
FACULTY TIMES

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Faculty Times welcomes your contributions and letters to the Editor. We look forward to lively responses and debate on issues related to UWOPA and its membership. Please address them to us at uwofa@uwo.ca

President's Report:

Jane Toswell, President

47% of the faculty members at Western have arrived since certification in 1998. A similar proportion of librarians and archivists have also arrived in the last eight years, and certified in 2004. This represents a massive generational and structural change in the university's academic staff, and one that we must all address. Mentoring of junior colleagues is something we often speak to as an important aspect of our jobs, but how many of us are finding the time to do this? We do have a lot of advice and help to give and to receive; the culture at Western takes a lot of learning. There are days on which I find the cynicism and resistance to change here more exhausting than any other aspect of life at this university, though I realize that universities are by their very nature structures which are very slow to change. On other days, the strengths of institutional stability are heartening and helpful. Nonetheless, though I've been at Western for seventeen and a half years now, I do recall that by comparison to other institutions its processes are unclear and difficult to decode. We do have to help our colleagues to understand how this institution works and how to negotiate their places in this complex structure. And, most importantly, we have to be open to change at every level. This includes the Faculty Association, of course. In 1959, at what appears to be the first annual "state of the association" address, the chairman in that year reported, among other matters, on the "problem of communication between the association and academic heads such as Deans" and referred the problem to the future. Maybe there is very little real change here, come to think of it.

Pay Equity Implementation Committee: One thing that is changing is the pay for about 70% of tenure-track and tenured women faculty at Western. As a result of provisions negotiated by the Association in the Collective Agreement which expires shortly, the issue of pay equity was studied last summer and it was determined that there was indeed a gender difference in the salaries of men and women faculty. The Implementation Committee this winter engaged in a further and very detailed analysis of that difference, in a report to be published very shortly, and it has recommended specific individual raises for affected

woman faculty members. These will be effective 1 May 2006, and will therefore appear in the pay provided at the end of May. The decision to rectify this situation was a good one, and the Provost's willingness to put an extra half-percent into the salary mass for full-time faculty is significant. However, at heart here there is a problem, which I want to highlight. Some few women on this campus (all in one faculty) will be receiving about ten thousand dollars in a pay equity increase; another few will receive less than a hundred dollars. In every single case, however, those of us (I suspect I'm not among them but still continue to live in hope) who receive these increases need to bear in mind one very important thought: we were underpaid. Let us not be too grateful for the increase. It almost certainly reflects a starting salary that was lower for women with equivalent qualifications and experience than for men. What is worse, a first round of pay equity increases took place ten years ago. This means that in the ensuing ten years, the problem was not corrected. Please, if you receive a large increase, take it as a sign that you have a clear responsibility to monitor pay equity issues in your part of the university. Think about your treatment as a woman faculty member on this campus, and think about what you might do to improve the campus for future female colleagues. We have to find a way to fix this problem.

Grievance Matters: These issues continue to occupy a large part of our time. CAUT has established an *ad hoc* committee to inquire into both the case (or lack thereof) being prosecuted under the article "Discipline" against one faculty member as a result of a student complaint and the extraordinary length and mismanagement of the process of that case. The matter is now in the latter stages of its fifteenth month, during which the pain and suffering for the faculty member and the member's family have been truly appalling. Four policy grievances have been filed, three of which are now scheduled or being scheduled for arbitration: on Ivey dues and the dual contracts endured by our members in the School of Business, on privacy issues with respect to the handling of our pensions, on very poor appointments practices in the Faculty of Engineering, and on appointment practices in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The last two are particularly worrisome since the appointment of full-time faculty members is generally seen as a long-term project; if poor practices are being used at the time of appointment,

there is a particular problem for the health of the university. Four individual grievances are also at arbitration, one referring to the case discussed above, and three tenure denials. Since there is at least one case, in late April, of a faculty member who still does not know the outcome of a tenure file submitted over a year ago, there may be a fourth tenure denial for the Grievance Committee to consider. Luckily, we now have a Grievance Officer appointed for a three-year term, and an excellent individual in the job. Albert Katz started on 1 April 2006, and handled his first Step 2 meeting yesterday on a policy grievance; he will be coordinating grievance matters and developing the grievance website which is one of my dreams for this spring. His email for grievance matters is uwofagr.uwo.ca.

Negotiating Woes: Once again, I have to report that the librarians and archivists negotiation, shortly to enter upon its second year, is not progressing well. Thirteen articles, of a projected more than fifty, have now been agreed at the table. Last week's accomplishments were "Leave of Absence" and "Reduced Responsibility," for both of which articles good models existed in the faculty collective agreement. More worrisome yet is that the administration, having used its government-granted fiat to insist that the librarians and archivists certify as a separate bargaining unit despite the fact that they are a part of the academic staff and recognised as such as a matter of course at other Canadian universities, is now using the librarian negotiations as a stalking horse for the faculty negotiations which will begin shortly. This is a particularly egregious behaviour.

An eleven-year-old recently asked me, "Do you like your job?" Since the question came in the aftermath of a thoroughly enjoyable Q&A period on the middle ages, I answered in the affirmative, but the question stayed with me. In this particular role, I have greatly enjoyed contact with individual faculty members, answering queries, offering advice, trying to suggest ways to fashion a niche here for the individual's research and teaching, and responding to a broad range of problems and issues. This is the work I think of as the Association side of my job as President. I spend a lot of time at meetings, talk to a lot of people, and try as best I can to help resolve issues. The Union side of the job is a little trickier on three fronts. First, UWOFA has three unions: two bargaining units for which it serves as agent, and the CUPE local which represents the UWOFA staff. I'm

not at all convinced that we have yet managed to adapt to being management on one side (with all the work that our altered relationship to our staff represents), and to addressing issues for two different—though very closely related—groups of academic staff on the other. Second, although as an Association we have clear responsibilities to our members, as a Union those are more clearly delineated and defined by legislation. We are still working on what this means for our structures. Third, there is a very great deal of work to be done and nothing like enough people to do it. The problem here, however, is that we don't have good procedures in place to encourage greater involvement by our Members in our work. Elsewhere there is one manifestation of a different approach: we now have reports for the Annual General Meeting from all the Members who serve as our representatives on university committees. Many

Let's Talk Teeth

Mike Carroll, Chair, Pensions and Benefits Committee

Since the University of Toronto Faculty Association has recently rejected - and not for the first time - a renewed effort by the Administration there to introduce a so-called "Flexible Benefit" (FB) plan, it seems like a good time to outline - once more - what's wrong with this sort of plan.

In thinking about FB plans in the UWO context, it is important to keep in mind that this university, like many others (the University of Toronto for example), self-insures. What that means is that aside from LTD (Long Term Disability) coverage, they hire a company to administer our benefit plans but pay benefit claims out of their own budget. This in turn means that the Administration has a strong incentive to control costs. Note that what "control costs" means here is less a concern with controlling the general costs of healthcare (something that might be a concern for many of us) but rather, and more simply, with controlling the costs the Administration has to pay out for the healthcare coverage to which their employees have a right as the result of various collective agreements. There are obviously several ways of doing this.

One way to control costs (to the Administration), for example, is simply to hold the line, if not cut back, on coverage. This presumably helps to explain why, during the last round of negotiations, none of the suggested changes we made with regard to benefits were accepted *and* why we lost ground on out-of-country coverage. Another strategy is to shift

of those individuals noted that they had to give some background about their committee, since no one knew about it. This is an important step forward. Perhaps next year we will have reports from Officers as well. I also recently asked department chairs and directors of schools to put in place procedures by which UWOFAs stewards or departmental representatives (the first line of knowledge about our rights and privileges pursuant to the collective agreement) would be elected, their existence advertised locally. I hope these procedures will develop over the next year; we certainly need them to. Perhaps in the interim we will start to find a way around the bottleneck that currently exists, with decisions made too slowly or by far too few individuals. I certainly hope so, and I look forward to helping Kim Clark with this starting in July—but not until after I get back from the holiday/work trip I'm taking this summer.

costs to employees. This is most obviously done by cost-sharing (as in: getting employees to pay 15% of costs in certain areas), but it can be done in another way as well: by introducing a Flexible Benefit plan.

The initial appeal of these plans to employees rests on a simple premise: you get a certain amount of money up front to buy the benefits that are appropriate to your stage in life. Have a young family? Well, you don't really need coverage for implants but you do need orthodontics. Older and with the kids having left home? Well then, coverage for implants makes far more sense than orthodontics. (I've chosen orthodontics/implants as an example only because you'd be amazed how often these issues have come in conversation with members since I became chair of the Pensions/Benefits Committee - but you get the general idea). In this context, a typical FB Plan would (1) provide you with some basic coverage, but also (2) advance a certain amount of money that allows you to purchase the coverage that you need. So: just how does such an apparently appealing plan shift benefit costs to employees?

Well, think about it. The premiums you pay for a certain level of coverage will always be a function of how much the carrier pays out for claims under that coverage. As costs go up, so will premiums. So let's say that we have a FB Plan and you're deciding what coverage to purchase with the "up front" money you've been allocated. If you guess wrong, of course, you will end up with no coverage for what you need.

But let's assume that you *guess right*: you only purchase the coverage that you and your family are likely to need in the near future. What this now means is that the number of people buying coverage is (1) going to be a subset of all employees and (2) is going to be those employees who are most "at risk", that is, those employees (and families) who are especially likely to need that coverage over the next few years. Since the carrier is now only getting premiums from a smaller group *and* a group that is more likely to be making claims, it seems clear that very shortly the cost of providing coverage will go up - and this will drive up the cost of premiums. Under a FB Plan this is of no importance to an employer (remember: each year they advance a fixed sum and that's the end of it for them), but it will erode the coverage that individual members can purchase with the sum that is advanced to them. Voila: increased costs are passed on to the employee.

I might add that if you google "Flexible Benefits" you will turn up a number of websites maintained by consultant groups touting these plans

Introduction to the Workload Survey Report

Regna Darnell, Department of Anthropology

One of the felicities of a periodic workload study is that it encourages faculty to share a discussion and appreciation of the nature and conditions of their varied work. The challenges of a one-size-fits-all model of faculty work themselves illustrate the great diversity of ways that faculty can be working across the domains of research, teaching and service. Sadly, there is some question in my mind, however, whether our employer shares our tolerance for range of our work and our charitable collegial interpretation of what constitutes work.

One of the blessings of being an academic is that we get to make most of the decisions about the timing and substance of our work. Its products need not always be directly reflected, at least in the short term, in measurable outcomes. I may spend six months reading fairly intensively on a subject only tangentially related to my immediate research and teaching. But in the longer term, there is usually a method in my madness; moreover, it often transcends my original motivations. For example, on my last sabbatical, I signed up for a non-credit course in physics for poets because I was using metaphors about chaos and complexity in the modelling of systems of social order and wanted to be certain that I used the words accurately. I think I did, in a book

to employers. All of these sites mention that FB plans are a way for employers to contain costs but there are indeed a few that are honest enough to say that this is done by passing costs on to employees. Your Union could of course work to offset some of the costs passed on to you by negotiating an increase in the amount of "up front" money that is advanced each year, but most of this increase would be taken up with "treading water," that is, maintaining the level of coverage you had initially, rather than with improved coverage.

None of the analysis here is especially original; the same points have been made by any number of other individuals and groups and - as I suggested at the beginning - in a brief (written in December 2005) by the University of Toronto Faculty Association. That same brief, I might add, pointed out that none of the 16 universities in Ontario have such a plan. (For a copy of this brief, access "UTFA'S Reply Brief" at <http://www.utfa.org/currentissues/bargainingupd/>).

that dealt with many other subjects more directly. A couple of years later, I developed a graduate seminar on metaphors of science in relation to anthropological theory; this drew directly from the earlier foray into chaos/complexity. A similar train of thought in philosophy (breaking down the distinction between linear tree-like models and more rhizomatic, grass-like forms of thought) led me to model contemporary First Nations decision-making strategies in terms of "nomadic legacies." There is an underlying coherence to the way ideas emerge over the career of a given individual. It is not predictable in advance. The example I have given is one that is reflected in research, teaching, and professional service in relation to First Nations communities with whom I work. That too, is an aspect of our work that is often impossible for anyone else to judge.

Many respondents to our survey, this one and its predecessor, contain complaints that the categories overlap. Academics often do things for more than one reason. I am reading a book which will go into the paper I am giving next month. But I will also incorporate it into my lectures and seminar debates. And it will colour my relationships within the Western community, with my discipline(s), and with the larger public. I cannot separate research, teaching

and service because the same ideas and values cross-over. It's hard to characterize this kind of cross-over statistically – it cannot be understood in the aggregate because each individual faculty member attains the balance uniquely. No one ever asks us how we juggle so that things come together. I don't know that I could ask a question about integration and overlap meaningfully. I do know that I need to be able to control when I work on what in order to maximize my own productivity. Creeping administrative surveillance makes it harder to do the same work effectively. We are asked to do more and more (class sizes for example); administrative work is downloaded (which is inefficient because I'm not particularly good at the nuts and bolts thereof). Research and writing usually land on the back burner during the school term, because the teaching and service are a full-time job. Sustained research and writing requires some solitude and some hours of the day not devoted to interruptions and busywork, however necessary all of these things may be.

Another difficulty in evaluating faculty work is what we count as work. Some of us figure that we are

working virtually ever waking hour, whereas others have a narrower and more literal sense of work. This is exacerbated by the fact that most of us think our work is fun. We like to talk about it. Faculty are usually talking shop when they socialize. Even if they are not, the connections established are collegial ones that weave in and out of one's work. Hanging out is an established method of participation-observation fieldwork in anthropology. I apply it also to the ethnography of the university and to the networks that structure my professional life more widely. I know a lot of people because over the years we have talked about this that, on committees or through students and former students; hence, when I need access to particular expertise I know where to find it and can trust the response. For me, this is part of my work. Our survey has places to code it, even though respondents clearly do not code the same way. This is why we have included some qualitative responses in this report. Hopefully they will resonate with the experience of many faculty, including the experience of being frustrated by the survey.

The Workload Survey: Comments from our Members

Ernie Redekop, Co-chair of the Workload Survey Committee (with Regna Darnell)

The UWOFA Workload survey conducted last fall, we must admit, did not attract a large response. Only about 20% of our members completed the survey, and it would be wrong to claim that the responses represent a fair random selection. An analysis of the data will appear elsewhere; I am concerned here only with the written responses. Despite these caveats, there are some interesting themes in the responses which cannot be dismissed out of hand. Almost no one says that his or her workload has decreased in the last five or ten years; instead there is an almost universal sense among respondents that workload has increased substantially in the last few years and that coping with the demands of academic life is becoming increasingly difficult.

One respondent, commenting on the consuming nature of this life, remarks that “if I’m awake, I’m working.”

Instead of beginning with the usual tripartite division of our work, I begin with one of the most consistent complaints in the survey, a complaint arising from technology which was barely on the horizon when the first workload survey was conducted ten years ago but which is now like paint on office walls, viz., the complaint that e-mail is

becoming an onerous burden for faculty members. One respondent writes that e-mail work involves six major areas: queries addressed to colleagues at other institutions; administrative work, committee work and requests for information; giving advice to students and writing letters of recommendation; editorial matters; organizing papers for a symposium or conference; and revising and submitting manuscripts, concluding that “e-mail itself is a funnel for omnivorous multi-tasking and a workload issue in its own right.” While more detailed than most comments on this problem, this response is one of many dealing with this issue. The survey, unfortunately, was not particularly helpful on this point, since in order to be able to make comparisons with the Association’s survey of a decade ago, we used the categories of the earlier survey; and the snowballing effects of electronic messaging were not obvious at the time. As one respondent to this survey puts it: “You need a category for the biggest black hole for time: e-mail!”

There are other complaints about workload, of course, and about the survey’s tendency, despite its many categories, to lump things together. While one or two respondents complain about the length and

complexity of the survey, many others remark on the lack of specific categories for such things as graduate student supervision, supervision of post-doctoral research, examining theses, writing reference letters for students and references for P&T deliberations elsewhere, mentoring junior faculty, evaluating clinical practice, proctoring examinations, transporting technical equipment, working at Convocation, coordinating and administering major research projects, evaluating grant proposals, updating online course materials, travelling to and from work, dealing with instances of cheating and plagiarism, or coping with the many secretarial tasks which have been downloaded onto faculty members—as one respondent writes, “how to code time spent sorting out messes with the marks management system.” The timing of the survey was itself problematical, not only because it covered only two weeks, but because the two weeks in question were not teaching weeks in several faculties and because they coincided with the two weeks when NSERC and SSHRC grant applications were due.

Many of the respondents remark on noticeable increases in workload over the past few years. Teaching workload has grown because of increases in the size of classes and in the number of students per faculty member, and because of the apparent necessity of maintaining course websites and responding to students’ e-mail messages. Some respondents complain of a lack of teaching assistants; one suggests that, given the amount of time and effort expended on supervising teaching assistants, they in fact add to the workload. Another remarks that “I do not think Western is a research-intensive university, as they call it. It is more teaching and administration intensive”; and goes on to say that faculty members do not get enough credit for teaching. One respondent captures the sense of a generally relentless increase in workload by remarking that “my comfortable class of 60 that I inherited is now 140”. Another respondent comments on “absurd increases in graduate and undergraduate population.” Still another respondent writes of being forced to team-teach with people who have major differences in teaching philosophy. A respondent on a limited-term contract explains how, despite being required to teach five full courses during the fall and winter terms, and despite a very low salary, he or she is also required to participate fully in all kinds of service work.

There are fewer comments about increases to the workload in research, since research varies greatly from discipline to discipline, from one researcher to

another, and from time to time in the academic year. One respondent remarks on the ways in which continued supervision of graduate students during a research sabbatical interferes with research. A respondent from the Faculty of Science describes the difficulties of having to maintain a state-of-the-art research laboratory without technical support, adding that this, added to very high “external pressures,” has affected the member’s health. Another writes that “my wet lab is another time sink for inspections, meetings, reports, etc.”. There are various comments on the time required for writing grant proposals, reviewing grant proposals, dealing with graduate and post-doctoral students, and writing various reports on laboratory research.

There are, as one would expect, comments about increases in administrative workload for members who are not administrators. One respondent puts it bluntly, saying that “the overall question of downloading” is even more important than the increases to teaching workload. “It appears that this administration is learning from the old Mike Harris regime—simply, if you don’t want to pay for it, get someone else to do it.” The member continues: “in my mind, this downloading factor is now a blight on the way we are expected to carry out our responsibilities and needs some very serious study.”

In general, the comments indicate that female faculty members, at least among the respondents, are having an increasingly difficult time juggling the demands of research, teaching, service work of all kinds and family responsibilities. One respondent finds that she is still being subjected to adverse comments regarding a woman’s right to maternity leave; another remarks that, while she or he does not have children, this factor, “perhaps more than gender, should be taken into account.” A female respondent objects strongly to being asked to sit on committees simply because she is expected to be a representative for women on these committees.

Among the respondents, there are some who are outspoken about the perceived increases to workload. One writes that “it is common advice in the faculty of science that in order to be a success you must work 80+ hours each week. It is clear to me now why they say this.” Another remarks that “the hours I have to put in to stay competitive are crazy. There is always a ‘good’ reason for working around the clock” Perhaps the longest comment on this topic is the following: “I think that ‘workload’ is the most acute problem on campus right now. . . . If we do not deal with it effectively, most of us will leave our jobs for

health reasons or abandon some of its important components, like research. . . . The time from the beginning of September to the end of April is considered by most as a 'non-existence' zone. One does not exist as a research person, a family person or a social being. . . . My strong suggestion: limit the number of courses taught to two per term; limit the number of students per course to 25 per class and allow more frequent leaves for health recovery, education and research."

Drawing conclusions from the comments on the workload survey that would be universally applicable is hard, perhaps impossible. It seems to be clear, however, that like the canary in the mine, the survey leads us to a distinctly un-Panglossian observation that not everything is for the best in this (not) best of all possible worlds. Despite the low response rate and despite the problems raised by self-selection, the

Analysis of the Workload Survey

M.J. Toswell (with files from David Bellhouse)

The Faculty Workload Survey was a census of faculty members at Western, who were asked to report their working hours over a two-week period in October 2005. A total of 205 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of nearly 20%. Anecdotal evidence exists to suggest that since this survey was first sent out ten years ago, faculty members have found the workload increase so much that they did not have time to fill out the survey. The Faculty Association received a number of impassioned phone, mail and email messages to this effect. Of those surveys returned which identified the gender of those reporting, 90 were women and 99 were men, which very significantly reflects a higher proportion of the women faculty at Western than the men. The

survey indicates that many faculty members have real problems coping with a workload that continues to increase from year to year, and that, unless the Association and especially the university administration deal with these problems in a more direct and forceful way, many faculty members will continue to find themselves in the predicament described by one respondent, who finds that "there is little time to think or talk with colleagues" and believes that "our new faculty colleagues" (who now comprise about half of all faculty members) "are overwhelmed as they attempt to continue research and publication while preparing and delivering courses, counselling students, participating on committees. . . . We are going to have trouble retaining the best under these trying circumstances."

average working week was 40.9 hours, the range being from a low of 7.25 hours to 89.75 hours. The responses included limited duties or part-time faculty as well as Limited Term Members and those in the professorial ranks. The time spent on research and on teaching varied considerably according to the appointment type. Nearly half of the faculty left blank the question concerning whether the workload had increased or decreased, although among those who answered 28% noted an increase in service of 50% or more, 77% saw an increase in teaching of 20% or more (18% said 50% or more), and 53% indicated an increase in research of 20% or more. Very few saw a decrease in workload (10 in teaching, 9 in service, and 25 in research).

Reflections on Workload

Jonathan F. Vance

Professor and Canada Research Chair in Conflict and Culture, Department of History

At the outset, I must say that I am currently under an alternative workload arrangement that was negotiated when I took up the Canada Research Chair in Conflict and Culture in January 2001. This arrangement sets my research at 60%, my teaching at 30%, and my service at 10%. In terms of the research, there is little to say. I have never felt short of research time (except where I create my own problems by taking on too many tasks), nor have I

felt that the Department and the Faculty have failed to support me (in terms of time and resources) in my research endeavour.

Under the original agreement with my Chair, my teaching load changes from year to year, so that the five-year average works out to about one and one-third courses per year. In the current academic year, I am teaching 1 ½ courses, but in other years I have taught only one course. My teaching is largely at the

senior undergraduate and graduate level (a high-enrolment 200-level course I used to teach has been taken over by another member of the Department). The amount of undergraduate teaching (i.e. the number of students taught per year) is a known commodity, because our senior seminars are capped at 25 students, and the course I teach is always over-subscribed – not, I hasten to add, because of the instructor, but because of the popularity of the subject matter!

In terms of graduate teaching, the workload is highly unpredictable. The size of graduate seminars changes annually, and it is impossible to know until two weeks into any term how large one's course will be. There are supposed to be caps on seminar size, but the fact that our graduate students seem to believe it is their right to change courses without telling anyone means that you can have far too many students in a seminar – and by the time you realize that, it is too late to shift people out. So, my graduate seminars this year have had 19 (in fall term) and 20 (in winter term) students, which represents a high level of work (and a less than ideal pedagogical situation for the students). Unfortunately, the instructor who has 20 students in a graduate seminar is given the same teaching credit as the instructor with 4 students in a graduate seminar.

Other elements of our graduate programme make it difficult to determine workload in advance, or to do any advance planning. Students do not have to select their PhD comprehensive examiners until February, or their supervisor for the MA cognate paper until March. This means that the academic year is half over before you know how many graduate students you will be supervising over the summer and into the following fall (our comprehensive exams are held in late November). I have heard rumours that our Workload Committee is planning to tackle the problem of assessing graduate teaching loads, but I'm not sure if these situations can be resolved. Again, I am perhaps my own worst enemy – throughout my graduate career, no instructor ever turned me away because I would have put them over their workload limit (real or notional). For that reason, I tend to accept most students who come to me, because it would be ungracious not to do so.

So, while I am happy to say no to administration when something comes up that I don't want to do, but I am very reluctant to say no to students. Apart from my classroom teaching and cognate paper and comprehensive examination supervisions, I currently supervise nine PhD candidates. My Chair would

certainly support me if I decided to start refusing students (he has told me this directly), but these people come to Western to work with me (heaven help them!), and I am very reluctant to disappoint them.

With respect to service, there has been a proliferation of committees in our Department of late, some of which we created on our own initiative and some that were apparently created because of the demands of the Collective Agreement. Perhaps I am wrong, but I have also noticed an alarming growth in the number of Faculty and University committees as well. Because of my CRC, I have never had a problem refusing to accept committee work (or, rather, picking the committees that I feel I can contribute to most effectively). However, I know that some of my colleagues feel very over-committed – some of them have committee meetings every day of the week, and have very little time for research as a result. This situation is very difficult to regulate – according to our Departmental By-laws, some committees require a certain number of tenured faculty members and, because our pool is not large, the same people do a good deal of the committee work. It would be nice if each faculty member was required to sit on no more than two departmental committees, but I'm not sure we have enough faculty to fill the spots under that kind of regime. I have also pushed (without success) for a kind of self-denying ordinance, so that the same person wouldn't have to serve on the same committee for more than two years in a row, or three out of five. This is a personal crusade borne out of the fact that I have sat on the Appointments Committee every year I've been at Western – interesting work, but I don't believe that any one faculty member should have that much ongoing influence on any aspect of the life of the Department.

In short, I believe that most people in my department find committee work to be odious, and would support any effort to reduce it. For my own part, I would be happy to see the responsibilities of the Workload Committee and the Performance Evaluation Committee delegated to the Chair, thereby reducing the overall committee load.

Having said all this, I consider myself to be very fortunate, and not simply because my alternative workload agreement affords me the research time that I desire. More fundamentally, I don't believe in quibbling over hours or meetings or courses. As a salaried employee, I believe that I am paid (very generously) to do a job – sometimes, the job requires

more of my time, sometimes it requires less of my time – and I am grateful that the job gives me a good deal of freedom. I would hate to be in a position of having to count every fifteen minutes to see if I've gone over my allotted workload – this strikes me as unprofessional.

I think part of my attitude stems from my experience as a PhD student and then job-seeker. I finished my doctorate at the worst possible time in terms of faculty openings. In the four years I was a PhD student, there were no more than two or three jobs a year teaching Canadian history in Canada; the year I graduated, not a single position was advertised. There were a couple of positions in Canadian history in the U.S. and overseas, and a good number in mili-

tary history – over the course of six or seven years, I applied for every one for which I was even remotely qualified (well over a hundred) and did not get a single interview. When I applied to Western, I had already decided that it would be my last application and, if it was unsuccessful, I would leave the field and do something else. Because of this experience (which, as you know, is enormously stressful, both personally and on relationships), I remain extremely grateful for the position I now hold – if it ever occurs to me that I may be taking on a few more students than I should have to, I just remind myself that I came within a hair's breadth of having a very different life.

Work Load Issues

Madeline Lennon, Department of Visual Arts/Faculty of Arts and Humanities

After consulting with colleagues about major concerns in terms of work load, I believe the following is a fair summary of issues in Visual Arts.

There is no doubt that faculty in the art history and studio areas are conscious of an increase in work loads. While our student numbers are relatively stable, public expectation of universities seems to have developed with demands of greater teaching-related 'service' from faculty. For example, the number of students with special needs, and the types of services demanded for these students (extra directives on special examinations, class materials, and the like), have grown to add hours of work to the loads of individual faculty members. I could cite a number of cases to support this contention, but to take just one: with a class of 60 students, 10 require special examinations. When images are involved this requires a tremendous amount of time to prepare each test to be administered elsewhere on campus (the SDC does not have the capability for images on disk). Each year this issue of special needs has been discussed in the department with growing dismay as the numbers of such students climb.

There is also a higher level of expectation with respect to experiential learning as part of a degree program. The Visual Arts Internship placement course is certainly valuable for the participating students. (We have been running this course for ten years, and now other universities and colleges have similar programs.) However, the coordination and supervision of the Internship is added to the department workload without the possibility of any sort of compensation such as course release. Thus, extended

pedagogy is added to the workload without a structure to recognize the value of this extra work.

At the level of graduate teaching, the increased emphasis on graduate education and expanded graduate programs here at Western, as at many other universities, results in a very competitive acceptance process for the best students. If the high-end students are spread thinly among a number of institutions, it is very likely that more students closer to an 'average' ability level will be accepted. We see this as leading to more work for supervisors who need to spend more time directing graduate students requiring intensive guidance.

The last issue of great concern to faculty in Visual Arts is having sufficient time to do research of the highest quality. It is often said that research and teaching should be integrated, especially at the graduate level. This is a reasonable expectation. However, if the teaching mission of the university continues to grow in importance in terms of public perception—and teaching potentially overshadows research—the emphasis on research for the sake of its own merit is seriously compromised. Sufficient time is required for both research and teaching, to ensure that scholars can follow the threads of their research projects to conclusions that may not be expected or predictable (or always useful for teaching).

Finally, I would add a topic that I find widely discussed among faculty across campus: the impact of e-mail on our lives. We probably all agree that it has been very useful for communication with colleagues for purposes of research. It can also be helpful for communicating with students and

colleagues generally. However, it has promoted expectations of instant response that are stressful, and has left us open to messages that are intrusive and do nothing to assist us in our work (spam is another topic that I do not include here). Among these I would count the number of surveys that we are routinely asked to complete. While I am usually

Workload Musings

Andrew Nelson, Associate Prof., Anthropology

The heavy emphasis that the University and Faculty place on CFI grants (and similar large scale, multi-component grants that frequently require matching funds) places an enormous additional work burden on individual researchers. It is true that the grants benefit the researchers, and it is also true that the university provides considerable support from the research services office and from research accounting. However, these grants involve long periods of work-up (frequently many months), involve highly detailed accounting (often tracking amounts in the

willing to help out with things, if it takes more than ten minutes to complete, I resist. The latest is the University's questionnaire on campus communication. A number of colleagues began the survey and eventually gave up—it is just too lengthy. I hope that the Faculty Association takes note of this point as a factor in the workload issue.

millions of dollars), interactions with sales representatives and so on – as well as the task of writing the grant itself. If the grant is successful, the administrative load becomes extremely heavy, as all quotes must be redone, and done in multiples, and a very complex process of “finalization” ensues. If the grant is unsuccessful – and competition is extremely intense for these funds – then the researcher is out an amount of time that is probably equivalent to that required to publish at least one paper.

Workload Commentary

Keir Keightley, Associate Prof., FIMS

In the almost seven years I have been teaching at Western, I have noticed two kinds of workload increase, one related to class size, the other to the downloading of trivial administrative chores. Taken together, they mean that I keep searching for an extra dimension of time that will help me cope; alas, so far there is only the one, old-fashioned and insufficient dimension.

In terms of class size, for example, I teach a Master of Arts in Journalism theory course with 46 (yes, forty six) M.A. students. It is an understatement to say that it is a challenge to give them what I believe to be an appropriate, graduate-school-level of attention. Similarly, my undergraduate courses have increased 33% in the past 3 years with no TA support, and so I am regularly faced with the classic time-management dilemma: if I must rob Peter to pay Paul, who will be Peter and who Paul? If I continue to devote the time I have traditionally spent marking papers, writing comments, discussing work with students, then it will be me who loses research and writing time; conversely, if I'm “selfish” about it, then the students get less of my time: clearly a lose-lose situation.

Less important, but a part of the puzzle nonetheless, has been a kind of trickle down of very minor administrative/secretarial work onto the shoulders of faculty. Of course, one of the wonderful advantages of growing up in the computer age is that it seems perfectly natural that we can all be our own typists, and spend lots of time every day dealing with student emails, and making sure our WebCT readings have been posted, and installing anti-virus software, and so on. But even in our brief 21st Century things have changed, and not for the better: there was a time when course lists appeared in mailboxes; now we have to log on to the intranet, find our course, and print it out. But that's just a few minutes work, nothing more. There was a time when we had assistance in completing claims for research and travel expenses; now, those of us lucky enough to have research monies are expected to add it all up ourselves, including calculations of foreign exchange rates. Takes a little longer, but still nothing major. Need to send a fax? Do it yourself, it's easy: just stand and wait until the confirmation message appears and you're on your way, mere minutes later. I still don't know why I have to fill out a request for an undergraduate Marks Management file for each

class three days in advance and wait for it to be sent to me; I had always thought that in the future computers would do things like remember my email address and automatically send me the course list. Alone, each of these issues is almost laughable – minor irritants, a few minutes or hours lost here and there. Taken together, along with many other necessary but “trivial” tasks, they can add up to days lost in the course of each semester.

On top of these greater and lesser demands on my time, there has been a massive amount of hiring and curriculum development in my relatively-new Faculty. Programme-building and appointments necessarily involve a substantial commitment to committee work, and I have relished the opportunity to be in on the “ground floor” and contribute to the

Work"luge" – tackling the job feet first!

Reflections on the Workload Survey

Candace Gibson, Department of Pathology

It's a tedious exercise, but it does have its rewards. Well not so much rewards as revelations. Sitting down to fill out the workload survey and accounting for your time on a half hourly basis for a period of two weeks is an incredibly tedious, time-consuming task (can I fill in the time it took to fill in the survey?), but what it reveals about how we spend our time is amazing. Akin to setting those new year's resolutions, it's essential every now and then to stop and look at what you're doing, look at what tasks engulf and consume your time, and look at what tasks provide you maximum enjoyment and satisfaction – and ask are those last what you are spending most of your time on?

I say it's a revelation because a lot of my time gets taken up with routine clerical tasks, university service (those endless and unproductive meetings!), and that set of 'urgent, but not important' tasks that eat into my day – so at most, only half of the time I'm spending in class, talking to students, writing and doing research – my high enjoyment and productive tasks. Patterns emerge – I spend the first hour of my day answering emails. I come in an hour before class to do so and although most of them are from students and colleagues, a fair amount is still 'spam' – 'work spam' – notices about power or water shut offs, meetings on campus, other surveys to fill out, multiple copies of the same funding announcements. I spend too much of my time doing 'clerical' tasks that have over the years been downloaded to faculty.

growth of a Faculty that I am proud of. Nonetheless, this has meant a great deal of committee work, even pre-tenure (and it has increased substantially, post-tenure). We are a relatively small Faculty, and so of course more work will fall on fewer shoulders. But, again, it is the combination of all of these forms of workload increase, great and small, that has made this job feel like it's getting harder, not easier. Oh, and research? Research is for weekends and summers, even though seven years ago senior colleagues assured me that this was a “temporary” situation, and that “soon” I would be able to spend less, not more, time on teaching and service. Well, perhaps I just need to wait another seven years and the physicists will locate that extra dimension of time and we'll all be on easy street...

For example during that two week period I was writing letters of reference, setting up exam questions for a mid-term exam, writing a grant application. We had secretaries when I first came to Western over 20 years ago, who typed letters, grants, class notes, final examinations – a lot of that work has been shifted to me as secretarial support within our departmental office has been cut. I wouldn't say that I'm the best person to do that (I can just never make a letter look right and I always forget whose address is supposed to go where!) nor is it the most productive use of my time.

In the Fall I coordinate two courses – one delivered on campus, the other delivered online to the UWO-FC nursing program. I spend time preparing for class and a lot more time with my online class (posting notes to WebCT, checking discussion boards, setting up weekly quizzes, monitoring student progress, answering emails). The other interesting thing was how much of my time was spent in 'travel' – from my office in the dental sciences building to classes in the north campus building, south valley building, Somerville house and, for the nursing program, to and from Fanshawe College.

I try to set aside two days a week for 'research', usually not on concurrent days, but that's the best I can do. I have a habit of leaving my door open and students drop in at all times for advice on courses, questions about class, or just to chat. I'm still resisting the need to shut the door on those research days – I

like talking to students, I want them to know they can drop in anytime. Through those two days there were interruptions by students, the need to get an exam ready for the end of one week, the need to set up an extra exam review session – all I could do was grab 2 and 3 hour chunks to work on a grant application and to get some additional writing done. It doesn't work – the 40/40/20 split of our time is artificial enough but trying to get substantive research done only two days

a week is next to impossible. I get my teaching/research/service split in, but I do that by working 9 to 10 hours on most days.

So most days my work day feels like I'm jumping on the luge feet first, head down, careening down the track at high speed, taking a few sharp corners hard here and there, closing my eyes at some points, and hoping, just hoping, I'll get to the end of the day in one piece and...maybe win the gold!

Academic Librarians and Workload

Peggy Ellis, Chair, Librarians' Bargaining Support Committee

The days when a librarian was defined exclusively as a bibliographer, a reference specialist, or a cataloguer are long gone. Within Western Libraries, many librarians assume responsibilities in multiple areas of our professional practice: collection development and information literacy in designated subject areas; reference work through chat services and at information services desks; and, in-depth specialized reference or instruction by appointment with students and faculty. Librarians also serve on committees for the university, associations, departments and/or Western Libraries. Our Members in other campus departments manage information centres, doing work that involves teaching, collections management, and database development and project planning.

Manageable workloads ensure that librarians are able to successfully control their day-to-day responsibilities and respond proactively to changes in the information environment. Through collective bargaining, librarian members want to ensure that professional development, research and scholarship are also embedded in workload. The nature and scope of academic librarians' workload has changed considerably in recent years due to downsizing caused by several years of large funding cuts to education, technological change, and the transformation of the profession.

Technological developments that profoundly changed the working landscape of academic librarianship have been a double-edged sword. Processes for acquiring material to support teaching and research have been streamlined but require continued monitoring and adjustment. Streamlined acquisition processes have resulted in increases in material arriving that must be processed and organized in ways that facilitate access for campus researchers. Likewise, online databases that make basic research easier for students and faculty are in a constant state

of development, and librarians must keep up with these changes in order to share this information with students and faculty. Librarians are now the intermediaries between online sources of information and the users of that information. Technology has not eliminated the amount of work; rather it has changed the nature of our profession.

Workload protection includes so-called normal workweek of 35 hours. As professionals we recognize and respond to unusually high demands on our time at certain times throughout the academic year, or during an occasional major project. However, to maintain a healthy work/life balance, and to maintain a high professional calibre it is essential that we have safeguards from ongoing demands that may require us to work 60 or more hours per week.

While university libraries across Canada are in the process of rebuilding after years of budget cuts, the mindset of "doing more with less remains." Past practice was to redistribute work of librarians and library assistants who left or retired to those remaining in the library. Workload distribution and planning are decisions that need to be made in consultation with our Members so that we may continue to function professionally, and continue to provide excellent services and research resources to the university community.