

Teaching Load: Present unpleasant, future uncertain

Present Unpleasant

The statistics say it best: workload was one of the top three priorities of the YUFA members who responded to the 2001 bargaining questionnaire. On a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important), 62% of 430 respondents rated workload as a 4 or 5. Among respondents who have worked at York for at least five years, 67% said their workload increased substantially over that time. Of these, 83% cited teaching (for professors) or professional performance (for librarians) as the main source of the increase, while 64% noted increased service demands.

Cuts to department budgets, increasing class sizes, and technological change affect YUFA members' workload, morale, collegial relations (due to service fatigue), and ability to devote time to research. They also affect our students. Numerous studies attest to how increasing class sizes and other trends lead to impersonal relations, inadequate advising, lowered performance, decreased participation, reduced retention, and plagiarism.

Future Uncertain

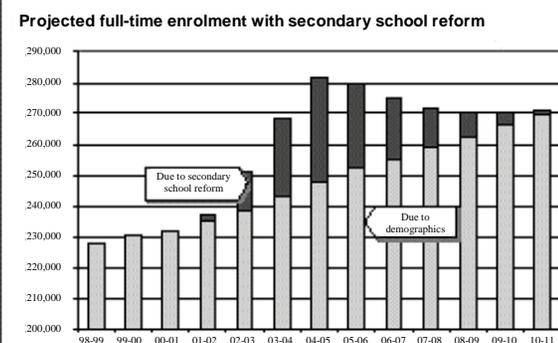
According to the Ontario Federation of University Faculty Associations, "student demand for a university education is expected to increase by 40% over the course of the next decade. To date, Ontario has lost 2,000 full-time equivalent faculty, representing more than 15% of the total complement. In addition a third of current faculty members are between the ages of 55 and 64, suggesting that a further 5,500 professors will leave their universities by the year 2010." (*Forum*, Spring 2001)

How will our employer address the arrival of the double cohort, the burgeoning demographic change and the impending retirement of an estimated 40.5% of YUFA members in the next ten years? Management has indicated vaguely that "technology-enhanced learning" will do the trick. Yet this raises further questions: How will learning new technologies affect faculty workloads? How will student learning be affected by changes in class size and changes in how they are assessed? Will management provide adequate faculty development resources and support?

Besides increasing reliance on new technologies, our employer might respond by attempting to shift work out of YUFA to contract faculty positions, by outsourcing, and through new 'partnerships' with colleges. At a recent Canadian Association of University Teachers conference on workload, Gail MacDonald, St. Thomas University, enumerated how such shifts deter innovative research, erode academic freedom, threaten tenure, and imbue the university with corporate values.

Our collective agreement currently offers inadequate protections in the critical area of workload. Watch for upcoming *FactSheets* on faculty and librarians' workload proposals.

Temporary phenomenon meets lasting effect



Summer Reading List

- Ashworth, P. et al. (1997) Guilty in whose eyes? University students' perceptions of cheating and plagiarism in academic work and assessment, *Studies in Higher Education* 22(2).
- Borden, V. & Burton, K. (1999) The impact of class size on student performance in introductory courses, Annual Forum of Association for Institutional Research, Seattle.
- Fassinger, P. (1995) Understanding classroom interaction: Students' and professors' contributions to students' silence. *The Journal of Higher Education* 66(1).
- Feldman, D. & Dow, K. (1995) Tenure status and pedagogical choices. *Journal of Education for Business* 71(1).
- Gibbs, G. et al. (1996) Class size and student performance: 1984-1994. *Studies in Higher Education* 21(3).
- Inagatullah, S. & Gidley, J. (eds) (2000) *The University in Transformation: Global Perspectives on the Future of the University* Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.
- Kreuger, L. and Stretch, J. (2000) How hypermodern technology in social work education bites back, *Journal of Social Work Education* 36(1).
- Maxwell, N. and Lopus, S. (1995) A cost effectiveness analysis of large and small classes in the university *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 17(2).
- McMurtry, S. & McLelland, R. (1997) Trends in student-faculty ratios and the use of non-tenure-track faculty in MSW programs. *Journal of Social Work* 33(2).
- Sugrue, B. et al. (1999) Distance learning: Relations among class size, instructor location, student perceptions and performance *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 12(3).
- Sullivan, C. (1998) The corporatized research university and tenure in modern language departments: Notes from Minnesota. *ADFL Bulletin* 30(1).
- Wilson, R. (1991) Undergraduates at large universities found to be increasingly dissatisfied, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 37(17) [Jan.9].

Next FactSheet: Toward consistent and contained teaching loads

Your voices ...

I am most concerned about quality of education issues and certainly workload is tied to this. I find it difficult to give 100 percent to my course development and lecture preparations under current circumstances. My combined teaching, research and service load is crushing and my kitchen floor has not been washed in weeks. (Arts)

YUFA survey respondents (n=430) who say...	%
Workload is an important priority	62
My workload has increased in the last 5 years	67
Overall, email from students has significantly increased my teaching load	51
My class sizes are too large for optimal learning	43
Other aspects of workload are so heavy that few members in my unit want to do committee work or fill chair and programme director positions	43
It is very difficult to achieve a balance among teaching, research and service	42
I receive no teaching load credit for graduate supervision	39

Computing support in our department is terrible. An external reviewer of the Physics and Astronomy graduate programme considered it the worst he has seen anywhere. Researchers are largely left to their own devices to manage complex systems which they

and their students rely on every day. (Marshall McCall, FPAS)

York libraries are understaffed, especially with full-time staff. Too many part-timers don't make up a few full-timers. (Libraries)

Lack of teaching support - most recent example is constant badgering about using too many overhead sheets! Large classes = greater need for overheads but this doesn't seem to penetrate! (Erin Hewitt, Atkinson)

We're expected to do so much with our students, but the class sizes mean we only pay lip service to many crucial aspects of teacher education - especially to equity issues in teaching and learning. (Education)

I have a concern about t & p and workload. In the first year of my appointment at York, I was assigned not only a full teaching load but also to cover in the winter term the classes of a colleague on his sabbatical. I was able to keep up research, creative work, and service. What suffered was my patience and tolerance level, reflected in student polls. (Fine Arts)

Anyone who prepares an internet course should be paid the equivalent of an overload for the preparation. (Glendon)

My term as undergraduate programme director is ending and we can't find anyone to become the next UPD. I don't blame anyone. The compensation is not worth it. Anyone who becomes the UPD should be getting \$10 000. As it is, you end up negotiating whatever you can for yourself – in my case, some international travel money – because the stipend is so small. I did the job for citizenship reasons, but it's virtually impossible to keep up with research and publishing, which is what the university values. I could only manage it because I'm single. (Shannon Bell, Arts)

When I teach Internet, that is all I do! (Atkinson)

The profession of teaching is a joy when students come in with projects that show growth, initiative, engagement with ideas. My concern is for the quality of our jobs/profession; reasonable facilities, support and class size are issues that affect the faculty and student body. When YUFA negotiates for these things, they negotiate for

students as well as YUFA members. (Judith Schwarz, Fine Arts)

Double cohort and associated expansion will be explosive unless we have some control on future increases (Walter Whiteley, Arts)

I am also concerned about cutting back on TA allocation, substituting marker/graders. If anything, the reverse is needed. (Michael Lanphier, Arts)

The push for cooperative 'partnerships' and distance education seems to be promoted as a way of making money, not necessarily providing a better education. It's a hard one to fight, as there is a budget squeeze. I share the concerns expressed that we are diluting the kind of education we offer, and doing future generations of academics out of jobs. (Ester Reiter, Atkinson)

I'm concerned about the increase in part-time teaching and the potential for the university to rely on this group to meet growing demands in enrolments (especially the double cohort). As the part-time complement increases, it will ultimately threaten the salary levels and quality of work for full-time faculty. (Arts)