

First Report of the Workload Committee To the MRFA Negotiating Committee and Executive

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One of the goals set by the MRFA Executive for the year was to establish an ad hoc workload committee to advise the Negotiating Committee and the Executive on the workload implications of the transition to a university. This report is based on the two initial meetings of the committee. Workload is used throughout to refer to teaching workload. The report lists the unscheduled workload at Mount Royal that committee members are aware of, suggests ways in which workload credit could be received for such work, and makes several recommendations to the membership regarding workload.

Types of Unscheduled Workload at Mount Royal

- 1) The university administration is attempting to reduce the number of hours of instruction in courses to three, except for science courses which may have a lab. This often means eliminating a tutorial, but not always, because there are courses with more than three hours of instruction that do distinguish between lecture and tutorial. The administration argues that such reductions would not increase workload because, for example, if the number of classroom hours is reduced by 25%, then adjustments must be made to the course in order to reduce instructor and student workload by a corresponding 25%. But course design does not begin with the number of hours of instruction available and then proceed to determining how much and what type of content can be covered in the given number of hours; rather, a delivery model appropriate for the course content is chosen. Therefore, there is often a reluctance to remove content for fear of harming the integrity of the course or in order to maintain equivalency with courses at other universities (where graduate students may be responsible for some components).
- 2) Last year the Dean of one Faculty asserted that, for certain courses with four hours of instruction, a choice must be made between reducing them to three hours of instruction or increasing class sizes to save an equal amount of money. Faculty responsible for some of these courses decided that the fourth hour of instruction was required to maintain the quality of the course and chose to increase class sizes. Will there be pressure for these courses to be reduced to three hours of instruction in the future?
- 3) Science faculty are concerned about workload credit for science labs. Currently, full-time faculty get full workload credit for labs because they are not listed under

other forms of teaching in the definition of Scheduled Instructional Course Hour (SICH) given in Article 1.24: "any officially scheduled 50-minute class requiring the employee to be present and teaching, without assistance, a group of students. Credit for other forms of teaching, including but not limited to practica, open laboratories, studios, directed study, computer-assisted instruction, team-teaching, rehearsals and productions shall be assigned by the Chair in consultation with the members of the academic unit, and is subject to the approval of the Dean". Part-time faculty do not receive full workload credit because they are paid at the part-time laboratory instructor rate which is 45% of the part-time lecture/tutorial rate. There is also a full-time laboratory instructor appointment with a salary scale lower than that of other faculty (see Article 6).

Another aspect of this issue is that there is great variation in the real workload associated with labs and in the expertise required to teach them – some are tightly coupled with the lecture, while others in multi-section junior courses can be taught effectively by someone other than the lecture instructor. Therefore, flexibility in instructor assignment is required, and the Collective Agreement currently provides this.

- 4) The amount of work involved in supervising senior research projects in the sciences depends on both the student and the faculty member. A project can require up to 4 to 5 hours per week, and typically averages at least 3 hours per week. If the project is within the faculty member's research interests, then it can be argued that the work is at least partially scholarship. However, in this case, the faculty member generally devotes more time to the project.
- 5) The amount of work involved in supervising an honours thesis depends on both the student and the faculty member, but is estimated to average 3 hours per week in meeting and marking time.
- 6) In the English Honours Seminar course (ENGL 5110), students write a conference paper as well as a longer paper. The English Department is exploring whether the instructor could receive additional SICH for the course in recognition of being the first point of contact for reference letters and associated support for students who are planning on graduate studies.
- 7) There are an increasing number of Directed Readings courses in the Faculty of Arts. They are intended to be in the faculty member's research area but, in practice, it is often student interest which determines the topics.
- 8) SICH is an imperfect measure of real instructor workload, which depends on a number of factors including the level of the course and whether it is a core course in a program. For a core course, the assessment may be determined by the department and be greater than for an optional course or a general education requirement. For example, a department may require three essays in a core course and allow the instructor to determine the assessments in a course that is not core. This could be compensated for by limiting enrolment in a core course to fewer students or by increasing the SICH assigned.

- 9) Coordinators of nursing courses with a clinical component are responsible for up to 300 students and as many as 40 clinical instructors and sites. The work of a coordinator includes hiring and orientation of new instructors, site visits, dealing with student complaints and clinical instructor issues, and being on call during evening and weekend clinicals. There are approximately nine such courses running every semester and the up to 48 SICH reassigned time granted to the coordinator is inadequate. Therefore, the coordinator is forced to take time away from other commitments such as scholarship. Much of the coordination work could be performed by support staff.
- 10) There is an ongoing pattern of faculty going beyond their contractual workload commitments for the success of their program. The example given below is not an issue because the faculty members involved enjoy working with their students in case competitions and are committed to the success of their program, but it is not possible to continue adding more work without taking something away.

In the Bissett School of Business, coaching a group of about four students for a case competition can take 40 hours and then one is away for the weekend when the competition is held. This work counts as service and faculty choose to do it based on their interests. But, on the other hand, these competitions are considered important for the reputation of the School and so there could be pressure to participate. List A reassigned time has occasionally been granted for this work in the past. Some business schools do not participate in these competitions and others incorporate them into a course.

Recommendations of the Workload Committee

- 1) The **Credit Curriculum Approval policy (POL 550-1)** defines editorial changes to be “non-substantive changes that do not alter or affect the substance of curriculum, programs, or policies” and states that the originator of the curriculum submission is responsible for determining whether a change is substantive or editorial. Substantive curriculum changes must be reviewed by Academic Program and Policy Committee and approved by General Faculties Council.

Recommendation: That members use the substantive change process if reducing the number of instructional hours in a course will result in curriculum change.

- 2) Instructional workload for faculty on the TS and TSS work patterns is specified by ranges centered at 384 SICH and 288 SICH, respectively. A department is required to maintain an average based on these figures (see Article 14.6).

Recommendation: That the department average be used to equalize real workload, to the extent possible.

- 3) The definition of SICH in Article 1.24 states that "Credit for other forms of teaching, including but not limited to practica, open laboratories, studios, directed study, computer-assisted instruction, team-teaching, rehearsals and productions shall be assigned by the Chair in consultation with the members of the academic unit, and is subject to the approval of the Dean".

Recommendation: That Chairs assign SICH credit for other forms of teaching at the rate of 16 SICH for 3 hours of work per week. The rationale for this conversion factor is as follows:

Faculty on the TS work pattern are required to teach an average of 384 SICH annually, or 192 SICH per semester. A multiplier of 16 is used for semester SICH and so 192 SICH is $192 / 16 = 12$ classroom hours per week. A multiplier of 3 is then typically used to estimate real workload, i.e. 3 hours in class entails 9 hours of real workload when preparation, marking, student support, and maintaining currency are taken into account. A multiplier of 3 is also used to determine deemed hours for Employment Insurance. For example, if a part-time faculty member teaches 192 SICH, or 12 hours per week, in the winter semester and then applies for Employment Insurance, they are deemed to have worked $12 * 3 = 36$ hours per week for the purposes of determining eligibility for EI.

The workload credit of 16 SICH for 3 hours of work per week derives from reversing this conversion: if 36 hours of work per week equates to 192 SICH, then 3 hours per week is one-twelfth of that and equates to $3 / 36 * 192 = 16$ SICH.

Recommendation: That Chairs and faculty report the results of attempting to assign SICH credit for other forms of teaching to the MRFA Executive.

- 4) Article 14.1 of the Collective Agreement specifies that “The instructional load of full-time employees shall be assigned by consultation between the Chair and the members of each academic unit, following consultation with the Dean”. The range of SICH that faculty on the TS and TSS work patterns teach are given in Articles 14.4 and 14.5, respectively. The department average is defined in Article 14.6 and the procedures governing reassigned time for List A, advising, and coordination are specified in Article 14.9. A grievance (see Article 20) can be initiated if any of these articles are contravened. Article 14.12 describes the workload appeal procedure that a faculty member who is dissatisfied with the workload responsibility assigned, including any reassigned time approved or denied, may use to appeal such assignment.

Recommendation: That members use the grievance procedure or the workload appeal procedure, as appropriate, including where they believe that the SICH assigned for other forms of teaching under Article 1.24 does not fairly recognize the workload involved.

- 5) The committee also makes a recommendation to itself.

Recommendation: That the workload committee examine the relationships between the various forms of instruction, in particular the range of activities involved in laboratory and clinical instruction, with a view to developing workload equivalency ratios based on lecture/tutorial SICH. There are several places in the Collective Agreement where such ratios would be useful; for example, the normal maximum instructional load for part-time faculty of 192 SICH per semester given in Article 14.15.

Other ways to measure workload

- 1) When workload is measured by number of courses, the Collective Agreement often lists factors affecting real workload that are to be considered in the assignment of courses. For example, the Assignment of Teaching Article in the St. Thomas University Collective Agreement states: “It is expected that each Department shall ordinarily assign those courses within the Department which its members are to teach. In so doing, the Department is responsible for ensuring that there is a reasonable balance between small and large classes and that there is an equitable distribution of workload among members of the Department taking into account independent study courses, Honours thesis supervision, the varying demands of alternative teaching and evaluation methodologies. Whenever possible, there shall be prior consultation with Employees on the assignment of teaching duties.”
- 2) The attached [workload form](#) used in the Ontario college system attempts to quantify some of the factors affecting real workload.
- 3) At Vancouver Island University, a faculty member who supervises an undergraduate research project is credited with 1/32nd of an annual workload for each student undergraduate research project. Directed Studies courses are taught on a voluntary basis in addition to a faculty member’s assigned workload, the courses are restricted to a maximum of five students, and the faculty member receives a stipend of \$250 for each student in a 3 credit Directed Studies course.
- 4) Also at Vancouver Island University, faculty members with a seven section or equivalent workload assignment, which includes one or more upper level sections in an academic year, receive a one course release for scholarly activity. When class sizes are increased within prescribed guidelines, the Collective Agreement provides that: “Where a department’s reconfiguration results in an increase in student numbers, seventy three (73) percent of the money generated by the increased tuition shall be used exclusively for funding teaching release or research activity as jointly determined by the Dean and the department. The money generated in a year may be carried over for use in a subsequent year.”
- 5) At Brock University, unscheduled teaching such as graduate student supervision is increasing. The Collective Agreement tried to deal with this in the past through departments developing Normal Department Workload Standards, which were to articulate partial course equivalents for unscheduled teaching responsibilities and set an upper boundary for a reasonable amount of unscheduled teaching. This did not work and they are now developing an evidence-based definition of unscheduled teaching, along with proposals for course release and/or overload pay and an arbitrated dispute resolution mechanism if the department and the dean cannot agree.