

Négociations 2011 Negotiations

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Please note: This bulletin is intended for information only.

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE #4

1. KEY MESSAGES – EMPLOYER PROPOSAL IMPLIES MAJOR ALTERATION TO PROFESSORIAL ROLE

- Employer proposes to create a new category of teaching-centred professor
- Employer proposes that these positions make up 15% of total faculty appointments
- Professors in this position would:
 - Teach double the normal course load (up to 24 credits/8 courses per year)
 - Teach in a minimum of 3, rather than 2, semesters each year
 - Not be allowed to supervise at the graduate level
 - Be significantly limited in the focus of their scholarly activity and research and be given very little research time and support for it
- The APUO has been open to the possibility of recognizing and formalizing ‘teaching-intensive’ positions as long as holders of these positions were treated as regular faculty and the conditions would allow them to pursue a reasonable minimum threshold of scholarly activity.
- Moreover, the APUO has spent much time both before and during these negotiations to try to find a reasonable solution that would address the needs expressed by the employer while at the same time ensure that professors in these positions not become ‘teaching-only’ professors.
- While it previously appeared that the APUO and employer might be able to find a solution that was acceptable to both parties, given the new workload outlined in the employer’s latest proposal, the APUO cannot accept it.

The APUO requests that you, the members, consider the implications of the employer’s proposal, and that you immediately communicate your views to your Board representative or directly to the APUO President.

2. BACKGROUND – LIMITED-TERM APPOINTMENTS

Beginning in the 2002 bargaining round, a series of Letters of Understanding (LOU) were signed permitting the appointment, in several units, of limited-term faculty members. These positions carried higher teaching loads than their colleagues having a regular appointment. At the time, these appointments were argued to be necessary to cope with the effects of the Ontario double cohort which saw university admissions begin to swell in the fall of 2003. Fifteen positions were originally created in the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the School of Management and the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS). Subsequently, similar positions were created in Arts and Social Sciences, each having unique aspects. Most of these positions have been renewed for a given period of time, according to the provisions of their respective LOU, and the future status of the incumbents depends on the outcome of the current collective bargaining.

In Science and in Engineering these appointees initially taught up to six three-credit courses, or 18 credits. The LOU in Arts and Social Sciences provided for a typical teaching load of seven three-credit courses over three years. All members hired into these temporary positions are fully qualified for regular academic appointment, including having completed a PhD. However, their scholarly activity expectations are reduced and these may be, though are not required to be, pedagogical in nature. The number of such appointees was capped at no more than 10%-20% of regular faculty in any unit.

3. EMPLOYER PROPOSAL

The employer now wishes to create a category of regular, permanent professors whose workload would be a more extreme version of these limited-term appointment positions. As noted above, the employer's position proposes that these teaching-centred faculty members:

- comprise 15% of faculty in a unit
- must teach double the current normal course load of their regular peers, but no less than six three-credit courses (18 credits) to a maximum of eight three-credit courses (24 credits) annually
- must teach over three, rather than the current two, semesters of the academic year
- would be restricted from supervising graduate students or serving as thesis examiners at the University of Ottawa
- would be limited to undertaking scholarly activity (research) only on topics of teaching and learning (i.e. any research in their particular field beyond simply remaining 'current' in their area of teaching would not be supported nor recognized)

Additionally, the employer wants to increase the workloads of all replacement faculty positions by requiring that these positions carry the same heavier teaching loads as those proposed for "teaching-intensive" faculty for the full duration of their appointments (rather than only in the first year as presently required by the collective agreement) for initial periods of three years (up from the current two years), and renewal for up to five years in all.

4. APUO POSITION

The APUO has consulted rigorously with members of all faculties to understand their positions and interests in regard to this issue. We understand that our members have been faced with increasing workloads due to growing class sizes and that the university community needs to find creative ways to address these very real challenges.

As such, the APUO has been willing to explore ways to make "teaching-intensive" faculty positions permanent as one way, among many others, that the employer might begin to address workload challenges and promote the importance and quality of teaching on the campus.

The APUO also recognizes that the intensity of scholarly activities could be lesser in cases where these members are taking on a greater share of teaching workloads. Moreover, we support the idea that, if any member so chooses, scholarly engagement can take the form of the scholarship on teaching and learning (SoTL).

APUO opposes "teaching-only" faculty appointments where neither scholarly engagement nor academic service components contribute sufficiently to the overall work of their units and the university community as a whole. While we understand that universities must compete with colleges because of the greatly expanding possibilities for the transfer of academic credit from colleges to universities and the trend to award colleges degree-granting status, APUO does not support universities becoming colleges.

As such, it is the APUO's position that:

1. 'Teaching-intensive' members have complete access to full academic careers and entitlements, including, but not limited to, tenure, promotion to all ranks, and academic leaves (sabbaticals).

On the positive side of the ledger, the employer and APUO have agreed that all rights and entitlements of an academic career would be extended to "teaching-intensive" faculty. Such faculty would be paid according to the regular faculty pay scale. They would be eligible for tenure, for academic (sabbatical) leaves on the same basis as regular faculty, and may apply for promotion to all academic ranks.

Faculty who hold these positions would be considered to be on a permanent teaching-intensive career path. However, they would also be permitted, at a later point in their careers, to apply for regular non-teaching-intensive positions when these become available. They would also be eligible to be appointed to administrative positions that could give rise to compensatory teaching load reductions, and they would be able to apply for temporary teaching relief to pursue grant-supported scholarly projects.

Enshrining these conditions would be an important first step in improving the quality of these members' professional lives. Work has begun on tenure and promotion criteria and procedural changes to accommodate teaching-intensive career profiles.

2. What distinguishes a university education from that offered by colleges is the engagement of students with instructors who are fully qualified and actively engaged in the scholarship of their disciplines or professions. As such, the APUO believes that the 'teaching-only' nature of the employer's current proposal is unacceptable.

At this time, the key obstacles to the APUO and the employer finding a mutually acceptable solution in regard to teaching-intensive positions are the issues of (a) the intensity of the teaching workload; (b) the limits this, and the other employer requirements, puts on these members' scholarly activity and graduate supervision; and (c) the overall ratio of teaching-intensive faculty to normal faculty proposed by the employer.

First, the APUO believes that a teaching workload of double the course load of that of their regular peers (minimum of 6 courses, maximum of 8) and the idea that such members would be required to teach 3 semesters/year rather than 2, is excessive. Such a workload would result in these members spending between nine and twelve hours per week in the classroom for up to 36 weeks plus examination periods and preparation time. According to this proposal, teaching-intensive faculty would have only 44 days in the year without teaching provided they choose to teach in one of the intensive spring/summer semesters. Teaching in a regular spring/summer session would leave only their annual vacation leave without teaching. As should be clear, this workload would make it impossible to pursue significant scholarly activity.

Second, the APUO believes that the broader academic work these members undertake should not be limited in two other ways proposed by the employer: i.e. not being allowed to supervise at the graduate level, if they are competent to do so, and having their scholarly activities and research pre-defined by the employer as having to focus primarily on teaching and learning, regardless of the research interests of the faculty members themselves. The APUO believes that teaching-intensive faculty should be free to choose, just as regular faculty members, to engage in the scholarship of their disciplines, professions or areas of creative activity.

Third, the APUO feels that a 15% ratio of teaching-intensive positions to regular faculty positions is high.

5. CONCLUSION

In sum, the APUO has been and remains open to exploring ways to formalize ‘teaching-intensive’ positions in ways that are fair to those members who would be hired under these standards and would continue to ensure that all professors would be able to focus (even if the relative weight differed) on scholarship, teaching and administrative service.

The APUO does not believe, however, that the current employer’s position is one that achieves this. Under the employer’s proposal, these positions would, in essence, create college or CÉGEP teachers employed by the University. They would be “teaching-only” rather than “teaching-intensive”. The employer proposal that these become the terms for all replacement professors’ positions ensures that individuals in those positions would be unable to maintain a level of scholarly activity that would allow them to qualify for regular appointments in the future.

APUO does not believe that this vision is consistent with a quality university education, and invites its members to communicate their views on this issue to their representatives on the APUO Board of Directors (an up-to-date list of directors is attached) or directly to the APUO President (apuopres@uottawa.ca).

Thank you for your attention.

The APUO Executive Committee