clear in data from 2015-2025. For example, there are differences in the average number of advisees per faculty member between the three academic divisions of the college: 12.5 in Division I, 21.0 in Division II, and 25.1 in Division III.

¹ In the Spring 2025 semester, the mean number of advisees is 19, the median is 17, and the maximum number of advisees is 78.



Inequities also occur *within* divisions and departments. Some imbalance in numbers of advisees is acceptable—for instance as faculty’s advisee rosters peak with FYS instruction or rebuild after sabbatical leaves. However, it is also important to note that in most departments, students are free to choose their advisors. In these systems there is always the possibility that some faculty will be sought out for mentoring, for a variety of reasons. These faculty may feel uncomfortable turning away new advisees even when they are already overstretched, leading to unequal advising shares. In addition, in listening sessions and narrative submissions, faculty frequently noted that faculty often take on unofficial – and hence ‘invisible’ - advising and mentoring roles across campus. In addition, many students have multiple advisors; for example, double majors also have double the number of academic advisors, whom they may not rely upon equally. Finally, some important non-departmental programs – such as Dickinson@Oxford, Fulbright, and Pre-Health programs require specialized academic advising, even over the summer months, without compensation. These and other factors work against the general principle that faculty advising workloads should be fair and equitable within and across departments and programs.

Challenge 6: Uncredited and under-credited labor in teaching and mentoring

Some faculty teaching is not included in the traditional 3:2 load system. In listening sessions, faculty routinely cited rehearsals, practices, independent studies, and student faculty research as teaching demands for which no course credit is assigned. Other teaching, which is included in this system, may be credited *differently* depending on the department or program. This may include lectures, studio sessions, and laboratory sessions. These are sources of workload inequity.

High-impact, uncredited teaching

Dickinson's curriculum offers a rich array of high-impact student experiences, including theatrical and musical performances, honors projects and theses, debates, competitions and discussions, organized travel for student fieldwork and conference attendance, independent studies, and student-faculty research experiences. These are examples of high-impact practices (HIPs) - teaching approaches proven to deepen learning, build key skills, support career preparation, and promote equity in student learning outcomes (Kilgo et al 2015). These experiences are marketed to prospective students, sought out by current students, and are increasingly important for placement and success in graduate and post-graduate professional programs. They are hallmarks of a top-notch liberal arts education. Dickinson faculty are dedicated to these types of teaching and learning.

All Dickinson programs offer high-impact learning experiences requiring faculty teaching outside of the regular 3:2 load. For example, all departments offer qualified students the opportunity to enroll in independent studies and to pursue honors, a process requiring faculty supervision and evaluation. Other experiences are associated with particular programs. For instance, rehearsals, performances, and exhibitions are key components of programs in the arts while student faculty research experiences occur most often in the social and natural sciences. Some degree programs require these experiences. Currently, thirteen majors, minors, and certificates require that their majors complete research experience or internship. This is one reason that half of Dickinson students complete a research experience of some type before graduation. These experiences require a significant amount of uncredited teaching. For example, in 2024, a typical year, Dickinson faculty supervised 299 individual independent research and student-faculty research experiences, requiring tens of thousands of hours of uncredited instruction.

Our current workload system does not adequately credit, incentivize, or reward this work. Faculty at the open listening sessions shared a number of concerns regarding:

- lack of teaching credit;
- unclear and/or unequal expectations for faculty participation across departments and programs;
- limitations of staffing and faculty time that prevent them from meeting student demand for these experiences;
- assurances made to prospective students that these opportunities are available to all interested students;
- challenges obtaining funding, especially external funding to support these experiences;
- how this work is valued in personnel reviews and for promotion; and
- lack of assessment for these experiences.

These and other constraints have led some programs to eliminate their requirements for research and/or internships in recent years. These include Environmental Studies

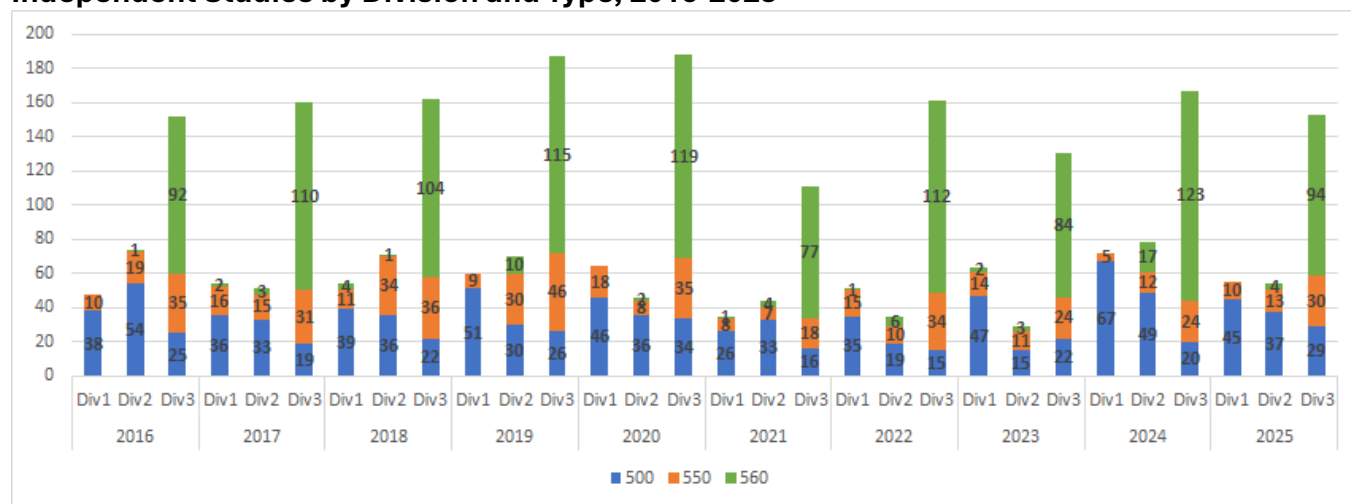
(internship, removed AY2016-17), Policy Management (major sunset, last grads AY2021-22), and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (research, removed AY2022-23). Other programs have added flexibility to their curriculum to allow students to meet research requirements in other ways that do not require supervision from Dickinson faculty, e.g. by completing internships, summer programs at other institutions, or seminar courses.

The task force analyzed three main categories of uncredited / under-credited teaching: independent studies, student-faculty research, and similar experiences; extended-time courses; and invisible labor.

6a: Independent studies, student-faculty research, and similar experiences

Dickinson College offers several types of opportunities through which students can engage in specialized study outside of the classroom. These include independent studies, independent research, student-faculty research, and tutorial studies (see Appendix A for a description of each kind of study). Some departments and programs require or highly-recommend these experiences for their majors. These opportunities require many hours of personalized instruction during and after regular work hours as well as efforts to secure external funding and/or service on related safety committees. However, while students usually receive academic credit for these experiences, faculty generally receive no teaching credit for offering them. Furthermore, the expectation for delivering these opportunities differs by department and program, creating unclear and uneven expectations during the personnel review process. In short, uncredited teaching outside the 3:2 teaching load system is a source of workload inequity, with implications for student opportunities and faculty career advancement.

Independent Studies by Division and Type, 2016-2025



Some departments and programs have adjusted their curriculum to indirectly compensate for this otherwise uncredited teaching, while others have not. For instance, some departments have requested and been approved for courses that cover supervision of their senior thesis/honors projects. Whether these count as a course in the instructor's standard 3:2 teaching varies. For example: POSC 490 Senior Thesis and SOCI 405 Senior Thesis carry one course load, but EASN 490 and MEMS 490 do not. This is another potential source of teaching inequity among departments.

Some peer institutions have installed systems to award at least some teaching credit, usually in the form of teaching releases, to faculty offering these high impact experiences. At these peer institutions, a typical system awards a fraction of a teaching credit for supervised student experiences, e.g. 1 course release for every six experiences supervised, with the ability to accumulate credits over time and take course releases in coordination with departments.

6b: Extended-time courses

Currently, the standard for courses is 150 minutes of instruction per week, either in 3 sessions of 50 minutes, or two sessions of 75 minutes. Usual practice is that each course is awarded 1 FTE (full-time equivalency). However, the College has already assigned some courses additional teaching credit, based on the extra time spent in the classroom or lab:

- Courses in **Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Geosciences, Neuroscience, Physics, Psychology, and Sociology** are assigned one course for the lecture/class portion [150 minutes] and one course for the separate lab portion [180 minutes], for a total of **two FTEs**.
- Courses in **Astronomy, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geosciences, and Physics** are assigned **one** course for the lecture/class portion [150 minutes] and **one-half** course for the lab portion, for a total of **1.5 FTEs** if there is one lecture and a single lab, or **2 FTE** if there is one lecture and two lab sections.
- In **Physics**, a course-sequence is assigned a **two**-course load for lecture/class [150 minutes] and **one-half** course for the lab portion [180 minutes], for a total of **2.5 FTEs**.
- In **Mathematics**, three courses are assigned **one** course load for lecture/class and **.33** course load for the lab portion (1 hour 50 minutes 1x per week), for a total of **1.33 FTEs**.

However, there are many courses, mainly in languages and creative and performing arts, in which faculty spend extra time in the classroom but do not receive any additional teaching credits.

- In **Greek and German**, some 100- and 200-level **language courses** meet **four days a week** in 50-minute sessions
- In **Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish**, 100- and 200-level **language courses** in other departments generally meet **five days a week** in 50-minute sessions.
- **Studio art courses** meet two days a week in two-hour sessions.
- **Music lessons** taught by full-time faculty include **5 hours** of lessons for each FTE.
- In **Theatre and Dance**, dance performance groups and theatre productions commonly meet 3-4 hours per week for most of the semester and for more than 20 hours over in the week before a performance or production.
- Across the College, seminar courses often meet in 3-hour blocks.

The uneven assignment of additional FTEs to some extra-long courses but not others has arisen over time in response to requests from individual departments. This need not suggest favoritism or prejudice, but the system would benefit from greater transparency and equity.

6c. “Invisible” Labor in Teaching, Advising, Mentoring

Faculty workloads have increased and become more inequitable in recent years due, in part but not entirely, to the pandemic (O’Meara et al. 2022). At Dickinson and other institutions, reductions in faculty size means that faculty members have been asked to do more. Too often, workload allocation in higher education is decidedly unsystematic—assignments and requests made in time-sensitive contexts, to colleagues with uneven capacities to decline, by leaders with incomplete information about how much work colleagues are already doing (Culpepper 2025). Research shows that this burden falls more often on women and faculty from historically minoritized racial groups (Guarino and Borden 2016; O’Meara et al 2017). Even small but meaningful differences in the ways faculty spend their time can have real consequences for advancement and promotion, especially since such differences accrue over time (Valian 2005). Workload inequalities lower productivity, increase burnout, and decrease retention for many faculty members (O’Meara et al. 2022). Heavy workloads have also been shown to compromise quality of instruction and negatively impact the long-term health of faculty (Moss 2021). In listening sessions and in written comments, colleagues across ranks and divisions highlighted these kinds of concerns.

V. Primary Recommendations to the Provost

Recommendation 1a: Benchmarked Salaries for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty

The task force recommends a robust benchmarking system that pegs faculty salaries to an external target group. Faculty salaries across all academic divisions should be benchmarked to 90% of the American Association of University Professors Category IIB (hereafter: AAUP IIB—see Appendix B). We likewise recommend a four-year implementation process and urge the College to frontload movement toward closing that gap. Specifically, we recommend that the College eliminate 50% of the current salary gap (the difference between current salaries and target salaries, according to years at rank) in the first year; and 85% in the second year. We recommend eliminating the salary gap entirely by the fourth year.

Benchmarking Salaries to 90% AAUP, by Years at Rank: Assistant

A possible benchmarking structure for Assistant Professors could look like this:

Assistant Professor \$93,900 = target salary					
Years at Rank	At hire:	2-3 years	4 years	5-6 years	7+ years
Percentage	90%	91-99%	100%	101-103%	103%
Range	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>
Salary Range	\$84,510	\$85,449 thru \$92,961	\$93,900	\$94,839 thru \$96,717	\$96,717

Conceptual Priorities Guiding Target Ranges, Assistant:

- Starting salary should be competitive enough to attract highly qualified candidates. We propose 90% of target.
- Assistant Professors should meet 100% of the target in Year 4, just over midway toward their 6-year tenure review.
- A junior colleague should level off at 103% of target by their 6th year. Beyond that time, salaries should rise as that target salary itself rises, not as an increased percent of that salary.
- A maximum target of 103% restores the College's capacity to provide an appropriate salary bump between Assistant and Associate ranks.

Benchmarking Salaries to 90% AAUP, by Years at Rank: Associate

A possible benchmarking structure for Associate Professors could look like this:

Associate Professor \$113,300 = target salary				
Years at Rank	<u>1-6 years</u>	<u>7-10 years</u>	<u>11-14 years</u>	<u>15+ years</u>
Percentage	90-100%	101-104%	105-107%	108%
Range	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>
Salary Range	\$101,970 thru \$113,300	\$114,433 thru \$117,832	\$118,965 thru \$121,231	\$122,364

Conceptual Priorities Guiding Target Ranges, Associate:

- Entry salary to Associate status should begin far enough above the highest Assistant rank faculty member to maintain an appropriate bump between ranks. We propose an entry target of 90%.
- Associate Professors should reach 100% of target salary by their first post-tenure review. This 6-year point marks their eligibility to stand for promotion to Full Professor.
- Associate Professor salaries should increase steadily beyond the 6th year at rank and should plateau at 15 years. The 15-year threshold includes two post-tenure personnel reviews and offers colleagues an opportunity to earn an increasing percentage of target salary until Year 16.
- A maximum target of 108% preserves an appropriate bump in salary between ranks of Associate and Full, even for those who stay at the Associate level for 15 years. Beyond that time, salaries should rise only as the target salary itself rises, not as an increased percentage of that salary.

Benchmarking Salaries to 90% AAUP, by Years at Rank: Full

A possible benchmarking structure for Full Professors could look like this:

Full Professor \$148,600 = target salary				
Years at Rank	<u>1-10 years</u>	<u>11-15 years</u>	<u>16-20 years</u>	<u>21+ years</u>
Percentage	85-99%	100-105%	106-110%	111%
Range	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>	<i>of target</i>
Salary Range	\$126,310 thru \$147,114	\$148,600 thru \$156,030	\$157,516 thru \$163,460	\$164,946

Conceptual Priorities Guiding Target Ranges, Full:

- This range starts below the others, because faculty should ideally spend most of their career in this final phase. We propose an entry target of 85%. This target preserves an appropriate bump between ranks.
- Full Professor salaries should reach the 100% target at 10 years at rank. This places the 100% target midway between entry and the threshold target at Year 21.
- Full Professor salaries should grow most aggressively at the start of a faculty member's years at Full and then grow less quickly. We propose increasing by 15% during the first 10 years at rank and then by 10% for subsequent 10 years. This ensures that Full Professors increase their earnings potential early in their time at rank, which will benefit faculty members who take longer to get to the status of Full and spend relatively less time at this rank before retirement. This percentage of increase also recognizes that this is the highest and final promotion that a faculty member can earn at the College.
- Full Professor salaries should max out after 20 years at rank. These salaries will continue to increase as the AAUP target salaries increase, but these faculty will not earn an ever-increasing percentage of that rising salary.

Recommendation 1b: Benchmarked Salaries for Part-Time and Non-Tenured Full-Time Faculty

The task force recommends raising stipends for Adjunct Instructors and pegging salaries of non-tenure-track faculty to entry tenure-track salaries so that all salaries in the faculty salary structure increase together.

Adjunct Stipends: At \$4,600 per FTE (regardless of instruction credentials or experience), Dickinson pays adjunct colleagues at a lower rate than some nearby institutions, and at a higher rate than others. Gettysburg compensates adjuncts from \$6,000-\$6,500 depending on degree or experience; Franklin and Marshall pays \$7,000 to \$7,800 depending on experience; and Elizabethtown pays at a lower rate than \$4,600 per course. The College should increase the adjunct stipend to \$5,500 per FTE for adjunct colleagues who have taught 1-8 semesters at the college, and \$6,000 per FTE for colleagues who have taught more than eight semesters at the College.

VAP Salaries: Given that over the past nine years, starting VAP salaries have ranged from 71% of starting TT salaries, to 80% of those salaries, the task force should recommend that the College set starting target salaries at 75% of tenure-track salaries. As entry tenure-track salaries increase, so will entry VAP salaries. It is reasonable that the VAP role earns 75% of the tenure-track role, given that visiting contracts do not have any expectation of advising, research, or service.

Lecturer Salaries: At the College, lecturers (and, when promoted: senior lecturers) teach 6 courses per year, advise students, serve on college-wide committees, and engage in service to their department. Currently, starting lecturer salaries are 87% of starting TT

salaries. The task force should recommend to the College that entry lecturer salaries are pegged at 90% of entry tenure-track salaries. Because lecture roles have only two ranks, once lecturers are promoted to senior lecturers, their salaries should be benchmarked at 90% of Associate Professor salaries and remain benchmarked to that rank.

Visiting Instructor and Visiting Lecturer Salaries: This group of employees is much smaller than other groups—there are currently seven colleagues working in this role. These colleagues have either a Master's degree or terminal degree and teach 6 courses per year. They do not have advising, research, or College-wide service commitments, though they often participate generously in the life of their departments. This role is in some ways like a VAP (it is a non-permanent role without advising, research, or College-wide service expectations) and in some ways like a lecturer (a long-term position, teaching a 6-course load, in which a terminal degree is not required). Given that five colleagues currently in this role have been at the College for more than 10 years, the task force recommends benchmarking salaries for those colleagues to 90% of starting TT salaries. Salaries for new visiting instructors or visiting lecturers or those who have been at the College for 1 or 2 years should be benchmarked at 80% of starting TT salaries.

Market-Driven Salaries: At Dickinson, the College has deemed it necessary to offer higher starting salaries in order to successfully recruit tenure-track faculty in particular disciplines—Computer Science, Data Analytics, Economics, and International Business and Management. Differences between starting salaries in these “market-driven” departments has ranged from \$1,000 to \$9,000, with an average of about \$5,000. The task force recommends against offering elevated starting salaries within market-driven departments. With aggressive benchmarking practices, starting salaries across the College, even in market-driven fields should become competitive enough to recruit, hire, and retain talented faculty in these areas. We recommend further observation to see whether robust benchmarking might address differentials between market-driven entry salaries and others across the College.

Recommendation 2: Establish Workload System that Gauges Faculty Work in Its Varied Forms

The College should develop a holistic method for identifying faculty whose workload exceeds sustainable levels and those who could be making more robust contributions to their department and to the College. A workload equivalency model (a workload calculator) is suitable to measure key aspects of teaching and formal advising loads. Overwork in teaching/advising identified through this tool should be compensated over time with course releases. Fellowships awarded to faculty in recognition of outstanding mentoring and advising are necessary to recognize the crucial, but often invisible labor through which faculty support our students. This work should also be compensated over time with course releases. Providing time relief to both quantifiable and invisible forms of faculty labor are twin practices, both critical to an equitable workload system.

Recommendation 2a: Develop a Workload Calculator

The Task Force recommends that the College design a workload calculator (also called an equivalency model) that takes into account structural dimensions of faculty teaching (course characteristics such as class size and contact hours) as well as formal advising loads. Faculty service represents a significant share of faculty workload and should be incorporated into future versions of a workload calculator.

A workload calculator is a tool for measuring faculty workload that converts separate dimensions of faculty labor (teaching, advising, service, research) into standardized equivalency units and sums these units to gauge total workload. Given that the College has not previously attempted to gauge workload in this way, the task force proposes a model that focuses first on teaching and advising. Such a model has a diagnostic function—it can identify faculty members whose combined teaching and advising loads exceed normative expectations, and those whose load is too light. It allows the College to move beyond a broad understanding of what kind of pressures intensify faculty workload to identifying which faculty experience an acute confluence of intersecting pressures. Importantly, this calculation does not measure kind or quality of teaching.

Workload calculators capture quantifiable elements of teaching and advising (how many, how long, how often) but fall short of addressing more informal ways in which faculty support, counsel, and mentor students who seek out faculty based on shared elements of identity (faculty of color, women in STEM fields, LGBTQIA and first-generation faculty). Recommendations below address how to identify overwork in each of these areas.

The task force proposes a [workload calculator](#) with preliminary equivalency units assigned to key elements. These preliminary equivalency units should be considered contingent and approximate until additional data analysis is complete. The workload calculator employs the following assumptions:

Course contact hours impact faculty workload.

Teaching involves multiple dimensions of labor, including but not limited to preparing content of class sessions; preparing (and then disassembling) the space and materials for class sessions; instructing students in class sessions; course-related instruction occurring outside of class; and grading/evaluating student work and performances.

The task force affirms a model that identifies contact hours—the time faculty spend teaching students inside the classroom, lab, hall, theater—as a singular kind of labor in which faculty are responsible for facilitating a pre-designed, coordinated group learning experience with attention to timing, content, and safety.

Class size impacts faculty workload.

Faculty enjoy broad pedagogical autonomy. Both individually and at the department level, faculty make decisions about what kinds of pedagogical strategies best fit disciplines and learning goals. Faculty make choices about *how much* class time is necessary to meet learning goals; *how to use* class time (lecture, discussion, hybrid); and *how to identify* appropriate course expectations, assignments and assessments. Faculty weigh expectations about class size into these pedagogical choices.

The task force affirms a model that takes account of class size in gauging faculty workloads. Even with a wide range of variability in how faculty teach, more students create predictable pressures—more persons in the instructional space, more grading/evaluating, more emails, more students in office hours, and a greater likelihood that faculty will encounter students in crisis (which can require extensive time and emotional energies).

Formal advising impacts faculty workload.

Faculty advisors support students who have not yet declared a major, students within their own department or program, and pre-health students. Advising practices vary from intermittent or infrequent contact centered largely around to course selection, to more intensive support for students who are struggling academically, facing non-academic challenges, are pursuing ambitious professional or personal goals, or need advice about internships and careers. Advising relationships sometimes, but not always, result in the hope or expectation that the faculty member will write letters of recommendation in the future.

The task force affirms that a workload calculator that captures labors related to quantifiable dimensions of academic courses must also take account of formal advising loads.

Independent instruction impacts faculty workload.

As detailed in previous sections, specialized independent instruction (see Appendix A) requires intensive time commitment from faculty, no matter the type.

The task force recommends that a workload calculator take account of independent instruction (course numbers: 500, 550, 560) and that each type of independent instruction be counted equally. There should exist a maximum amount of credit each faculty member should earn each academic year from individualized instruction.

Recommendation 2b: Identify Overwork and Provide Relief Over Time—Assign Maximum and Minimum Thresholds to Workload Units

The Task Force recommends that the College identify and assign maximum and minimum thresholds to workload units to identify faculty members whose workload exceeds sustainable expectations for a faculty member in the liberal arts environment, as well as any circumstances in which faculty members should contribute more to their department and to the College. Faculty whose workload exceeds the maximum threshold will bank the partial workload units year-over-year until they earn enough partial units for a course release. Faculty whose workload falls below the minimum threshold for two consecutive semesters would meet with the Provost to discuss possible areas of additional contribution.

Workload thresholds must be conceptually derived and empirically tested. Conceptual estimations of minimum and maximum levels of workload should consider guidelines about *minimum* class size (generally courses must have 5 students enrolled in order to run); *maximum* class size (class “caps” set between 16 and 45 students) and Academic Handbook guidelines that within departments, faculty teach *across the curriculum*.

Conceptually derived thresholds should then be applied to data on faculty workload from the past several years, to discern how much workload relief would be generated by the conceptually derived model each year, how many course releases would accumulate, and in what areas of the curriculum. “Workload relief” refers to fractions of workload units earned by faculty each year and course releases earned over several years by the accumulation of partial units. This data must then be considered in light of curricular pressures, to discern whether our current academic curriculum could sustain the amount of course releases generated by applied thresholds. This analysis should also consider what kind of workload relief could be supported with strategic adjustments to major requirements across departments.

A balance between conceptual understandings of sustainable workload and numerical analysis of workload patterns is critical. Data must guide the articulation of thresholds, but recent patterns may not be sustainable. Thresholds should not institutionalize or normalize patterns of overwork.

Recommendation 2c: Identify Overwork and Provide Relief Over Time—Implement an Excellence in Advising and Mentorship Award

The Task Force recommends that the College create at least three fellowships to reward excellence in advising and mentorship. This award recognizes ongoing identity-based labor in support of our students.

Given the inherently difficult nature of identifying and quantifying invisible labor in a consistent way, the College should create three fellowships that recognize outstanding

faculty leadership, mentorship, and advising that goes above and beyond expectations. The task force proposes assigning time relief to faculty who mentor students in the context of independent studies and student-faculty research (see Recommendation 2). The Excellence in Advising and Mentorship Award seeks to recognize faculty support of individual students outside the classroom, lab, hall, and theater, many of whom are not identified as formal advisees. The award recognizes the support, advice, and counsel faculty offer students including and especially from historically marginalized, underrepresented identities and those who face particularly difficult circumstances due to global, national, or local issues.

Excellence in Advising and Mentorship Fellowships should not be awarded on articulation of new projects or endeavors, but as recognition for sustained, ongoing work that faculty do to support students. The fellowship should come with a course release or stipend and faculty should be eligible to receive this fellowship every four years. Faculty should self-nominate or be nominated by colleagues. Nominations should remain under consideration (with possibility of update) for up to four years so that applicants need not submit new materials each year. In the first two to three years, the Faculty Personnel Committee should select award recipients, with the possibility of moving to a different structure thereafter.

Recommendation 3: Fund Term Chairs, Fellowships, and Awards to Recognize Faculty Achievement in Teaching, Mentorship, Research, and Service

Faculty excellence takes many forms at Dickinson and deserves recognition in the form of a robust set of enhancements to the benchmarking system. Accordingly, the task force recommends that the College create a system of rotating term chairs and professorships, year-long fellowships, and annual awards that recognize outstanding faculty achievement in teaching, research, service, and the many forms of invisible labor that make Dickinson a world-class liberal arts college.

In recommending a benchmarking system for faculty compensation, the task force proceeds from the recognition that Dickinson faculty are committed liberal-arts educators and mentors who contribute vital service to the College and who shape their fields through research, creative projects, scholarship, and public-facing work. At the same time—and in keeping with common practice at ambitious liberal arts colleges—Dickinson should commit to creating enhancements to the benchmarking system that recognize faculty members' outstanding achievement and/or contribution to the College community. We are inspired in this recommendation by the Provost's recent initiatives for faculty fellowships, on which the College can and should build.

The system of enhancements allows Dickinson to celebrate and meaningfully to reward exceptional achievement, broadly defined. Because each form of enhancement would either rotate or be awarded annually, the system also allows more than one faculty member and more diverse kinds of achievement to be recognized year over year. Finally,

each enhancement carries either a one-time cash prize or, for term chairs and professorships, a yearly stipend of at least \$5,000 for the duration of the term.

The set of term chairs/professorships, fellowships, and awards requires funding that might be raised through an Advancement initiative with intellectual specificity and intention. While these suggestions can be honed through discussions among Academic Affairs staff, the Faculty Personnel Committee, and department chairs, we suggest that the College establish:

- Rotating endowed chairs or professorships with fixed terms of three to five years—e.g., “term chairs”—that include a yearly stipend of at least \$5,000, discretionary research funds, and, where feasible, an accelerated sabbatical cycle. These term chairs or professorships can be titled broadly as “of the humanities, of the social sciences,” etc. Or, as with the recent creation of the Kalaris Chair in the History of Science, they might lift up and make more visible the inter- and cross-divisional work that Dickinson faculty do.
- Early-career fixed-term professorships for junior faculty that include a minimum \$5000 annual stipend and access to discretionary funds for research and/or creative work.
- A robust and diverse array of one-time awards for faculty. Modeled on the Distinguished Teaching Award, these awards would carry a cash prize and be designed to recognize work the College values but that we do not always make visible--e.g., an award for distinguished service, an award to recognize the many forms of invisible faculty labor on which a world-class institution relies.
- As described in the previous section, create at least three fellowships for outstanding advising and mentoring, each to be held for a year and to afford the recipient one course reassigned time and a stipend in recognition of their developmental work with our students.
- Competitive partial sabbatical support through which three or more Assistant or Associate Professors per year receive 75% salary for a full-year sabbatical. Building on the recent change to sabbatical salary options, this enhancement would offer further pre-tenure and mid-career faculty support—and recognition for outstanding achievement—in the form of more financially accessible full-year sabbaticals.

A pivot away from merit-based financial compensation

Merit-based compensation systems are popular in many economic sectors. Merit pay is a strategy employed to recruit and retain productive, talented workers. In many

organizations, including some higher ed institutions, merit pay functions as both an incentive and reward.

However, the task force unanimously agreed that instituting a true merit-based pay system is not a good fit for Dickinson College. Arguments against a merit-based system include:

- Problems of measurement—Connecting research production to the College's compensation system would emphasize quantity of over quality in a way discordant with the College values.
- Cultural mismatch—Literature identifies cultures of competition or division, and of increased mistrust, associated merit-based compensation system. Informed by our readings, discussion, and listening sessions, the task force found that the risk of undermining collegiality at our liberal arts college was greater than the limited rewards of a true merit-based system. A robust benchmarking system that would prioritize lifting all boats is best suited for a faculty climate where excellence is already expected.
- Faculty Workload—The task force identified the Faculty Personnel Committee as the entity best-suited to assess faculty "merit," but FPC personnel reviews occur every six years (for tenured faculty). Increasing the frequency of these personnel reviews would come at a considerable cost of FPC's time and energies.
- Intrinsic motivation: Literature suggests—and our experience at Dickinson confirms—that most academics are intrinsically motivated. Merit pay has not been shown to incentivize faculty in academia as powerfully as it can incentivize professionals in other economic sectors.
- Small percentage increases not compatible with merit-based system: Even when merit-based compensation systems align with institutional cultures, literature suggests that merit pay increases be large enough to motivate increased productivity or performance. With annual raises between 2-3%, funds assigned to merit pay would be small. If merit pay increases are trivial, they will not be effective.

V. Recommendations for Additional Structural Reforms

The task force recognizes that large-scale reforms to structures that compensate and recognize faculty labor must occur in coordination with movement in other systems. These systems are within the purview of the Provost's Office, Academic Affairs and all-College committees.

- **Reexamine the current weekly schedule and yearly academic calendar:** Dickinson's weekly and yearly calendars were adopted at a time of vastly different student, staff, and faculty needs. A reimagined weekly schedule and academic calendar can enhance our ability to offer the current academic program, while also allowing for innovation, creative and global programing, etc. New calendars may

also reduce faculty workload by, for instance, offering more flexibility in teaching slots, building in more restorative breaks across the academic year, etc.

- **Reconsider the number of department major requirements and graduation requirements.** Reducing faculty workload means identifying areas of overwork and asking faculty to do a bit less. Related to teaching, creating space for the reduction of workload will necessitate an openness to trimming course requirements (at the department and possibly the College level) and, in some cases, a willingness to consider which major requirements are required and which are electives.
- **Consider opportunities for reducing the number of academic units and committees.** This might include reductions in the number of department chairs and program coordinators by, for example, incentivizing adjacent programs to join in jointly chaired academic units, thereby reducing the number of faculty serving as chairs while maintaining disciplinary autonomy.
- **Reimagine and reduce committee service:** We recommend that the Handbook Revision Committee, together with the Steering Committee, convene a conversation on committee work at the College. Items to be considered might include numbers of committees and size; committee charges; compensation for committee work; and how faculty committee service is considered in the personnel review process. The College should fortify the role of faculty on governance issues such as tenure and promotion, curriculum, and assessment, while reducing the number of faculty who are serving on committees at any one time
- **Build upon and employ emergent Academic Affairs strategies to improve the experience of first-year students.** If the College moves towards a cadre-of-advisor model for advising undeclared first year students, consider how this strategy might relieve pressure on faculty labor or, conversely, create an opportunity for those who carry lighter loads.
- **Use Research and Development funds strategically in support of faculty research.** Support for faculty research and pedagogical projects no longer meets minimum handbook standards (e.g., where sabbatical funding is concerned). Increased and sustained investment in faculty R&D support is crucial for Dickinson faculty to remain leaders in their fields.

Appendix A: Special Approaches to Study

Dickinson College Academic Bulletin notes several distinct kinds of independent work that fall broadly under the heading of “[Special Approaches to Study](#)”.

Tutorial Study: Tutorial study is occasionally approved for students who, by agreement with the instructor, need to take a course listed in the bulletin on a one-to-one or limited enrollment basis. Such a need might be justified in the case of a course which is offered only on an alternate year basis or at some other frequency which would not allow for the completion of the student's program. Approved tutorial studies are added during the schedule adjustment period in the Registrar's Office.

Independent Study and Research for First-Year Students: First-year students who, on the basis of advanced placement, have qualified for credit in an introductory course (except foreign language courses below 230 and such other courses as may be designated by the departments) and desire to work more extensively at the survey or principles level of a discipline may enroll for a tutorially directed course or half-course in independent study within the same body of knowledge.

A first-year student who wishes to take a second independent study, or a course of independent study or research on terms available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, must petition the Subcommittee on Academic Standards, with supporting statements from the academic advisor and proposed supervisory instructor.

Independent Study for Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors: Independent studies allow a student to pursue an academic interest outside the listed course offerings. The study may include experimental work and reading and may culminate in several short papers, a single paper, or any other project acceptable to the supervising faculty member and the student. The work may be supervised by one or several instructors from one or several departments. Such interdepartmental studies must be approved beforehand by the Subcommittee on Academic Standards. Sophomores may undertake one independent study or research course and may, with the support of the student's academic advisor, petition the Subcommittee on Academic Standards for permission to take two independent studies or independent research courses in one semester. Juniors and seniors may undertake two such courses without special approval and may petition the Subcommittee on Academic Standards for additional independent study or research courses. In addition, the student must have a cumulative average of 2.00 or the permission of the Subcommittee on Academic Standards.

Independent Research for Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors: Independent research allows a student to pursue an academic interest beyond the listed course offerings. The project should be designed as original research and practice in presenting the results of an

investigation. This pursuit must culminate in the student's own contribution to a discipline, whether in the form of fully-supported conclusions or in the form of a creative effort. Students may initiate a research project independently or in consultation with supervising faculty from one or several departments. The final project must be presented to the advising faculty no later than two weeks prior to the end of the evaluation period. The program may be elected for a maximum credit of four full courses. Programs of independent research involving more than two such courses per semester must be approved by the Subcommittee on Academic Standards.

Study-Faculty Research: Student-faculty collaborative research allows a student to conduct original research in close partnership with faculty collaborator(s). The project should be designed as an investigation yielding novel results that contribute to the area of study. With the faculty collaborator(s), students will develop the project and participate in all aspects of the research. It is expected that the faculty member will work closely with the student for at least half of the time the student is pursuing the research. The final project must be presented to the faculty collaborator(s) no later than one week prior to the end of the evaluation period. The course will typically earn one half to two full course credits per semester.

Appendix B: Benchmarking as a Process, AAUP IIB as a Target Group

What is a salary benchmarking system? As a compensation strategy, benchmarking is a practice of pegging the salary of one role or group to the target salary of another group, at a particular percentage of that target, so that as the target salary increases, so does the salary for that role or group. In higher education, faculty salaries are benchmarked by rank, and sometimes by academic department. At Dickinson, starting salaries are nearly uniform across disciplines (see discussion of market-based salaries in subsequent section). We therefore recommend benchmarking Dickinson faculty salaries by rank only, a practice that would align with our institution's values and current compensation practices.

What is the AAUP IIB? This is large, heterogenous group of schools (over 200). It includes smaller, liberal arts colleges and regional universities that primarily serve undergraduate students. Some of these institutions offer graduate programs, but not at a significant scale, relative to their undergraduate population. AAUP IIB colleges focus primarily on teaching, rather than research.²

Why the AAUP IIB? The task force is confident that this is the most appropriate group to which to benchmark Dickinson faculty salaries. Because it is a large, heterogeneous group, it has greater stability over time. Forces that impact a particular type of institution will be more muted with this set of schools than for a group with a narrower range of institutions. Furthermore, the list of schools is public, and inclusion criteria are also public. And importantly: this is the list against which College administrators have been comparing Dickinson salaries (in public forums) for decades.

Why 90%? This is an ambitious and robust target benchmark appropriate for faculty salaries that have for so long remained nearly stagnant and suited to an excellent liberal arts college. We recommend a four-year implementation process and urge the College to frontload movement towards closing that gap. This would involve eliminating 50% of the current salary gap (the difference between current salaries and target salaries, according to years at rank) in the first year; 85% by in the second year; and eliminating the salary gap entirely by the fourth year.

Target salaries by year at rank: Benchmarked to 90% AAUP IIB, faculty will earn a fixed percent of target salary, according to their years at rank, as described in the previous section.

² From AAUP website: "Institutions characterized by their primary emphasis on general undergraduate baccalaureate-level education and not significantly engaged in postbaccalaureate education. Included in this category are institutions that are not considered specialized and in which the number of postbaccalaureate degrees granted is fewer than thirty annually or in which fewer than three post-baccalaureate-level programs are offered and that either (a) grant baccalaureate degrees in three or more program areas, or (b) offer a baccalaureate program in interdisciplinary studies.." For other category descriptions, see AAUP [website](#).

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