

FACULTY WORK

A Focus on Teaching

UT SYSTEM ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM

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FEBRUARY 2011

Office of Strategic Initiatives

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UNDERSTANDING THIS BRIEF

Useful Definitions

Measures of student effort:

Credit hours - A measure of student effort. The number of credit hours assigned to a course is based on the amount of classroom time per week. For example, a student earns three credit hours for a course that meets for three hours per week for a semester.

Measures of faculty effort:

Instruction - Time spent in the classroom, lab, or field educating students. Also includes instruction-related activities such as course preparation, office hours, or grading.

Semester credit hours - The number of semester credit hours is equal to the credit hours of a course multiplied by the total enrollment for that course. For example, a three hour course with 50 students enrolled is equal to 150 semester credit hours.

Teaching load credits - The number of teaching load credits for a faculty member are based primarily on time spent in the classroom. For example, teaching a three hour course would yield three teaching load credits. For a more detailed explanation, please see: www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/30000series/31006.pdf

Clock hours (also "hours") - The estimated number of hours per week that faculty spend on an activity (in the context of this brief, refers to teaching activity). As a conservative estimate, for every hour spent teaching (i.e., teaching load credits), a faculty member would spend an additional 2 hours preparing and/or evaluating (grading and advising students). For example, a faculty member teaching a three hour course spends at least nine clock hours per week in preparation, teaching, and evaluation for that course. These are conservative estimates since this analysis does not account for new course preparations.

Common Abbreviations:

AY = Academic Year

TLC(s) = Teaching Load Credit(s)

FTE = Full Time Equivalent

NSSE = National Survey of Student Engagement

OAC = Other Academic Campuses

SCH(s) = Semester Credit Hour(s)

T/TT = Tenured and Tenure-Track faculty

TA(s) = Teaching Assistants

THECB = Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About This Brief

In This Brief

This research brief will focus on teaching and, in that context, explore faculty work at UT System institutions. Faculty have multiple roles and responsibilities — they teach, engage in scholarship/research, and provide public service. The brief will answer questions about how much time faculty members spend on instruction and instruction-related activities and about who is teaching undergraduate students and the lower-division courses which are critical to student engagement. Using data from the National Survey of Student Engagement, this brief provides evidence to the multiple interactions students have with faculty both inside and outside the classroom.

Exploring Faculty Workload

The five things you need to know about UT System faculty:

1. *Up to 39 hours of instruction alone.* Estimated faculty time spent on instruction and instruction-related activities range from 29 to 39 clock hours per week. This does not include hours spent on scholarship/research (Figure 7).
2. *Faculty exceed the standards* for teaching loads set by the UT System Board of Regents (Figure 6).
3. *Faculty demonstrate a strong commitment to classroom teaching.* T/TT faculty produce a high—and, in many cases, the highest—proportion of undergraduate semester credit hours. Teaching assistants do the smallest share of teaching, ranging from 4% to 11% of undergraduate credit hours taught (Figures 3 and 4). These teaching assistants are advanced Ph.D. students.
4. *Quality instruction at the lower division level.* T/TT faculty members teach freshmen/sophomore level courses (Figure 5).
5. *Students rate institutions and faculty members highly.* Of UT System seniors responding to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), more than 80% rate their educational experience as good to excellent and three-quarters rate the quality of relationships with faculty members as above average (Table 1).
 - Evaluations of faculty teaching quality involve both student and peer assessment.
 - Teaching evaluations are part of faculty annual reviews for promotion and tenure.

Conclusions

Committed to Teaching. There is evidence of a strong commitment to teaching by tenured and tenure-track faculty, including undergraduate classes. Teaching load credits are increasing. Only a small percentage of semester credit hours are taught by teaching assistants who are advanced Ph.D. students.

Exceeding Standards. All UT System institutions are exceeding Board of Regents' teaching load requirements of at least 27 clock hours per week on instruction and instruction related activities alone or the equivalent of 3 organized classes per semester.

Demonstrating Quality in the Classroom.

- Highly-qualified tenured/tenure-track faculty members are teaching undergraduates;
- Faculty are rated positively by their students; and
- Students rate their entire educational experience highly.

The Analysis

TEACHING IN CONTEXT

An Overview of Teaching

Boyer (2009) describes teaching as “scholarship both educating and enticing future scholars.” Faculty teaching is a complex activity. Teaching takes place as both formal and informal activities. The formal activities include organized course instruction such as courses, laboratories, field study, thesis advising, and directed study. Organized instruction requires preparation, evaluation, and advising students on problem solving within organized courses. The informal teaching activity includes general faculty advising during office hours, helping students learn difficult material, and service on student research committees, among others.

How do we quantify teaching?

- A measure of time (and intensity of effort) spent on instruction, research, and service
- Texas Higher Education Code – classroom teaching, basic and applied research, professional development
- UT System Board of Regents – requires a workload of 18 or more TLCs per academic year. This is equivalent to at least 27 clock hours per week on instruction and instruction-related activities alone, or 3 organized classes per semester.

Characteristics of UT System Faculty and their Work

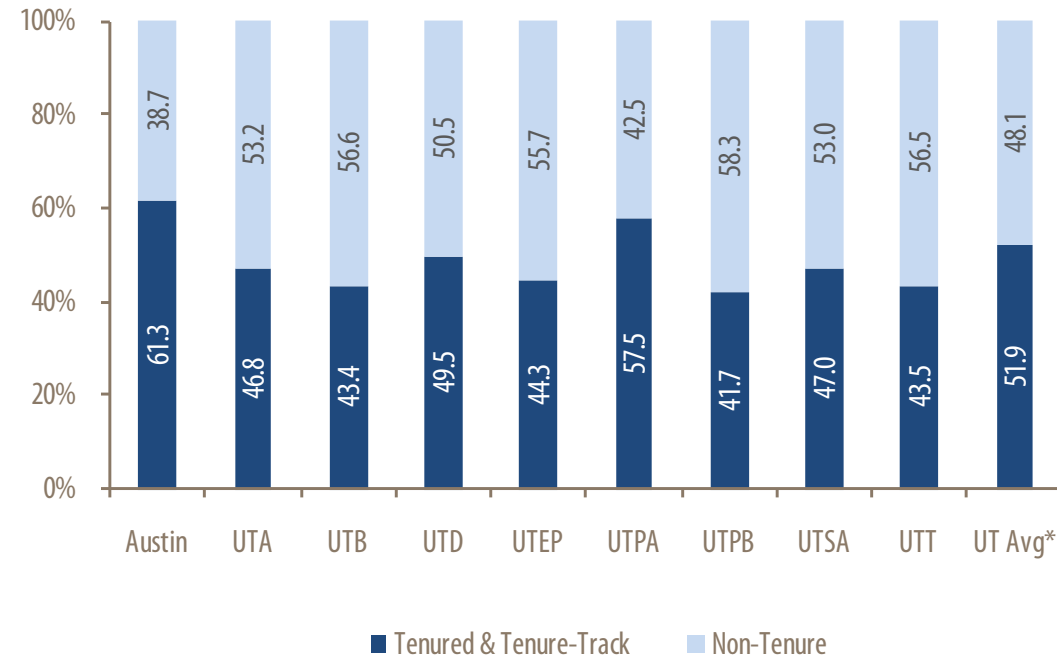
Faculty Status: Tenured/Tenure-Track & Non-tenured Faculty

T/TT faculty members are expected to teach, conduct research, and participate in service. Other professional faculty members are hired as specialists to do one particular job, typically teaching. On average, for all UT System academic institutions:

- 52% of faculty are tenured or tenure-track, and
- 48% are other non-tenured faculty (Figure 1).

The balance between T/TT faculty and non-tenured faculty within the UT System demonstrates the commitment of the institutions to both teaching and research missions.

Fig 1 Faculty by Level as Proportion of Total
Average, AY 2007–2010



Note: * UT Avg includes all nine academic institutions.

Student/Faculty Ratios

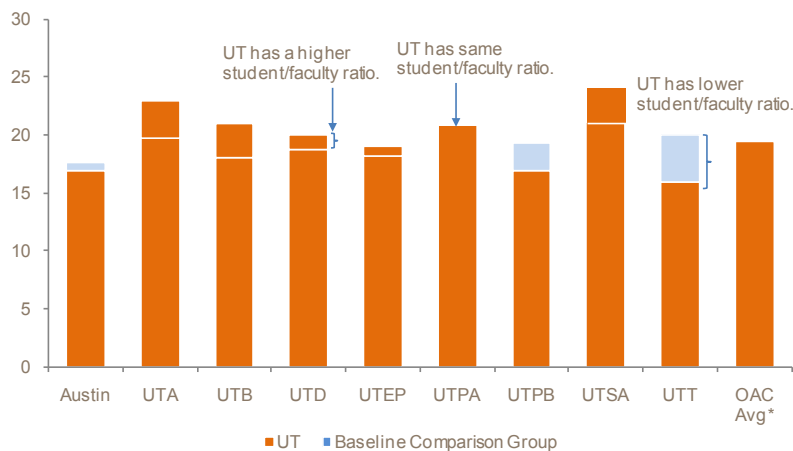
The ratio of full time equivalent (FTE) students to FTE faculty is related to several important issues:

- level of faculty work (amount of grading, assisting and providing feedback to students inside and outside of class, and course preparation);
- the mission of the institution (teaching, research, or both); and
- budgetary constraints of the institution.

A focused priority on enhancing quality by UT System and university leadership has been generally successful in lowering student/faculty ratios except at those institutions where enrollment growth has outpaced faculty growth. AY 2010 ratios based on national data range from 17:1 on the low end to 24:1 on the high end (Figure 2).

- In keeping with the University's mission and goals to provide meaningful engagement in the classroom, UT Austin has a lower student faculty ratio than national peers (17:1).
- Other academic campuses within the UT System have, on average, a student faculty ratio of 20:1; equal to their baseline peers. UT System institutions still have room for improvement in comparison to baseline peers. Six of the nine institutions have higher student/faculty ratios than their respective comparison group.

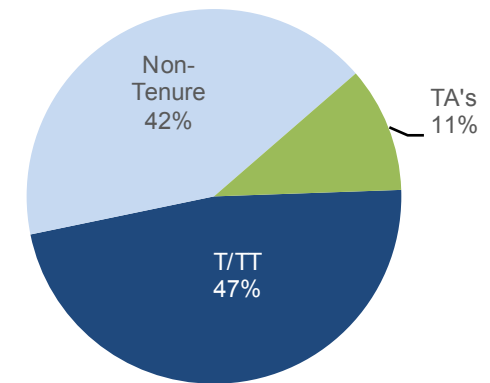
Fig 2 Comparison: FTE Students per FTE Faculty
Compared to Baseline Comparison Group (average), AY 2010



*OAC includes all UT System academic institutions, except UT Austin.
Source: IPEDS

Faculty Commitment to Teaching **Fig 3** Of all Undergraduate Semester Credit Hours, Percent Taught by Faculty Status, AY 2010 – UT Austin

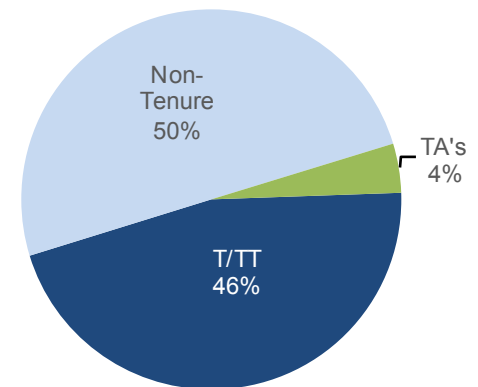
In direct contrast to popular notions about which types of faculty are in the classroom, data from UT System institutions clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to classroom teaching with T/TT faculty generating a high proportion of undergraduate semester credit hours (Figures 3 and 4).



Findings for UT Austin indicate that the largest proportion (47%) of undergraduate semester credit hours is generated by T/TT faculty, with only 11% generated by teaching assistants who are advanced Ph.D. students (Figure 3).

Fig 4 Of all Undergraduate Semester Credit Hours, Percent Taught by Faculty Status, AY 2010 – OAC

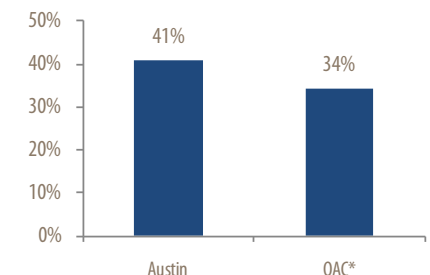
Findings for the other UT System academic campuses indicate that T/TT faculty generate close to half (46%) of the undergraduate semester credit hours (Figure 4).



T/TT faculty members are teaching freshmen and sophomore level courses.

- T/TT faculty members at UT Austin teach 41% of lower division SCHs offered (freshmen/ sophomore level courses) (Figure 5).
- At other UT System academic campuses, on average, T/TT faculty members teach 34% of lower division SCHs offered (freshmen/sophomore level courses) (Figure 5).

Fig 5 Proportion of Lower Division SCH taught by T/TT Faculty, Fall 2009



*OAC includes all UT System academic institutions, except UT Austin.
Excludes UT Brownsville

Measuring Faculty Work: Clock Hours

All UT System institutions are exceeding the Board of Regents' requirement of 18 TLCs. This is equivalent to at least 27 clock hours per week on instruction and instruction-related activities alone, or 3 organized classes per semester (Figures 6 and 7).

Conservatively, UT System faculty members spend between 29 and 39 hours per week on instruction and instruction-related activities.

- UT Austin T/TT faculty spent 36 hours per week on instruction and instruction-related activities alone.
- T/TT faculty at the other UT System academic campuses spent, on average, 34 hours per week on instruction and related activities alone.
- These are likely underestimates of the total time spent on instruction and related since the analysis does not account for new course preparations. Research by UC Berkeley indicates that out-of-class time should be doubled for new courses or courses a faculty member is teaching for the first time.
- This does not take into account the amount of time faculty members also spend on research, institutional service, and other types of paid and unpaid service that contributes to the overall enhancement of student life and the campus community.

Fig 6 Average TLC per FTE vs. Board of Regents Requirement
Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty, 2007-2010

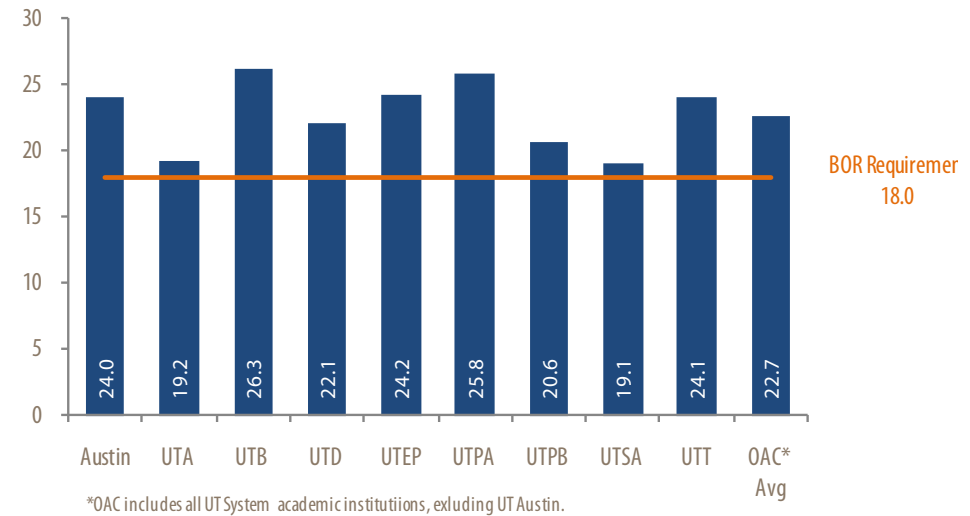
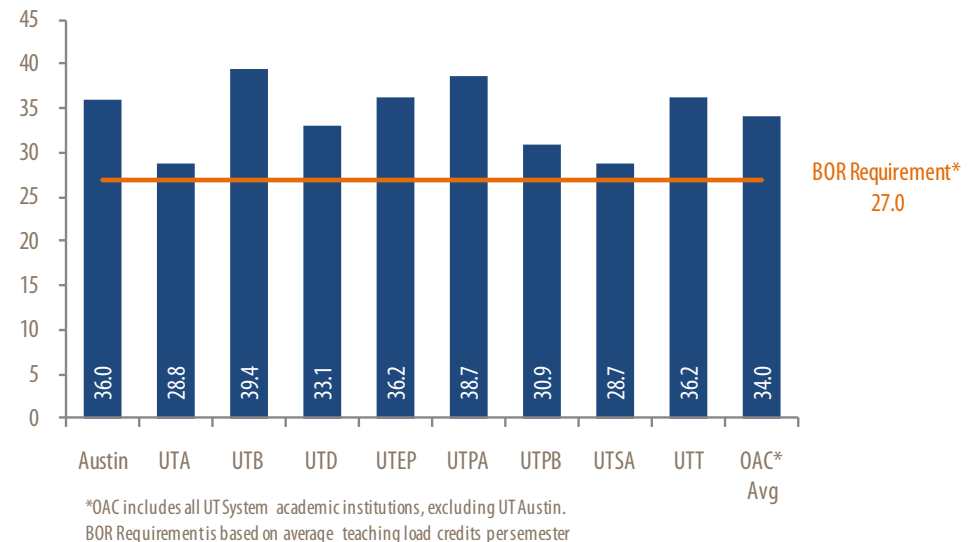


Fig 7 Estimated Clock Hours Teaching vs. Board of Regents Requirement
Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty, 2007-2010



Faculty Contributions to the Educational Experience

This brief has focused on typical data elements in the accountability bucket. While it is necessary to track, examine, and report data such as hours per week spent on instruction, the proportion of undergraduate hours that tenured/tenure-track faculty teach, and student/faculty ratios, it is also critical that we not lose sight of the less quantifiable aspects of higher education. Faculty members provide much greater value to our institutions than the number of hours worked per week.

While this value can be difficult to quantify, it is no less critical to the success of students and universities as a whole.

A few words of wisdom:

The word “accountability” is repeated but not necessarily understood and certainly not expressed with any precision. Often, items measured in an analysis of accountability are included simply because they are conveniently measured (Adelman).

Regarding the comprehensive nature of higher education: to develop students to be active and thoughtful participants not just in their individual careers but also in their social and political lives as neighbors, community members, and citizens. Faculty members have an important role in the development of students both inside and outside of the classroom (Durden).

What Do Our Students Think?

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) gives a glimpse into the thoughts of our students. Several of the NSSE items report students’ perceptions of faculty engagement outside of the classroom. These items also shed some light on faculty work not captured in the clock hour analysis. The surveys for UT System seniors show:

- The majority of UT System seniors responding to the survey report they use email to communicate with their instructors. Technology, specifically email, has increased student access to instructors beyond classroom and office hours and the ease at which instructors may provide feedback. However, the same is true in the classroom as in the boardroom: technology diminishes the boundaries between personal and work time. Responding to emails can take a significant amount of time, whether it is a few in-depth questions or many questions requiring short responses (or, more likely, both).
- UT System seniors responding to the NSSE rate their educational experience as good to excellent and rate the quality of relationships with faculty members as above average.

- NSSE data provides a glimpse into the types and frequency of interactions that students have with faculty members outside of class. While these data are by no means exhaustive, when considering faculty workload, and clock hours worked in particular, it is important to keep in mind these types of potentially time-consuming interactions which are not typically accounted for in formal analyses.

Table 1 National Survey of Student Engagement

	Austin	OAC Avg	UT Avg
Communication w/ Faculty			
<i>Percent of Seniors responding Often or Very Often</i>			
Used email to communicate	84%	84%	84%
Discussed grades/assignments	48%	59%	58%
Received prompt feedback on performance	61%	60%	60%
Quality of Relationships w/ Faculty			
Percent of Seniors rating relationships 5 or better	75%	77%	76%
<i>"Minimum = 1 ""Unhelpful, Unsympathetic""</i>			
<i>Middle = 4 (neutral)</i>			
<i>Maximum = 7 ""Available, Helpful, Sympathetic""</i>			
Rate Your Entire Educational Experience			
<i>Percent of Seniors responding Good or Excellent</i>	92%	85%	86%

Source: NSSE

Conclusions and Findings

CONCLUSIONS:

UT System faculty members are –

Committed to Teaching. There is evidence of a strong commitment to teaching by tenured and tenure-track faculty, including undergraduate classes.

Exceeding Standards. All UT System institutions are exceeding Board of Regents' teaching load requirements of 27 clock hours per week on instruction and instruction related activities alone or 3 organized classes per semester.

Demonstrating Quality in the Classroom.

- Highly-qualified tenured/tenure-track faculty members are teaching undergraduates;
- Faculty are rated positively by their students; and
- Students rate their entire educational experience highly.

Specific findings include:

1. Up to 39 hours of instruction alone. Estimated faculty time spent on instruction and instruction-related activities ranges from 29 to 39 clock hours per week, and this doesn't include hours spent on scholarship/research (Figure 7).
2. Faculty exceed the standards for teaching loads set by the UT System Board of Regents (Figure 6).
3. Faculty demonstrate a strong commitment to classroom teaching. T/TT faculty produce a high—and, in many cases, the highest—proportion of undergraduate semester credit hours. Teaching assistants do the smallest share of teaching, ranging from 4% to 11% of undergraduate credit hours taught (Figures 3 and 4). These teaching assistants are advanced Ph.D. students.
4. Quality instruction at the lower division level. T/TT faculty members are teaching freshmen/sophomore level courses (Figure 5).
5. Students rate institutions and faculty members highly. Of UT System seniors responding to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), more than 80% rate their educational experience as good to excellent and three-quarters rate the quality of relationships with faculty members above average (Table 1).
 - Evaluations of faculty teaching quality involve both student and peer assessment.
 - Teaching evaluations are part of faculty annual reviews for promotion and tenure.

Notes

Definitions

The University of Texas System Board of Regents' *Rules and Regulations*

Excerpt from Rule 31006, Academic Workload Requirements:

Sec. 1. Statutory Requirement. State law requires the Board of Regents to adopt rules concerning faculty academic workloads. Texas Education Code Section 51.402 recognizes that important elements of workload include classroom teaching, basic and applied research, and professional development. Workload for the faculty members of the institutions of The University of Texas System is expressed in terms of classroom teaching, teaching equivalencies, and presidential credits for assigned activities.

Sec. 2. Minimum Workload. Each person paid full time from the appropriations item "Faculty Salaries" shall be assigned a minimum workload equivalent to 18 semester credit hours of instruction in organized undergraduate classes each nine-month academic year, or fiscal year at an institution's option...

For a copy of the complete *Rule*, please see www.utssystem.edu/bor/rules.htm

Data Sources

In the absence of recent national data on time spent on classroom instruction and preparation, clock hours were calculated for UT System institutions based on national norms (2 hours of preparation/evaluation for each hour in class). The estimates are based on average TLCs for full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty from AY 2007 to 2010.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Enrollment Survey File, 2009. Student/Faculty ratio data for 2009 were selected for UT Academic Institutions as well as current peers and the baseline comparison group.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, CBM003, CBM004, and CBM008 for academic years 2007-2010. 1) Tenured/tenure-track faculty includes professors, associate professors, assistant professors and instructors. Other professionals include lecturers, visiting teachers and special, adjunct, and emeritus faculty. Graduate teaching assistants are not included. FTE faculty only include faculty with teaching appointments. 2) Semester credit hours (SCH) and teaching load credits (TLC) for all levels (undergraduate and graduate) were selected for academic years 2007 through 2010 by FTE faculty tenure status. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), 2010. Items 1m, 1n, 1p, 1q, 1s, 7d, 8b, and 13 for seniors only from the 2010 survey were used. The data were collapsed across the Emerging Research and Comprehensive Universities.

Technical Notes

The CBM003, CBM004, and the CBM008 were utilized for the SCH and TLC analyses by tenure status (tenured, tenure track, non-tenure, and teaching assistants). Only fall and spring data were used; summer was excluded. The CBM003 was merged with the CBM004 and this combined file was then merged with the CBM008 by institution, faculty ID, semester, and academic year.

CBM003: Course Inventory – identifies courses at an aggregate level for a given academic year.

CBM004: Class Report – reflects conditions as of the official census date which is the 12th class day for the fall and spring semesters. Includes every course offered as well as the faculty member(s) teaching the course.

CBM008: Faculty Report – collects data on the academic duties and services of each person who has any type of faculty appointment, regardless of their source of funds or their assignment. All faculty, including teaching assistants, identified on the CBM004 class report must be included.

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