

# CUASA COMMUNIQUÉ

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## **Workload**

The complex issues surrounding workload continue to be matters of lively discussion. Published below are three items on the topics:

1. "Workload Woes," an op-ed piece from Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, who headed CUASA's bargaining team during the last round of negotiations, responding to the Dean of FASS (see his posting at:

[http://www.carleton.ca/fass/events/2007/february%202007/deans\\_blog\\_workload1.html](http://www.carleton.ca/fass/events/2007/february%202007/deans_blog_workload1.html) )

2. The text of the agreement reached between CUASA and the University relating to workload reduction

3. An newspaper article on the impact of e-mail in the academic workplace  
If you have comments to add, opinions to declare, or experiences to share on these issues, please send them to CUASA.

### **1. Workload Woes**

Recently, we have heard extensively from management about the issue of workload. In particular the Dean of FASS has written a faculty memo and posted a comment on his blog on the subject (see:

[http://www.carleton.ca/fass/events/2007/february%202007/deans\\_blog\\_workload1.html](http://www.carleton.ca/fass/events/2007/february%202007/deans_blog_workload1.html) ). I think it is time to hear from faculty on the subject because our point of view—derived as it is from our daily work—is informed by different experiences.

Workload was a big issue during our last round of negotiations and CUASA was able to make some very small gains by instituting a process by which units can reduce their workload if they can demonstrate that to do so is cost neutral and does not negatively affect either the curricular needs of their programme or their students. Management also agreed to the desirability of reducing teaching workload to below 2.5 credits a year.

But why is workload an issue? Based on thirty years of teaching, Dean Osborne contends that it is not a problem. This position flies in the face of the many accounts that members sent in to us regarding their workload and the way that it has changed becoming more onerous.

I have only been teaching for twenty years but in my experience, the workload has steadily increased. Part of that increase is accounted for because I started teaching in American universities where small classes were the norm. But even in the fifteen years that I have been at Carleton, workload in my unit, while nominally the same (e.g. 3-2) has increased exponentially.

When I arrived at Carleton, my largest class was about sixty students. Now that would be a small class. The number of students that we are teaching has doubled and tripled and our workload formula does not reflect this change. I spend more time on all aspects of teaching because of this rise in numbers.

Back in the early days of my teaching career at Carleton, I held office hours and students consulted me only in those hours or by appointment. Now, students expect 24-7 access through email. I spend more time on consultation with students than ever before. Many colleagues wrote to the bargaining team stating that they spent hours and hours on email correspondence with students. We tried to get some recognition of this factor into the collective agreement but management was adamant in their refusal.

The technology of teaching has also changed so that preparation time often has to factor in learning new technologies such as power point, web ct, etc, and then applying them. This, too, is not factored into our workload formula.

We have also increased our graduate enrolment since I arrived at Carleton. Working with graduate students is incredibly enriching but it is also time consuming. Many colleagues— particularly in highly successful graduate programmes such as Canadian history, sociology, the TIM programme, and many more—spend ten to twenty hours a week just reading graduate students’ work and meeting with them.

Research is another part of our workload. While it is defined for faculty as 35% of our workload, professional librarians have to do research in their “spare time.” Management was not willing to give Carleton’s professional librarians any time to devote to scholarly work even though they are required to do this work in order to be made permanent and to be promoted. As faculty members, our job may be 35% research but when we ask for tenure and promotion, we are compared to colleagues at other institutions with lower workloads and more time for research—in essence we might be given 35% time for research but we are judged as if we had a lot more time to devote to this part of our job. With the introduction of centralized scheduling we might not even have any time for research or writing since the system does not allow for the long established practice of putting aside one day for research and writing.

Management at Carleton depends on our cooperation and enthusiasm to make things work. As an academic staff, we have stepped up to the plate when needed. But it seems that once the pressure of bargaining is off, management is backing away from its commitment to consider alleviating some of the stresses that workload has caused among academic staff. I have written this short piece based on my experiences and those of others that I heard about in my capacity as chief negotiator. I am sure that many others can attest to the way that workload has increased irrespective of the workload formula and don’t doubt that my experiences are shared by many of CUASA’s members

Sonya Lipsett-Rivera  
Chief Negotiator, CUASA

## **2. Letter of Intent on Workload**

### **1. Re: Curriculum and Workload Review**

At the beginning of each academic year, the President and Vice-Chancellor of Carleton University shall invite the Faculty Deans to initiate a curriculum and workload review of the academic degree programs offered by academic units within their Faculty.

The Dean will respond within thirty days to inform the President and Vice-Chancellor of the academics units which have elected to conduct such reviews.

The curriculum and workload reviews shall be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

#### Workload Principles

Workload needs to be addressed to maximize Carleton's ability to recruit and retain faculty. The parties are committed to addressing inequities in workload to support Carleton's objective to be a top tier research intensive university.

In order to be a research-intensive comprehensive university, Carleton faculty need a climate in which research and other academic functions of employees may be effectively carried out.

The parties agree that workload is an important and complex issue that involves a wide range of factors and variables that differ from one department and/or program to another.

Normal workload for faculty employees listed in Article 9.4(a)(i) is defined by Article 13.1 and the parties agree to achieve a teaching workload of fewer than 2.5 credits.

Achieving a teaching workload of fewer than 2.5 credits must:

1. not compromise the quality and integrity of academic programs
2. be addressed in a collegial manner across programs and departments
3. be addressed in a cost-neutral manner

Teaching workload and curriculum are closely related and change to one may require change to the other. Any such curricular change must be made in the context of existing academic planning and approval processes.

Where an academic unit proposes to implement teaching workload changes through curriculum reform, the Faculty Dean will be asked to attest to Senate that these curriculum changes can be achieved without net new resources and that the proposed changes meet the required academic standards.

Where an academic unit proposes to implement teaching workload changes through administrative changes within the unit, these changes shall only be undertaken with the approval of the Faculty Dean. In cases of disagreement between the Dean and the unit, the unit may, through its Chair or Director, appeal to the Provost.

## Materials and Services

1. The parties agree that the employer shall provide a level of facilities and support services necessary for CUASA employees to perform their work in accordance with Article 6.3(c) of the CUASA collective agreement.
2. The parties agree to establish a committee within thirty (30) days of the ratification of this collective agreement. The mandate of the committee shall be to consult with all the academic units and sub-units and report back to CUASA and the employer as what materials and services are provided to CUASA members and what materials and service are lacking.
3. Among other things, the committee will examine the provision of:
  - Services: administrative services
  - voice mail
  - access to University computer services,
  - assistance with instructional technology
  - mail services
  - Access: printer services
  - photocopying services
  - Supplies and Equipment: appropriate adequate computers
  - paper
  - cartridges for standard printers
  - Space: office space
  - ergonomic furnishings in workplace
  - adequate office furnishings
4. The committee shall invite submissions from all units and sub-units based on consultation with members of CUASA regarding all materials and services provided. The submission should identify current practice, whether it is satisfactory and areas where improvement is required.
5. The committee shall also examine the matter of cost-containment regarding the provision of material and services.
6. The committee shall consist of four (4) members; two (2) shall be CUASA members designated by CUASA and two (2) shall be designated by the University President.
7. The committee shall provide a report with recommendations to the parties within six (6) months of its establishment unless the parties mutually agree in writing to extend the deadline. The report shall consist of an overview of materials and supplies available to CUASA members in all the units and sub-units and a determination of what would constitute adequate levels of supplies and materials.
8. All units, sub-units, Faculties and CUASA will be invited to comment on the report.

### **3. Professors and E-mail**

They're called "millennials," the 21st century students who see themselves as education consumers. Technology lets them study when and where they want, but their expectations may be driving their professors crazy, according to a U.S. technology and education expert.

"These folks think of you as a product," Richard Katz told faculty at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology yesterday. "It's our job to deliver (education) that way. There are no longer office hours – it's all day, every day. Academics all over the world are screaming, 'I can't handle the e-mails.'"

Katz's own student son wants his grades posted online within 36 hours of taking an exam, said the vice-president of EDUCAUSE, a Colorado-based association that tries to advance education through technology.

Those expectations are perfectly reasonable, said UOIT nuclear engineering student Eva Sunny, 19. And she said 24 hours "is more than enough time" for a professor to respond to a student's e-mail, given that many class assignments have deadlines of a week or two.

"I know a lot of people who post things online at 1 a.m. and sometimes at 2 a.m. Sometimes, if the professor's awake, he'll (answer) it." Sunny says it's less intimidating to approach professors online. They usually respond within hours. But that may be an advantage of attending Oshawa's UOIT, promoted as Ontario's first laptop-based university.

Katz said all schools should be thinking about how to provide personalized service in the information age. "Students don't want to walk across a quadrangle and knock on a professor's door," he said, drawing nervous chuckles of recognition.

"We've always been under siege for a quick response, but as professors we're receiving more inquiries and requests than ever," Marc Rosen, dean of the university's school of manufacturing engineering, told the Star.

Because technologies have the potential to overwhelm, universities have to look for ways to use them efficiently, he said. One is for professors to address questions to a wider e-mail group or on a Web site.

Rosen acknowledged that there have always been students who need hand-holding, but electronic communication has the potential to create more cyber-babies. "We warn professors not to fall into the trap of becoming a spoon-feeding servant," he said.

Tess Kalinowski, Education Reporter, the Star

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