

Stakeholder Summary

Productivity 101: Increase teaching load of university professors who aren't active researchers

If professors who are not active researchers taught more, the teaching capacity of full-time professors in Ontario's universities could increase by 10%, equivalent to adding 1,500 additional faculty members across the province, according to a new report from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO).

The report, *Teaching Loads and Research Outputs of Ontario University Faculty: Implications for Productivity and Differentiation*, conservatively estimates that approximately 19% of tenure and tenure-track economics and chemistry faculty members at 10 Ontario universities sampled demonstrated no obvious recent contribution of scholarly or research output, although universities generally adhere to a faculty workload distribution of 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% service.

Extrapolating from that sample, the authors say that Ontario's university system would be more productive and efficient if research non-active faculty members compensated for their lack of scholarly output by increasing their teaching load to double that of their research-active colleagues – for an 80% teaching and 20% service workload distribution. Currently, research non-active professors teach approximately a third more than professors who are active researchers.

The Ontario government says that publicly funded universities need to improve productivity while protecting access and quality. As noted in HEQCO's 2013 [report on postsecondary productivity](#), the deployment of faculty resources may be one of the most promising opportunities for universities to increase their productivity.

Project Description

Using publicly available data including university websites, the new study focused on a sample of teaching workloads, research volume and impact, and remuneration for assistant, associate and full professors in the economics, chemistry and philosophy departments at Brock, Carleton, Lakehead, McMaster, Ottawa, Queen's, Toronto, Western, Wilfrid Laurier and Windsor. The institutions were selected to reflect the range of universities in the province – from research-intensive to undergraduate-focused.

Findings

Although all Ontario universities present themselves as research-intensive and typically subscribe to the 40-40-20 workload distribution, they have different workload expectations. Faculty members in the most research-intensive universities tend to teach the least, while faculty members in universities that are less engaged in research tend to teach more. The average course load during the 2012 academic year was slightly under 3 courses –equivalent to two courses in one semester and one course in a second semester.

Among the economics departments sampled, Lakehead had the highest average teaching workload with 4.5 courses for the fall and winter terms of the 2012 academic year, while Western had the lightest average workload with 2.4. In chemistry, the highest teaching workload was Wilfrid Laurier at 3.3 and the lowest Western at 2.1. In philosophy, the highest was Lakehead at 5.0 and the lowest again Western at 2.3.

Salaries for faculty earning \$100,000 or more were obtained from Ontario's Public Sector Salary Disclosure list for 2012. In economics, highest earnings were seen at Toronto, where the median reported salary was approximately \$162,000 among the 90% of economics faculty who earned \$100,000 or more. Windsor had the lowest median salary at \$123,000 among the 73% earning \$100,000 or more. In chemistry, Toronto had the highest median salary at \$165,000, among the 95% earning \$100,000 or more. Lakehead had the lowest median salary at \$112,000, among 67% earning \$100,000 or more. And among tenure and tenure track philosophy professors, Toronto had the highest median salary at \$165,000, among 79% earning \$100,000 or more. Carleton had the lowest median salary at \$112,000, among 54% earning \$100,000 or more.

Recommendations

By better understanding the workload of faculty members, conditions and practices can be created that enable faculty members to do their best work, improve the student experience and help institutions operate more efficiently, the authors say.

They acknowledge data limitations, noting that there is little publicly available that documents teaching and research outputs of faculty -- particularly teaching. "The best information with which to conduct an examination of faculty workload and impact resides with the universities themselves," say the authors. "They are also well positioned to... assemble a complete picture of what faculty do, what they contribute and how much they are paid... We understand that the Ontario university system has initiated an exercise to collect a more comprehensive data set."

Authors of Teaching Loads and Research Outputs of Ontario University Faculty: Implications for Productivity and Differentiation are Linda Jonker and Martin Hicks, HEQCO.