



**University Students' Council Standing Policy on
Teaching Stream Tenured Faculty**

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Introduction and Overview

Western University prides itself on offering an unequivocally robust student experience to all of its students. The very foundation of that experience is academic in nature. The courses in which students enrol and the way in which they're taught have a massive, formative impact on other aspects of the Western experience, including the activities that they participate in and the atmosphere fostered on our campus.

The University Students' Council has confidence in the notion that enhancing pedagogical practices within the classroom will fundamentally improve the student experience. In recent years, the USC has rewarded educators who have gone the extra mile to ensure that what and how they are teaching is conducive to the myriad learning styles espoused by their students. The USC believes that recognition and appreciation for the critical role teaching plays at Western, as well as an institution-wide investment in teaching stream faculty, is the pedagogical path forward.

Being taught well is a priority for students attending a post-secondary institution. The recommendations below are a number of ways that we believe will ensure that our students receive a strong educational experience from professors who are masters of their craft. We believe that if Western valued its teaching as much as it values its research, the very best in student experiences will be within our reach. Value can be derived from many places – from the language chosen to describe those that teach, to the requirements that educators need to teach, to who they hire and their expectations of them within their professional position.

Recommendations

1. Western University should hire teaching focused faculty, in the tenured stream, to increase quality of teaching.
2. During the 2018 bargaining cycle, the University should remove clause 4 under "Academic Responsibilities of Members" in its collective agreement with faculty to reflect equal value of teaching and research.
3. During the 2018 bargaining cycle, the University should rename all "Limited Duties" Appointments as Teaching Appointments.

Recommendation 1: Western University should hire teaching-focused faculty, in the tenured stream, to increase quality of teaching

Principle: Western students should have consistently high quality of education regardless of enrollment growth.

Concern: Tenured faculty are overburdened with the increase workload of higher enrollment.

As more students enroll in university, educators are feeling burdened with the increasing workload at their institutions. According to a 2012 survey by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association, 73 percent of faculty felt their workload had increased since 2007, and 37 percent felt their workload was unmanageable.¹ To combat this problem, many of the participants indicated that they had made changes to their pedagogy to reduce workload. Some of these practices include reducing one-on-one time with students outside of the classroom, more multiple choice tests, and fewer written assignments.² Faculty shortages are compromising the quality of instruction by forcing faculty to utilize ineffective pedagogical practices at the expense of the student experience.

Concern: Institutions are not effectively using resources to combat the higher workload of tenured faculty.

Universities are hiring part-time or contract faculty to take on courses that could not be taught by tenured faculty due to workload constraints. According to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), one of the largest changes to Ontario universities within the last decade has been the increase in precarious, casual, and contract work. OCUFA estimates that between 2000 and 2014, the number of courses taught by contract faculty at Ontario universities has increased by 97 percent.³

Recommendation

The University Students' Council believes hiring tenure-track teaching-focused faculty would drastically improve the student experience at Western. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario explains teaching and research should no longer be assumed as combined activities as there is in fact an inverse relationship between research productivity and teaching quality, as measured by student satisfaction surveys.^{4 5} Constraints in government funding begs the question of how to continue teaching and research outputs with limited or no new resources. The USC agrees with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), who suggests a 60-20-20 split of teaching, research and administration respectively.⁶ As students contribute more than 50 percent of university operating budgets, the resources should be allocated to areas that benefit them the most.

¹ <http://ocufa.on.ca/assets/2012-OCUFA-Faculty-Survey-Part-1-Formatted-FINAL.pdf>

² Ibid

³ <http://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/faculty/professors-challenge-dramatic-increase-in-precarious-work-on-ontario-campuses/>

⁴ <http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/The%20Nexus%20of%20Teaching%20and%20Research.pdf>

⁵ http://campusclimate.ucop.edu/_common/files/pdf-climate/Distance_learning_article-Pascarella_Terenzi.pdf

⁶ <http://www.ousa.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/OUSA-Teaching-and-Learning-Submission-Draft.pdf>

Recommendation 2: During the 2018 bargaining cycle, the University should remove clause 4 in the under “Academic Responsibilities of Members” in its collective agreement with faculty to reflect equal value of Teaching and Research

Principle: Quality teaching should have equal merit with research performance.

Concern: Western University currently utilizes language in the collective agreement that appears to value research more than teaching.

In Western University’s current collective bargaining agreement under Academic Responsibilities, section 4 states:

While research, scholarly or creative activity directly related to the immediate and normal preparation for scheduled teaching is encouraged and usually necessary, it shall not normally be credited to the Research category. However, where a Member’s research, scholarly or creative activity is judged by peer review to represent an academic advance or a development of clinical or instructional materials or methods of an innovative sort, with application wider than the Member’s own pedagogical courses, then such work may be counted either as Teaching or as Research, but not both.⁷

This section of the collective agreement implies that any research related to instructional methods or materials for a classroom setting that can be applied to more than just the courses they teach can be considered a part of their teaching requirements. While the University Students’ Council supports the research of new and innovative pedagogical practices, we do not believe research in this area should supplement an educator’s requirements for teaching.

Recommendation: During the 2018 bargaining cycle, the university should remove clause 4 under “Academic Responsibilities of Members” in its collective agreement with faculty in order to reflect the equal value of teaching and research.

To ensure Western University values teaching to the same degree as research, the USC recommends the removal of section 4 under Academic Responsibilities in the collective agreement. This section implies that research around pedagogical practices can be counted as research or teaching. The USC believes educators should not have the opportunity to make up teaching shortfalls with research, but instead, work within the 40-40-20 split of teaching, research, and administrative work respectively, to show that students that their teaching methods are just as important as their research.

⁷ http://www.uwo.ca/facultyrelations/pdf/collective_agreements/faculty.pdf

Recommendation 3: During the 2018 bargaining cycle, the University should rename all “Limited Duties” Appointments as Teaching Appointments

Principle: Quality teaching should have equal merit with research performance.

Concern: Western University currently promotes language in the collective agreement that appears to value research more than teaching.

Western University currently hires faculty to take on just a teaching role, but not within the tenure track. According to the collective agreement, these faculty members are appointed to the university as “limited duty” appointments. The University Students’ Council find this problematic, as the university is devaluing those whose appointments focus solely on teaching as opposed to research. Section 1.4 under “Appointments” states:

A Limited-Duties Appointment is a fixed-term non-probationary Appointment to the academic staff of the University which involves assigned duties equivalent to those associated with primary responsibility for teaching a University degree credit course.⁸

While the USC understands the original intent behind the use of “limited,” the word nonetheless implies having lesser abilities or talents, therefore undermining the work associated with this type of appointment.⁹ To add, a limited duties appointment does not exist for those interested in just pursuing research, which further expands on how the word “limited” could negatively impact the work of teaching-only faculty.

Recommendation: During the 2018 bargaining cycle, Western University should rename all “Limited Duties” Appointments as Teaching Appointments

The University Students’ Council recommends the removal of the title “Limited Duties” and a change in vernacular to “Teaching Appointments.” The new name directly correlates to the work being done by faculty holding these appointments while also removing the negative association with the word “limited.”

⁸ http://www.uwo.ca/facultyrelations/pdf/collective_agreements/faculty.pdf

⁹ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/limited>