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## USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity

### International Summit on Shaping the Future of Higher Education in Pakistan 10-12 June 2024, Islamabad

**Session 2:** Monday, 10 June 2024 (14:00 to 15:30 hrs)

**Topic:** Optimizing Faculty Workload: Challenges and Policies

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Uzma Qureshi, Professor, Lahore College for Women University
- Dr. Faisal Bari, Lahore University of Management Sciences
- Dr. Mike Barber, Professor and Chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Utah, USA

**Description:** One important challenge faced by faculty members in Pakistani higher education institutions is the absence of clear guidelines or support systems for workload distribution and prioritization. While institutions often have policies outlining expectations for teaching, research, and administrative duties, they frequently lack mechanisms to effectively balance these responsibilities. This lack of clarity often leaves faculty members grappling with how to allocate their time efficiently.

Moreover, existing policies may not adequately account for the diverse roles and responsibilities of faculty members. For example, tenure-track faculty may be primarily evaluated based on their research productivity, while non-research or part-time faculty may be disproportionately burdened with heavy teaching loads. This disparity can create tension and resentment within academic departments and contribute to feelings of inequity among faculty members.

Another significant concern is the limited availability of resources and support for faculty development and workload management. Faculty members often lack access to professional development opportunities that could enhance their teaching effectiveness or research productivity. Also, inadequate institutional support for administrative tasks, such as grading or committee work, can exacerbate workload pressures. Furthermore, Pakistani universities often introduce new programs or courses without hiring additional faculty, placing additional workload burdens on existing faculty members.

Existing workload management policies may not adequately address the growing demands for interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement in higher education. Faculty

members who seek to engage in collaborative research or outreach initiatives may be challenged by conflicting priorities - that hinder their ability to pursue these activities effectively.

Significant differences can be observed in the policies governing faculty workload between public and private universities in Pakistan, including variations within these categories. A comparative analysis among these groups, as well as with universities in the US, could provide valuable insights into the contrasting dynamics of workload, institutional cultures, and policy frameworks. By drawing upon best practices from these comparisons, we can extract valuable insights to guide evidence-based policy reforms tailored to the unique landscape of higher education in Pakistan.

In summary, the discussions in this session are poised to inform existing policy frameworks by offering clear guidelines for workload distribution, addressing disparities in workload expectations, and enhancing support for faculty development.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Understanding the multifaceted challenges confronting faculty members in Pakistani higher education institutions, particularly regarding workload distribution and prioritization, amidst the absence of clear guidelines and support systems.
2. Appreciating the necessity for equitable policies that consider the diverse roles and responsibilities of faculty members, fostering fair distribution.
3. Leveraging comparative analyses of workload dynamics, institutional cultures, and policy frameworks between public and private universities in Pakistan, alongside counterparts in the US, to extract best practices for informed policy reforms tailored to the unique landscape of Pakistani higher education.