

***Collective Perspectives:***  
**A Policy Paper on Collective Bargaining between  
Queen's University and the Queen's University Faculty  
Association**

Ratified by AMS Assembly April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015



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## Executive Summary

*This document is constructed on the basis of a series of Principles, Concerns, and Recommendations relating back to the four core pillars of: The Collective Bargaining Process; Teaching and Learning; Workload and Compensation; and Pension Plan. Within this framework, the AMS has endeavoured to outline the many considerations that would productively contribute to the continued development of discussions pertaining to collective bargaining between Queen's University and the Queen's University Faculty Association.*

This Policy Paper's key recommendations, divided by fundamental area of focus, are as follows:

### The Collective Bargaining Process

- The University should investigate the possibility of instituting a student representative to be present at the table during collective bargaining.
- Students should be appraised of developments in collective bargaining discussions, and should be formally advised in the event of a vote for a strike mandate.
- In the event of a strike, students should receive regular updates regarding academic disruption, progress through mediation and arbitration, and the impact of strike activity on their academic involvement.
- The University should provide reimbursement and educational accommodations to students who experience a strike that results in a university closure or class cancellations.

### Teaching and Learning

- The University should hire teaching-focused faculty in the tenure-track stream to reduce student-faculty ratios and increase the quality of teaching;
- The University should continue to prioritize hiring equity in future appointments for tenure and tenure-track positions, and should seek to hire faculty in early stages of their career;
- The University should remove provisions that allow faculty to "buy out" their teaching obligations, instead introducing mechanisms that allow faculty to have more flexibility in establishing a balance between teaching and research throughout their career;
- Where contract instructors are hired, the University should establish institution-wide standards for the appointment process coupled with the introduction of minimum guarantees surrounding compensation and job security;

- A lack of success or competitiveness in teaching metrics should no longer be able to be compensated for by success or competitiveness in research in the renewal, tenure, and promotion process;
- The University should protect and reward innovative course design through strong metrics and temporarily waiving the USAT form for that course;
- The compensation gradient for “special points” should be substantially steeper, with higher expectations for full achievement;
- The JCAA should strike a task force to examine the decision making process for the granting of tenure, with specific focus on the expectations currently laid out in the RTP process and how they are evaluated. Students should be included as members of this committee;
- The JCAA should strike a task force to re-examine the USAT system with the objective of making recommendations regarding the tool itself and the process for implementation and use. Students should be included as members of this committee.

#### Workload and Compensation

- The University should work with students and faculty to establish an effective mechanism for quantifying faculty workload with the objective of improving metrics for workload expectations in next round of collective bargaining;
- The bargaining units should ensure total possible compensation increases for faculty as provided for in the collective agreement not exceed the projected year-over-year revenue growth of the university operating budget;
- The University should revise the definition of University Service in the Collective Bargaining Agreement to include involvement in select student organizations.

#### The Pension Plan

- Queen’s Pension Plan should move towards a Jointly-Sponsored Pension Plan model;
- The University should work with applicable unions to investigate the possibility of joining a Multi-Employer Pension Plan, with consideration of the inclusion of university sector pensions in the CAAT Pension Plan and the creation of a dedicated pension plan for Ontario universities;
- The Pension Committee of Board of Trustees should strike a committee to evaluate whether the current minimum guarantee in the Queen’s Pension Plan’s is best tailored to the needs of the Plan members and the University;
- The University should eliminate the ability for pensioners to receive pension payments while still employed by Queen's in the event that their employment exceeds 30 days per annum.

# The Collective Bargaining Process

## *Principles*

**Principle 1: Given the profound impact of collective bargaining on the student experience, avenues should exist for students to be involved in the collective bargaining process.**

The collective agreement between Queen's University and the Queen's University Faculty Association has a profound and defining impact on the quality of the student learning experience. The agreement establishes the expectations and incentives with respect to fundamental issues such as teaching responsibilities, faculty time allocation, and professor evaluations. Moreover, compensation comprises a substantial component of the university's operating budget, exercising a direct impact on resource allocation across the entirety of the institution. Insofar as students are the ones who are primarily affected by this confluence of factors, they are uniquely positioned to provide insight and perspective in the bargaining process. The AMS believes that the collective agreement constitutes a pivotal element of the learning experience at Queen's, and the presence of a student voice through throughout negotiations would be an appropriate and productive addition to the discussion.

**Principle 2: Recognizing the potential impact of strike activity on academic progression, students should be adequately informed of the potential for, or details and ramifications of, strike activity resulting from the bargaining process.**

Strike activity has the potential to negatively impact a student's academic year, and can result in an inability to receive credits that are necessary for academic progression. Particularly given the lack of control students are able to exercise with respect to strike activity, resources and supports must exist to ensure they are apprised of the progression of the bargaining process. An adequate, sensitive and proactive delineation of relevant issues and factors relating to the likelihood of a strike, its potential impacts, and the supports in place should it occur, is imperative in enabling students to appropriately seek accommodations or plan for future academic engagements.

**Principle 3: Given that tuition fees are designed to cover core costs of education, students should not be expected to pay for education not received when faculty go on strike.**

Tuition fees are paid by students to a university as a payment for their classes, and the associated elements of the delivery of a degree<sup>1</sup>. Many universities corroborate this understanding in their own documents, providing policy on a student's various contractual

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<sup>1</sup> Carter, Jen, Jamie Cleary, Joyce Wai, and Colin Zarzour. Policy Paper: Tuition. Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2015.

obligations to a university. The University of British Columbia acknowledges this, stating “A student upon registering has initiated a contract with UBC for payment of all assessed fees.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, if the university ceases to provide classes and the associated elements of the delivery of a degree for a time, then students should not be paying for that time.

When a strike occurs, students are adversely impacted in a number of ways. Prolonged strike activity can result in many unproductive weeks for students as they wait for classes to resume, with the possibility of classes being postponed to the summer months or cancelled altogether. Delayed classes represent a negative opportunity cost for students by restricting their earning potential over the summer months, while completely cancelled classes represent a complete loss of a semester’s worth of learning. Beyond this, significant class cancellations could substantially affect a student’s time to completion, potentially delaying the attainment of their degree and their entry into the workforce. While losses in students’ time cannot be retroactively addressed, the AMS firmly believes that students should not be required to pay for education that is not actually received as a result of strike conditions.

### *Concerns*

**Concern 1: At present time, no formal avenues exist to facilitate student participation in the collective bargaining process.**

While students are significant stakeholders in the outcomes of collective bargaining, there are no formal mechanisms that allow them to participate in discussion or debate surrounding bargaining issues. As a group that is both most deeply affected by the outcome of bargaining and uniquely able to provide useful insights and recommendations, the absence of an avenue for meaningful participation disempowers students from engaging in a discussion that dictates many core elements of their educational experience. In addition, given that more than half the university’s operating budget is funded by student fees while much of the rest is coming from taxpayers, both the administration and the faculty bear an onus to make decisions that are for the well-being of the institution as a whole. Students believe that, as the only substantial party that the agreement affects but does not substantively include, they are uniquely positioned to bring a frontline perspective to the table that is not currently represented.

**Concern 2: Faculty strikes have the potential to disrupt classes and the overall educational experience for students.**

Strike activity can have a substantial impact on academic success, with class cancellations impeding progression and make-up classes affecting student earning potential. Impediments to student progress can manifest in multiple and compounding ways. Depending on when a strike begins and for how long it persists, the delay for graduating

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<sup>2</sup> University of British Columbia, “Vancouver Academic Calendar 2015/16: Policies on Fees,” accessed February 2015, <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=14,265,0,0>.

students could mean that they cannot graduate in the time that they have projected. Employment opportunities based on course completion and graduation are jeopardized as well. Beyond this, a survey undertaken following a strike at Dalhousie University concluded that “slightly negative” academic and emotional affects resulted alongside “substantial negative” effects on university reputation<sup>3</sup>. In addition, a study examining students’ reactions two-month faculty strike at York University evidenced a correlation between student stress and anger and the extent to which students’ academic plans had been affected by strike activity<sup>4</sup>.

**Concern 3: Faculty strikes could leave students paying for education they do not receive.**

In recent years, long-lasting strikes have impacted students across Ontario. Recent strike activity at the University of Toronto and York University resulted in multiple weeks of lost classes for undergraduate students. Furthermore, several strikes have lasted for a significantly prolonged period of time, with a 2008-09 strike at York University persisting for nearly 3 months. In these cases, tuition fees were not reimbursed to students after the fact.

Particularly given that the university is not obliged to pay salaries in the event of strike activity, tuition and fees being paid to the university over the course of a strike represents a substantial gain for the university with no commensurate return to students. For example, the 2014 Mount Allison faculty strike was three weeks in length, resulting in approximately \$856,948 saved by the university in tenured faculty wages. Throughout this period, faculty members were not teaching classes to students, and thus students were paying for an education that was not provided. To date, students have not been reimbursed for the lost educational opportunities resulting from the strike, despite past precedent for doing so at other similarly sized institutions at St. Thomas University and Acadia University in 2007, and a more recent faculty-strike tuition reimbursement at the University of New Brunswick during the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Concern 4: Students are not formally apprised of important developments that occur in the course of collective bargaining, leaving them ill prepared to respond to changes that impact or impede their studies.**

At present time, no formal mechanisms exist to advise students of bargaining issues that bear heavily upon their academic success. This imposes particular difficulties for students who may require accommodation or support in the event of a strike, and creates confusion surrounding barriers to graduation or course completion that could arise. Beyond this, without any avenue to become apprised of bargaining updates, students are inhibited from substantively engaging in fundamental conversations pertaining to their education. The few mechanisms that exist at present time, such as the updates provided by QUFA, are

<sup>3</sup> [ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/cjhe/article/download/183163/183138](http://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/cjhe/article/download/183163/183138)

<sup>4</sup> <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023%2FA%3A1020993302071#page-2>

helpful tools for information sharing. That said, while students support the direct efforts whereby faculty perspectives are communicated, these notices do not address issues from a perspective of student success and are often framed for a faculty reader only.

Beyond this, a lack of awareness of the details surrounding bargaining has a negative effect on student success and wellbeing. A study conducted to examine York University students' psychological reactions following a two-month faculty strike demonstrated that, "support provided to students from the internet predicted to lower anger", with conclusions showing that "individual and social resources can reduce distress resulting from interruption of students' academic plans due to strike"<sup>5</sup>. This underlines the importance of providing sufficient information and resources to assist students in the planning process should strike activity occur.

### ***Recommendations***

**Recommendation 1: The University should consider the viability of instituting a student representative to be present at the table during collective bargaining.**

Recognizing the potential for productive student involvement in bargaining discussions, students recommend that the university investigate potential models for formalized student participation in the negotiation of the collective agreement. The University of California provides a best practice model by including students at the bargaining table as a limited third party. The university created this provision recognizing the impact of bargaining on students, articulated as follows: "In the 1970s, the UC Student Lobby (UCSA's predecessor) fought for student representation in collective bargaining between the University of California and its employees arguing that students were also affected by the outcomes of these negotiations. The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA, July 1, 1978) gave students limited rights as third party participants in labor contract negotiations involving University of California employees. Since UCSA is the recognized voice of UC students, UCSA is the official student body association that appoints student representatives to the Collective Bargaining (CB) program."<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the benefits afforded students in being at the table, the potential for students to operate effectively in a mediatory capacity is articulated in a recent *University Affairs* article. This article emphasizes the utility of student participation in difficult discussions regarding the university sector, stating, "The participation by the students was particularly heartening. Their voices are not always included in these sorts of discussions, and they clearly appreciated taking part and offering their views. Several felt that student groups can be a sort of neutral party (between the faculty and administration)..."<sup>7</sup> In addition to the singular ability of the student voice to articulate and advise on issues affecting the learning environment in negotiations between QUFA and Queen's, the very presence of

<sup>5</sup> <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023%2FA%3A1020993302071#page-2>

<sup>6</sup> <http://ucsa.org/ucsaprod/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Collective-Bargaining-Program-Manual.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Cite.

student representation may well serve to have a salutary effect on the process by constituting an ongoing reminder of the negative impact of a protracted negotiation. Therefore, the AMS believes it is of benefit to all parties involved to investigate potential avenues for formal student participation in bargaining.

**Recommendation 2: Students should be apprised of developments in collective bargaining discussions, and should be formally advised in the event of a vote for a strike mandate.**

Recognizing the impact of the bargaining process on the current student experience as well as the broader impact of strike activity on academic progression, students should be advised of developments in bargaining discussions in a proactive and easily accessible manner. The information provided should include, but not be limited to, key dates, votes on strike mandates, informational items from both parties, and anticipated impacts on the academic term. The University of Windsor provides a best practice in this area by offering readily accessible information relating to the bargaining process. On their website<sup>8</sup>, they regularly post pertinent updates pertaining to the collective bargaining process, including important dates, financial situations, process, results and representative members.

**Recommendation 3: In the event of a strike, students should receive regular updates regarding academic disruption, progress through mediation and arbitration, and the impact of strike activity on their academic involvement.**

Students recognize substantial impacts resulting from strike action at their university. As such, it is imperative that regular updates on the arbitration process, as well as available accommodations, timelines for resolution, and potential impact on academic progression be readily available. This includes proactive provision of informational resources to all affected students, as well as supports for students suffering as a result of lost academic credit or course rescheduling. Windsor's bargaining update model could readily be applied in the context of strike updates.

**Recommendation 4: Queen's should provide reimbursement and educational accommodations to students who experience a strike that results in a university closure or class cancellations.**

Students commit significant resources in funding their education, and a strike can thus represent both monetary stress and a loss of opportunity. While students are hesitant to think of their education in a consumer context, they should nevertheless be assured of some protections available to consumers. When a strike, particularly in the event that it is prolonged, results in lost time and money there should be access to appropriate recourse. More specifically, students should receive a reimbursement equivalent to the tuition fees they would have paid for the lost instruction during the time of the strike. In addition,

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<sup>8</sup> The bargaining website can be found at: <http://www1.uwindsor.ca/bargainingunits/update>.

students require accommodations in making up for lost academic time. Students plan their educational and employment-related pathways around an expected school year. In the event that they lose educational time to a strike students should have access to appropriately compressed or accelerated coursework, modified coursework and evaluation weightings, or extra credit opportunities that allow them to return to their planned educational progression.

# Teaching Mission

## *Principles*

<b>Principle 4: Students should have meaningful access to a diverse and sizeable complement of faculty.</b>
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The Queen's University Academic Plan, approved by representation from all members of the Queen's academic community, highlights the key importance of a sizeable faculty complement in fostering student inquiry and enhancing the undergraduate learning experience. The academic plan prioritizes diversity in hiring, education, research and service, and affirms that bringing various perspectives is inherent to looking beyond traditional boundaries we face<sup>9</sup>.

Substantial work has been done on the topic of faculty diversity along the lines of race and gender, and on the privileges and obstacles of specific groups in universities<sup>10</sup>. Arguments have been made about institutional quality, research quality, educational perspectives, and pedagogical benefits from a diverse faculty complement<sup>11</sup>. The student community generally believes that the diversity of the student body should be reflected in the diversity of the University's faculty, in keeping with the now widespread idiom 'you can't be what you can't see'. Visibility and shared, lived experiences that occur organically in a diverse classroom enrich the learning experience and are necessary for Queen's to be a top tier Canadian institution<sup>12</sup>.

<b>Principle 5: Teaching constitutes a fundamental component of the university's mission, and should be appropriately incentivized and recognized as a result.</b>
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Principal Woolf articulates the role of the classroom experience in his document *Where Next* in recognizing, "At the end of the day, teaching students is the core reason why universities exist... We would be research institutes or industries without our students, and Queen's in particular has a vested interest in maintaining a reputation as a school that puts students first."<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Queen's University's vision statement identifies maintaining its transformative learning experience as the differentiating factor between itself and other research-intensive universities. Our academic plan highlights a strong tradition of teaching excellence, and the principles of learning and discovery working together to guide our

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<sup>9</sup> Queen's University. (2011). Queen's University Academic Plan Final. Kingston: Queen's University Senate.

<sup>10</sup> Moody, J. (2004). Supporting Women and Minority Faculty. American Association of University Professors - AcademeOnline,

<http://www.ccas.net/files/ADVANCE/Supporting%20Women%20and%20Minority%20Faculty.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Moody, J. (2004). Faculty Diversity. New York : Routledge.

<sup>12</sup> Simons, E. R. (2000). Diversifying Curriculum in Multicultural Classrooms: "You can't be what you can't see". English Journal, 12

<sup>13</sup> Woolf, Daniel. 2010. Where Next? Toward a University Academic Plan. Kingston : Office of the Principal; Queen's University.

purpose as a University moving forward. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has also stipulated that Universities have a mandate to educate, train, and provide study at a high intellectual level<sup>14</sup>.

In consideration of issues such as faculty-student contact, pedagogical practice, and opportunities for active and collaborative learning, incentives must reinforce high expectations for excellence. The alignment of institutional incentives with key priorities is essential for Queen's to achieve and sustain success in this core mission.<sup>15</sup>

**Principle 6: Adequate incentives should exist to support the teaching mission of the university and should be granted on the basis of high expectations for performance.**

It is the responsibility of both the Faculty and the University to acknowledge the obstacles that prevent Queen's from fully realizing its teaching mandate. Understanding the shared interest to maintain a high standing of quality in all matters, it is important that all parties agree to commensurate standards and checks for the administration of such incentives. Particularly given the fundamental importance of teaching excellence at Queen's, incentives and metrics should engender the same high expectations for performance that the university has committed to in its Academic Plan and other visioning documents.

**Principle 7: Faculty should be responsible for designing assessment strategies and styles that best suit the material they are delivering.**

Course delivery depends greatly on the attitude and teaching style of the instructor; as professionals in their field they are optimally suited to design assessment of complex material into a manner best fit for the classroom. Potential conflicts between strategy and delivery could arise if the responsibility to plan assessment for a class was removed from the professor's role.

Moreover, the Queen's commitment to consciously and purposefully articulating the learning outcomes for each course requires that the design, implementation and assessment of those outcomes is one synergistic process. Assessment and learning outcomes are integrally tied, and the strength of the learning process relies heavily on that linkage<sup>16</sup>. This responsibility of assessment therefore comes with a responsibility to connect outcomes to assessment of the course in a way that is both "rigorous and flexible -- rigorous in that they specify the complexity of the learning that's expected, and flexible in

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; Ontario Government. (1996). Future Goals for Ontario Colleges and Universities. <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/discussi/postdeng.html>: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

<sup>15</sup> Kuh, G. Gonyea, R. Shoup, R & Kinze, J. 2007. "Promoting persistence and success of underrepresented students: lessons for teaching and learning" in *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. 21-38

<sup>16</sup> Ascough, Richard. "Learning (About) Outcomes: How the Focus on Assessment Can Help Overall Course Design." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education / Revue Canadienne D'enseignement Supérieur* 41, no. 2 (2011): 22-61. 47,51. 54

that the learning might be demonstrated in a variety of ways.”<sup>17</sup>. Recognizing this inextricable relationship, students believe faculty should be responsible for course assessment within the broader framework of Queen’s learning outcomes and quality assurance processes.

**Principle 8: The University should rely on accurate and robust statistical and qualitative mechanisms to evaluate teaching, for the purposes of reviewing performance, providing feedback on course design, and identifying areas of improvement**

Students, the University and the Faculty stand to benefit from the use of accurate and robust statistical mechanisms to review teaching performance. As providers of a publicly subsidized good, universities should respond to students requests around the quality of education; the service faculty are providing. Student voices are valuable in the review tools alongside statistical mechanisms when it comes to evaluating delivery in the classroom and identifying areas of improvement. Faculty experience career barriers when they choose to be innovative with course design; it increases workload, there is a cultural stigma attached to investing time in teaching, and teaching evaluations often are worse for new, unpolished courses. When teaching performance evaluations are not precise, data driven and evidence based, Faculty are at risk of not having good work be recognized. As such, the University should be making decisions that involve performance metrics only based on the most accurate data possible, in order to maximize efficiency and fairness of all performance-related processes.

The critical importance of the teaching mission to the success of Queen’s as a high quality, transformative university necessitates the use of sound review mechanisms. Students know that the quality of the educational experience can depend more on the teaching methods, instructional technology and attitudes of students, than the number of students in the classroom. In fact, a 2011 survey of Ontario undergraduates showed that students would direct resources to training for instructors over smaller class sizes by a wide margin<sup>18</sup>. If Queen’s is serious about being a high quality institution, it must be able to evaluate statistically and soundly its teaching methods, instructional technology, and areas for improvement therein.

**Concerns**

**Concern 5: Student-faculty ratios continue to increase rapidly as a result of enrolment increase and poor faculty renewal.**

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<sup>17</sup> "Learning Outcomes." Faculty of Arts and Science. January 1, 2015. Accessed April 28, 2015. <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/staff-and-faculty/teaching/learning-outcomes>.

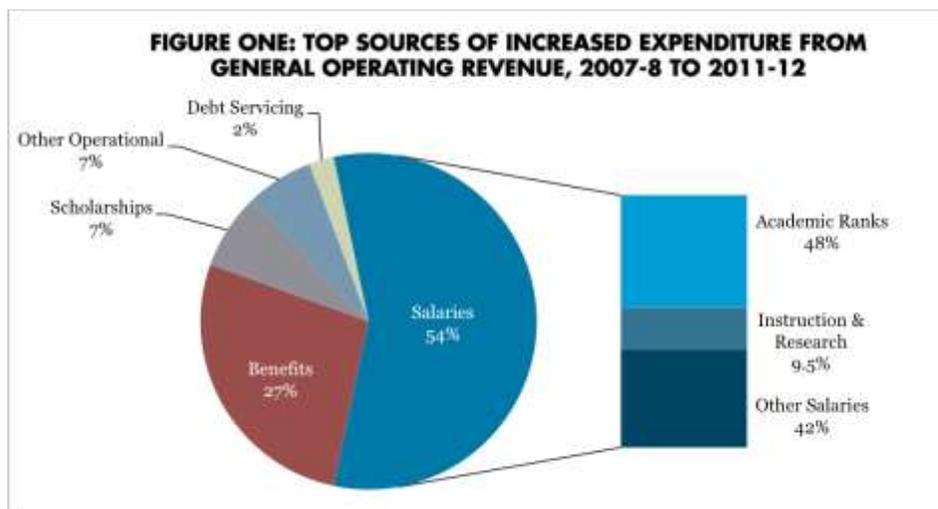
<sup>18</sup> Calculated from: The 2011 OUSA Post-Secondary Student Survey

Since 1990, the student-faculty ratio in Ontario has climbed from 18:1 to 27:132<sup>19</sup>. Since 2005, the average number of faculty in the province has not increased, even in the face of unprecedented enrolment and a rising investment in faculty salaries and benefits.

In an effort to combat these trends, the university has hired more part-time and contract lecturers to educate students. Not infrequently, these individuals possess fewer qualifications than tenured faculty, and their hiring process is considerably less stringent while they are not offered the same compensation and job security as tenured faculty members.

In many senses, this is not a sustainable method of addressing current faculty shortages. The University's Academic Plan acknowledges the "serious threat posed by financial pressures and increasing student/faculty ratios on the quality of the undergraduate learning experience."<sup>20</sup> The shift in the educational landscape towards climbing class sizes sees students increasingly removed from their educators, and the detriment to the overall quality of education at Queen's is evidenced in our poor faculty engagement<sup>21</sup>.

Faculty renewal is jeopardized when additional funding intended to improve the quality of instruction is used instead to maintain the salaries and benefits of existing faculty and administrators. In 2005 and onward when the McGuinty government invested 6.2 billion into the PSE system, 70% of that investment went into salaries and benefits. Approximately half of that stayed with existing faculty – and despite the new money, our student-faculty ratio has gotten worse. When 70 cents out of every new dollar spent on per student funding since 2007 has gone towards salary-related costs (see Figure 1), it becomes extraordinarily difficult for our university to hire adequate faculty<sup>22</sup>.



<sup>19</sup> Ontario Confederation of Faculty Associations. OCUFA Briefing Note, Issue: Faculty Shortages. (Toronto: OCUFA, August 2011).

<sup>20</sup> (Queen's University 2011, 4)

<sup>21</sup> NSSE Scores, 2015

<sup>22</sup> Canadian Association of University Business Officers. Financial Information of Universities and Colleges. Taken from report years 2007 to 2012

**Concern 6: The current faculty complement lacks diversity in age and career progression, and many equity-seeking groups remain underrepresented.**

Students are concerned that the advanced career progression and underrepresentation of equity-seeking groups across Queen's faculty complement constitute a genuine challenge to the academic mission and future prosperity of the university. In the absence of faculty at various stages of their career, the institution faces fundamental challenges surrounding faculty renewal and turnover. It is equally disconcerting that diversity is only promising among term adjuncts, who also experience poor pay and job security, compounding problems with privilege in our University<sup>23</sup>. It must be acknowledged by both faculty and the administration that relegating a generation of faculty to unstable and low-income employment will have serious negative consequences for the immediate and longer-term future of our institution. Potential faculty from underrepresented groups, or with limited financial and social support, will be dis-incentivized from selecting academic careers. Moreover, those who do choose this career path will be fighting against the multiple structural academic and social barriers if circumstances do not change. Currently, Queen's loses out on important voices, and when students from similar conditions do not see themselves reflected in academic staff, this inevitably compounds issues of participation and success for underrepresented students<sup>24</sup>.

**Concern 7: The institutional and sector-wide focus on research has outpaced support for the university's teaching mission, inhibiting Queen's in its ability to operate as a balanced academy.**

Research is too heavily incentivized, both internally at Queen's and externally through the province. Consequently, Faculty both choose, and feel obligated, to put more focus and energy into their research duties than their teaching duties across the academy. These results can be attributed to the fact that federal funding for research saw large influxes in the 1990s, and thus began a process of incentivizing institutions to strategically prioritize and invest in more research<sup>25</sup>. Between 1999 and 2004, federal funding for research more than doubled, and 2014 saw an additional 1.5 billion in research funding with no increase to education funding for universities<sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup>. Money in the system shows that

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<sup>23</sup> (Moody, Supporting Women and Minority Faculty 2004)

<sup>24</sup> Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. 2015. Those Who Can, Teach. Submission to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and other partners in Ontario PSE, Toronto: <http://www.ousa.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/OUSA-Teaching-and-Learning-Submission-Draft.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Snowdon, Ken. "The public funding of higher education: is it sustainable?" 2010 Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) Conference: Financing Higher Education in the Current Economic Climate. (Toronto: OCUFA, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Canadian Association of University Teachers. 2010-2011 CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada. (Ottawa: CAUT, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Finance. Canadian Federal Budget. 2014. Government of Canada.

while research's share of university budgets has increased from 14 to 21 per cent in Ontario, the proportion of the total budget consumed by operating expenses has decreased from 82 to 75 per cent<sup>28</sup>. This clearly "indicates that proportionally more resources are being devoted to research and fewer to the day to day operations of the university"<sup>29</sup> This trend is not slowing down, with the 2015 Economic Action Plan allocating more than 1.5 billion over five years to "renewed science, technology and innovation... including long term strategic research"<sup>30</sup>. This overwhelming disparity between funding for research and support for quality teaching creates a climate that creates an urgent imperative for Queen's to remember its teaching mission.

In response to this changing context, Queen's has shifted its strategic direction and resource allocation further in the direction of research. Moreover, we are operating in a cost restrained environment, with large solvency deficits and deferred maintenance costs compounding the consequences of faculty and staff salary increases. Within this environment, an overestimation of the need to spend time and money on research not only inhibits Queen's strategic direction, but jeopardizes our finances. The indirect costs associated with research intensity have become a critical institutional consideration: "Unfunded indirect costs of sponsored research have been estimated by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) to be nearly 2 billion nationally. While a federal Indirect Costs Program (ICP) exists to help mitigate the unfunded costs of research, some estimate that ICP funding only covers one half the estimated indirect costs of conducting research"<sup>31 32</sup>. In conversations at *The Forum: A Conference between Students and Faculty*, professors shared narratives with students about the struggle to meet tenure, hiring, and research obligations while simultaneously providing a rewarding classroom experience to students<sup>33</sup>. These priorities have left little time for teaching and mentoring students.

Absent an unequivocal acknowledgement from the administration and the faculty that the over-prioritization of research has had a deleterious effect on the other half of our balanced academy, the University will increasingly struggle in seeking to fulfil its core teaching mission.

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<sup>28</sup> Snowdon & Associates. Revisiting Ontario College and University Revenue Data. (Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Eftekarpour, Amir, Allison Williams, Julie Flesch, Spencer Graham, and Sean Madden. 2014. System Vision. Policy Paper, Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance.

<sup>30</sup> Oliver, Joe "STRONG LEADERSHIP: A BALANCED-BUDGET, LOW-TAX PLAN FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND SECURITY" 2015, Government of Canada (Ottawa) <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2015/docs/plan/budget2015-eng.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> (Eftekarpour et. Al., 2014, pg.33)

<sup>32</sup> Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Submission to the Federal Review of the Indirect Costs Program. 2013

<sup>33</sup> Compiled by: Castel, Nicholas; Wheeler-Hughes, Nicholas; Edited by Zarzour, Colin; *The Forum: A Conversation between Students and Faculty Report*, Academic Affairs Commission of the Alma Mater Society; release forthcoming in 2015

**Concern 8: Faculty workload has shifted substantially away from teaching over time, with workload pressures causing faculty to alter their pedagogy and methods of assessment in ways that negatively affect the quality of undergraduate education.**

Larger workloads and decreased funding inevitably lead to changes in our academy. If space, faculty, and support scale appropriately, we can enrich our learning environment and capitalize on economies of scale savings<sup>34</sup>. However, increased enrolment often means that decisions are based on saving time and money at the expense of accurate assessment. Increasingly, there has been a rise in multiple choice and Scantron usage in class assessment<sup>35</sup>. However, the material being assessed is not changing, nor is it becoming less complex or diverse. No one solution for assessment will fit all courses, and students should expect unique, fair, and accurate assessment methods based on mastery of learning outcomes in a course if they are to truly engage with the material presented.

**Concern 9: Faculty are given responsibility for assessment without any guarantee that they will have the training required to meaningfully explore a variety of existing assessment theories and data, and no professional oversight over their fulfillment of these responsibilities.**

As with any job, the dispensation of a responsibility should come with some mechanism to assess the efficacy with which a task has been completed. This is fundamental to ensuring that course quality is high, student grades are accurate and that the professors have the support they require in selecting course assessment styles. Studies demonstrate that a lack of well selected and rigorous assessment tied to learning outcomes will, “inhibit attempts by the instructor and the student to comprehend the effectiveness of the learning process (Bain, 2004; Mager, 1972)”<sup>36</sup>. As well, Queen’s students report that assessment currently does not accurately reflect their learning<sup>37 38</sup>. At present time, students believe that insufficient mechanisms exist to ensure assessment is accurately reflective of their learning.

**Concern 10: At present time, faculty have the ability to “buy out” their teaching load.**

The Collective Agreement affords faculty the opportunity to assume a “reduced responsibility appointment” whereby they agree to a certain reduction in salary and benefits in exchange for the ability to alter the “proportion of [their] efforts devoted to each of teaching, research, and service”. Students are concerned that faculty have the ability to forgo a portion of their compensation as a justification for ceasing activity in a fundamental

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<sup>34</sup> to an extent – we should remain a mid-sized institution for the sake of our community as well. The Rising Tide by the Alma Mater Society speaks to this.

<sup>35</sup> (Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance 2015)

<sup>36</sup> (Ascough 2011, 54)

<sup>37</sup> Concerns around assessment, grades and course design were among the top cases brought to the AMS this year, as seen in: Fedchun, Kathryn; Zarzour Colin; Academic Grievance Centre Report, 2015

<sup>38</sup> 2014-15 AMS Academic Affairs Commission Goal Plan Survey. Students reported frequent issues with grading and assessment in addition to identifying the need for professors to have increased pedagogical training

area of their job. In light of the heavy emphasis on research in larger institutional incentives around renewal, tenure, promotion, and the appointment of Chairs, this opens up a clear avenue for faculty to forsake their basic duties surrounding teaching in an effort to comply with the heavy research expectations surrounding research activity. Students are concerned that this provision has contributed to the disproportionate focus on the research mission of the university amongst tenured and tenure-track faculty.

**Concern 11: Contract instructors currently assume a large portion of university teaching duties, often for little pay and poor job security.**

Permanent positions have been steadily decreasing and temporary positions have been increasing as a percentage of University labour forces<sup>39</sup>. It is also clear that these contract instructors have less job security and university investment than other staff<sup>40</sup>. They are not paid to attend sessions at the Centre for Teaching and Learning and are not paid necessarily to accommodate the necessary amount of student needs per course. This means a large and growing portion of teaching duties at Queen's are being fulfilled by a poorly supported, unstable and untrained body of workers. This is integrally threatening to the mission, reputation, and quality of this university, and is unfair to both students and contract staff.

**Concern 12: Currently, research excellence may compensate for a lack of focus on teaching excellence in the process for renewal, tenure, and promotion.**

Teaching youth from childhood through to early adulthood in elementary and secondary education requires a university degree in Ontario. Although University education is indeed different, the point to be made is that teaching is a difficult, intensive and incredibly important task. Professors are asked to develop a course and all of its constituent parts, to keep it up to date, and to deliver it in a meaningful way that achieves learning outcomes. They are asked to be front line support for students, certainly academically and often in other aspects as well. Developing a student-teacher relationship is a personal one; a responsibility with great influence.

Bluntly, this task is not treated with the importance it should. Although the Agreement states: "Research, scholarly or creative activity shall compensate for a lesser involvement in the other area of service provided that there has been a satisfactory level of contribution in all areas", Faculty engagement scores on our NSSE are still decreasing, students are frequently appealing grades and concerned with assessment strategies and frequently report concerns with professors' teaching ability<sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup>. Even in instances where required teaching responsibilities are minimal, one's ability to research does not automatically grant

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<sup>39</sup> Field, C. C., Jones, G. A., Karram Stephenson, G., & Khoyetsyan, A. (2014). The "Other" University Teachers: Non-

Full-Time Instructors at Ontario Universities. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario

<sup>40</sup> (Field, et al. 2014)

<sup>41</sup> NSSE Scores, 14/15

<sup>42</sup> AMS Goal Plan Survey; AGC Report

the ability to be a teacher. As such, for all hiring, retention, renewal, tenure and promotion for positions that require a teaching load, research excellence must not compensate for a lack in teaching excellence.

**Concern 13: At present time, the bonus points awarded to faculty for teaching excellence on a yearly basis do not provide sufficient means to reward or incentivize good teaching practice.**

As provided for in the current collective agreement, the modal career development and merit adjustment award was \$2,877.00 in 2011, rising to just over \$3000 in 2014-15<sup>43</sup>. Particularly given that this award constitutes the sole provision in the agreement whereby compensation is linked to performance, the incentive introduced is insufficient; while students support the linkage of compensation to merit, the current allocation in the present collective agreement is insignificant as a percentage of total compensation. Students are concerned that, unless merit adjustments constitute a more significant component of faculty salaries, there is an absence of adequate recognition of the importance of good performance in the faculty compensation model.

**Concern 14: Despite the many evaluative requirements for granting tenure, very few applicants are denied tenure under the current system.**

Although it's not *necessarily* a problem that Queen's has many successful tenure applicants, several collaborating factors make such a drastic statistic problematic. Firstly, it is known that there are cultural but also financial and professional hierarchies between professors who spend most of their time teaching and professors who choose to primarily teach. NSSE data show that overall, our faculty engagement is far too low<sup>44</sup>. Lastly, although it is not popularly acknowledged, students frequently encounter professors who are not achieving the teaching excellence hoped for in university messaging and strategic documents<sup>45</sup>. It is therefore concerning that our data suggests that the vast majority of tenured faculty should be meeting our most stringent evaluative requirements when we know that must not be the case.

**Concern 15: Teaching Evaluations at Queen's suffer from misinformation and cultural obstacles that pose a threat to teaching quality, institutional reputation and student voice.**

In recent years, students have raised concerns regarding the USAT. In particular, they have identified issues surrounding the seriousness with which student complaints are taken, a lack of understanding about the role the tool plays, and the lack of accountability or follow through with any of the feedback. Moreover, students are concerned with the institutional commitment to genuinely engaging with the evaluation process. In a detailed report on

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<sup>43</sup> CBA p. 212.

<sup>44</sup> NSSE Scores 14/15

<sup>45</sup> AMS Goal Plan Survey 2014; AGC Report, 2015; Academic Affairs Commission Focus Groups 2014

student evaluations, HEQCO found that faculty and administration were skeptical of students' abilities to assess their teachers; some faculty even expressed "outright hostility"<sup>46</sup>. Those who try to emphasize the importance of student feedback at Queen's and students who pursue concerns and grievances with courses through faculty systems experience this as well<sup>47</sup>.

HEQCO states firmly that notions about the inability of students to assess teaching or provide objective, valuable feedback have been "frequently disproved...these negative perceptions of evaluations can lead faculty to discount their importance and hinder teaching and course development efforts"<sup>48</sup>. A conversation that continues to "generate and perpetuate the mythology and misperceptions about [student validity and objectivity in] course evaluations" only serves to weaken students' trust of feedback mechanisms, jeopardize quality assurance at Queen's, and silence student voices where they have been proven to be valuable.<sup>49</sup>

Though students should not be made to evaluate content or pedagogically analyze teaching goals, they have been extensively evidenced to be "reliable and effective at evaluating teaching behaviours (for example, presentation, clarity, organization and active learning techniques), the amount they have learned, the ease or difficulty of their learning experience in the course, the workload in the course and the validity and value of the assessment used in the course"<sup>50</sup>. In fact, in some areas, literature suggests that students might be more accurate than faculty peer or administrative evaluation, because "peers and administrators are generally more knowledgeable of the content and thus cannot necessarily empathize with the views of students who may be having problems"<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf 2008)

<sup>47</sup> The AMS undertook consultation this year with Academic Caucus, a group of student leaders in academic advocacy on the topic, as well as examining case data from the Academic Grievance Centre.

<sup>48</sup> (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf 2008, 14,15)

<sup>49</sup> Many, many studies state the importance, value and uncontestable ability of students to provide accurate and valuable course and instructor feedback of varying kinds. Some of these include:

Goldschmid, M.L. (1978). The evaluation and improvement of teaching in higher education. *Higher Education*, 7(2), 221-245.

Nasser, F. & Fresko, B. (2002). Faculty view of student evaluation of college teaching. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 27(2), 187-198.

Ory, J.C. and K. Ryan (2001). How do student ratings measure up to a new validity framework? *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 109, 27-44.

Wachtel, H.K. (1998). Student evaluation of college teaching effectiveness: A brief review. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 29(2), 191-121.

Wagenaar, T. C. (1995). Student Evaluation of Teaching: Some Cautions and Suggestions. *Issues. Teaching Sociology*, 23(1), 64-68.

<sup>50</sup> Gravestock, P, and E Gregor-Greenleaf. 2008. *Student Course Evaluations: Research, Models and Trends*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

<sup>51</sup> Theall, M., & Franklin, J. (2001). Looking for bias in all the wrong places: A search for truth or a witch hunt in student ratings of instruction? In M. Theall, P.C Abrami, & L.A. Mets (Eds.), *The student ratings debate: Are they valid? How can we best use them?* [Special issue]. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 109, 45-56.

**Concern 16: The USAT tool suffers from a number of flaws and is poorly utilized by departments.**

The USAT is intended to measure a professor's performance while also providing a formal avenue for students to communicate constructive feedback to professors. Teaching evaluations are vital for quality assurance as well as positive growth, expansion and finessing of courses and teaching styles. Without strong teaching evaluations, a culture of constructive progress will not take hold. Currently, the USAT is a complex, multi-layered set of questions with no assistive expertise or support included in the designing of a professor's own USAT. Data and the interplay between the questions is not analyzed regularly. This is especially concerning for adjunct professors who are paid per course, but not paid to spend the additional time learning how to design and analyze their USAT.

In addition, the USAT has had operational concerns raised by all stakeholders in the Queen's ecosystem. Issues of gender binaries in the questions, how actionable the question results are, lack of buy in from all members, and problems both of USAT design and question analysis at the faculty end have persisted over time. Students are concerned that flaws in the tool and its application have created barriers to the meaningful consideration of student feedback in course delivery.

**Concern 17: Teaching Evaluations are released by opt-in instead of restricting by opt-out.**

Educated engagement of students with teaching evaluations has been a key priority for the AMS since 1988. However, students sharply began disengaging when the Queens University Evaluation System for Teaching and Courses tool (QUEST) was moved to an opt-in release policy. This drove release rates and the ability of students to engage on the issue from 96% to 56% in a matter of 4 years. Faculty were not against publishing their results, but rather the time-cost of opting in caused this drop in rates. This practice perpetuates a lack of transparency and severely damages student engagement with the evaluation. Results cannot be published and students cannot see the results, rendering the tool essentially invisible to them. This in turn makes it incredibly difficult to acquire valuable student feedback because students cannot perceive any stake in investing in the evaluation.

***Recommendations***

**Recommendation 5: The University should hire teaching-focused faculty in the tenure-track stream to reduce student-faculty ratios and increase the quality of teaching.**

In a survey of 400 Queen's students, many respondents felt that faculty members should increase the percentage of work allocated to teaching versus research and service, on

average increasing teaching loads of all faculty by at least 5%<sup>52</sup>. In the same survey, 64% of students insisted that teaching being adequately focused, trained and supported in regards to teaching was the single most important academic priority for their student government, with 88% agreeing with this statement as their first or second priority<sup>53</sup>. It is clear that students believe faculty who want to pursue a career in teaching should not experience extra structural or cultural obstacles for that choice.

In addition, with the current allocation of faculty workload between teaching and research, the faculty complement at Queen's is insufficient in addressing the instructional demands of current class sizes<sup>54</sup>.

The most sustainable solution to this problem is to hire more tenure-track faculty with a focus on teaching, ensuring high quality instruction for all students. In fact, if every university in Ontario were to convert 10 per cent of their full-time faculty positions into teaching stream appointments teaching three full course equivalents per academic year, OUSA estimates that the system could increase its productivity equivalent to a new investment \$300 million in new faculty<sup>55</sup>. Further, the post-secondary system is currently employing an incredibly expensive and inefficient instruction model. Much of Ontario's undergraduate education is delivered by fulltime faculty who are expected to devote as much time to research as to teaching.

Students believe that Queen's requires a plan to hire new tenure-track faculty in a teaching-focused stream, allowing these faculty members to focus more resources on instruction while still pursuing research free from the extreme pressures to deliver research outcomes that faculty regularly experience. Tenure track teaching-focused faculty will drastically improve students' university experience by lowering class sizes, increasing the instructional capacity of institutions and providing high quality and focused instruction.

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<sup>52</sup> 2014-15 AMS Academic Affairs Commission Goal Planning Survey

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> More and more frequently, requests for support, meetings, extra information and accommodations between students and professors are being reported to the AGC because professors cannot afford the time.

<sup>55</sup> (Eftekarpour, et al. 2014)

### Teaching Focused Faculty: The Conversation So Far:

Discussions have been proposed over variance on the 40/40/20 split of teaching, research and service. Several issues in the current discourse on the topic will be raised here, and we will explore two models appeal to Queen's students.

"We Already Have Teaching-Focused Faculty" – This line of reasoning locates continuing adjuncts as an existing solution to faculty workload dilemmas. However, this paper identifies many problems with increasing non-tenure track faculty. In addition to the concerns around career growth and job security, no research funding can be problematic for professors who want to advance a research portfolio within a teaching stream.

"Any Faculty must have a 'Full Range' of responsibilities" – Though not clearly delineated in the Agreement, this is understood to mean teaching, research and service. A tenure track faculty may want to engage on all aspects of the university community in the form of these three allocations, but there is no existing rationale as to why this should be mandated. Principal Woolf also suggests in "Where Next", that there is no reason that the balance between research and teaching could not oscillate over a professor's career.



### 80/20

Under an 80/20 system, we would be doubling teaching efficiency at any one time. Arguments have been made that 80% leaves insufficient time to fulfill the full range research mandate as well. Though it is not clear what constitutes a 'sufficient' percentage of time allocated to any of the three areas of labour for a professor, this argument is a fair one. That is why in order to implement an 80/20 teaching-focused faculty position, there should be mechanisms built into the model that allow for altering of workloads over time, throughout a career. Good course development requires research, and so the research required to successfully deliver the increase in courses may very well fulfill the 'full range' argument.

### 60/20/20

This model has long been argued for by students in Ontario (Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance 2015). Queen's students who indicated they would like to see an increase in time allocation on average thought the portion should be 60%. This allows a slight but meaningful increase to teaching loads, increasing productivity – each professor would teach at least 3 full-course equivalents per year. Research in this model is most beneficial if it is pedagogical in nature. It is important that these positions be implemented broadly, with the ability for faculty to switch between streams. This is to allow teaching-focused faculty to be normalized within the academy, initiating a cultural shift towards viewing professors dedicated to the teaching mission of the university as equals to their research-focused counterparts.

**Recommendation 6: The University should continue to prioritize hiring equity in future appointments for tenure and tenure-track positions, and should seek to hire faculty in early stages of their career.**

This paper has already outlined the necessity for student diversity to be represented in faculty diversity, for differing perspectives and experiences in the classroom and in the research directions of this university. Hiring should be focused on building equity strategically where the university is deficient, especially age, gender and race<sup>56</sup>. Equity must be a driving philosophy behind all hiring decisions, rather than one requirement of a separate process.

**Recommendation 7: The University should remove provisions that allow faculty to “buy out” their teaching obligations, instead introducing mechanisms that allow faculty to have more flexibility in establishing a balance between teaching and research throughout their career.**

In his visioning document *Where Next*, Principal Woolf comments on the need to be forward thinking about the allocation of faculty time towards teaching and research. He articulates: “We must also re-examine and perhaps even recalibrate the balance between teaching and research. As I suggested last year at a Brown Bag Lunch organized by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, perhaps it is time to revisit the traditional 40/40/20 model of faculty members’ time split among teaching, research and service. What if it could be varied over the course of a career, as is now done to some extent in some Faculties?”

Students are supportive of further conversations surrounding the allocation of faculty time across their various spheres of responsibility. In particular, the AMS recommends that the university engage with faculty around the potential to create a more organic and flexible balance between teaching and research over the course of an academic career. This discussion should occur alongside more formal discussions surrounding the implementation of teaching-focused faculty, and should be undertaken with the objective of replacing the current practice of “buying out” teaching loads with a more holistic vision for the introduction of flexibility into faculty workload across the university.

**Recommendation 8: Where contract instructors are hired, the University should establish institution-wide standards for the appointment process coupled with the introduction of minimum guarantees surrounding compensation and job security.**

Currently when a tenured position opens up, the advertising for the job can often span provinces and countries. The panels and process for selecting the faculty member are in depth and extensive. The process is strong and, notwithstanding other areas of concern identified in this paper, generally provides Queen’s with high quality faculty. The process for term adjuncts, comparatively, involves posting the job on a website for ten days (or less,

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<sup>56</sup> SEEC Data

depending on exemptions), sending emails out on departmental listservs, and overall is a less rigorous process.

Queen's must raise our standards for appointment for term adjuncts and couple the increased standards with increases in job security and minimum compensation guarantees.

**Recommendation 9: A lack of success or competitiveness in teaching metrics should no longer be able to be compensated for by success or competitiveness in research in the renewal, tenure, and promotion process.**

Studies demonstrate that students notice lack of expertise in teaching<sup>57</sup>. In order to ensure that Queen's is hiring people to teach who have the necessary skills to do the job, teaching skills must be viewed as a non-negotiable requirement if the position being hired for will be expected to teach. This stands for all renewal, tenure, and promotion processes. The argument may be raised that bringing on an exceptional researcher (the Nobel Laureate is a frequent example) that an exception should be made. However, if the argument is founded on the belief that exceptional research benefits the Queen's community broadly, then the most direct example of that is how the research strengthens the rest of the Laureate's (grad and colleagues. Tangible teaching skills are a basic requirement if that connection is what is so valuable about a renowned researcher. Put bluntly, it is a waste to hire an exceptional researcher if they cannot prove that they will be able to communicate and share their expertise in an effective, pedagogical manner.

**Recommendation 10: The University should protect and reward innovative course design through strong metrics and temporarily waiving the USAT form for that course.**

Specifically, this should be done by creating a program allowing instructors developing cutting-edge course offerings to temporarily suspend the use of USAT data in decisions regarding tenure and promotion. This would be contingent upon a successful application to the relevant Department Head. During this period, the instructor should be required to meet regularly with the Centre for Teaching and Learning to ensure students continue to receive a high-quality experience, as their voices are being lost in the waiving of USAT data. Alternative modes of assessment besides the USAT could still be valuable and implemented, especially if the professor wants robust feedback on their innovative course.

**Recommendation 11: The compensation gradient for "special points" should be substantially steeper, with higher expectations for full achievement.**

Students believe that any compensation package for faculty must adequately recognize and incentivize strong performance in teaching and research. For excellence in these areas to be appropriately valued across the university, it is imperative that it be linked to

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<sup>57</sup> (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf 2008), corroborated by the AMS Academic Affairs Commission Goal Plan Survey

compensation in a meaningful and impactful manner. As such, students recommend that the “special points” assume a larger component of total compensation for faculty, with commensurate attention being committed to improving the evaluative process for the granting of full or partial merit.

**Recommendation 12: The JCAA should strike a task force to examine the decision making process for the granting of tenure, with specific focus on the expectations currently laid out in the RTP process and how they are evaluated. Students should be included as members of this committee.**

Students believe that further conversations are required on the topic of the process and metrics surrounding renewal, tenure, and promotion. This will ensure that our standards for RTP can evolve alongside the recommendations from the Teaching and Learning Action Plan, and the work of the other joint bodies in the school working on advancing the standards at Queen’s for RTP. The Provosts Advisory Committee on Teaching and Learning should be able to work on this issue and provide recommendations to the JCAA task force for consideration without being tied to the bargaining timeline.

**Recommendation 13: USATS should be publicly available except by a professor’s opt out. Any new mechanism should include data that can be always publicly available.**

For the purposes of reconnecting students to their stake in the USAT, and higher transparency of the practices and quality of our courses at Queen’s, it is essential to implement an opt-out policy on USATS. In addition to increasing student engagement and buy-in, it will be helpful in educating students about the USAT itself as well as assisting students in informed course selection. With any new teaching evaluation implemented, the notion that as much as possible should be transparent and available for student engagement should be key.

**Recommendation 14: The JCAA should strike a task force to re-examine the USAT system with the objective of making recommendations regarding the tool itself and the process for implementation and use. Students should be included as members of this committee.**

This project must have buy in from all members of the Queen’s community. There is much to be gained by having a strong student evaluation of teaching process in the school, one that is built with effort and consultation broadly and with the principles set forth here in mind. Queen’s academic representatives from all faculties decided this year in Academic Caucus to take on a multi-year consultation with students on the issue of teaching evaluations. This initiative is an indication of students’ frustrations with the current system, and a lack of movement on the issue thus far. A JCAA task force would bring all partners together and amplify the ability of the student consultation to achieve beneficial outcomes vis-à-vis the concerns raised in this paper.

### A Starting Point: Student Voices on Teaching Evaluations

In 1988 AMS releases a seminal report by The AMS Taskforce on Excellence in Teaching and among its many highly significant recommendations it calls for an examination of student teaching evaluation systems in all faculties in order “...to make recommendations about how to improve the professionalism and effectiveness and efficiency of these systems and about how to communicate the importance of an improved system to the student body”. It described the ideal system thusly:

- a) students would take the system very seriously and carefully consider their evaluations
- b) student questionnaires would be designed and analyzed by experts in this field
- c) a formal system of peer evaluation would exist
- d) problems identified in evaluations would be subject to follow-up procedures
- e) the results of both student and peer evaluations, given the added credibility attained from being professionally run, would be given proper weight in promotion and tenure decisions
- f) the results of student evaluations, having been consolidated and analyzed in a professional way, would be published and made available to all student

The AMS Assembly, a body of students elected from all undergraduate faculties at Queen’s has stated on Student Evaluation of Teaching:

*The AMS recognizes the importance of developing a strong teaching and learning environment. As the main beneficiaries of quality teaching, students are in a strong place to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom pedagogy. Student evaluations of professors are among the most effective methods of gathering feedback on teaching ability. The release of evaluation forms is essential for accountability and to ensure students are equipped to make educated choices in the course selection process.*

*It is the position of the AMS Assembly that:*

- *It is of the utmost importance that students continue to be involved in the evaluation of their classroom instructors and the effectiveness of their pedagogy.*
- *In order to foster accountability for the effectiveness of instruction in the institutions, there must be a semi-annual release of USAT results to the student body.*
- *The USAT release protocol should be immediately amended so that results are released by default and professors must apply to opt-out*
- *Professors have the right to withhold USAT results in certain circumstances, but the rationale for withholding this information must be approved through an established process.*

## Workload and Compensation

### *Principles*

**Principle 9: Faculty are fundamental contributors to the university, and should receive fair compensation and benefits for their work.**

Students recognize that faculty output in teaching and research is synonymous with our identity as a university. Given the defining contribution of faculty to the mission and mandate of Queen's, students believe they should receive appropriate compensation and benefits that are reflective of their engagement across the academy.

Given the importance of ensuring faculty compensation aligns with the important work they are undertaking, students are encouraged to see that Ontario boasts some of the best paid faculty in the world. According to a 2012 study, "For university faculty employed on a permanent (tenured and tenure-stream) basis at Ontario universities, average salaries have increased steadily across all ranks (assistant, associate and full professors) during the past decade (Chart 7). Comparative research of faculty salaries in 28 countries shows that Canadian fulltime professors are now the highest paid in the world (Altbach, Reisberg, Yudkevich, Androushchak, & Pacheco, 2012)."

Alongside this, faculty at Queen's are compensated well relative to the rest of the province. The Ontario Ministry of Finance Public Sector Salary Disclosure for 2013: Universities provides comparisons of compensation of professors on an internal and external basis, providing evidence that Queen's faculty is representative of some of the highest salaries in Ontario<sup>58</sup>.

Finally, evidence suggests that faculty working within the academy receive comparable pay to similarly qualified individuals in the private sector. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario produced a document analyzing salaries obtained by doctoral graduates, which concludes that, "incomes of university professors compare favourably with other professions..." It then continues on to assert that, "Of those Ontario doctoral graduates interested in pursuing non-faculty careers, 29 per cent believed they could make more money or that they would have better job opportunities outside academia (Desjardins, 2012)." (HEQCO salary document)

Students believe that faculty compensation in Ontario and at Queen's is an appropriate recognition of their important work at the university, adequately addressing both their contribution to the teaching and research missions of the institution and the value of the credentials they possess.

**Principle 10: All faculty at Queen's should have a fair and appropriate workload that contributes to the broader mission of the university.**

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<sup>58</sup> Cite.

As “the quintessential balanced academy”<sup>59</sup>, it is imperative that faculty contributions enhance the teaching and research missions of the Queen’s University. Pursuant to this goal, sufficient supports must exist to ensure faculty are not hindered in allocating their time effectively to both areas, and that achieving an effective combination of teaching and research excellence does not require any faculty member to assume an unmanageable workload. Students believe that an effective institutional balance of faculty time allocation between teaching and research is essential to our identity.

At present time, evidence indicates that Canadian faculty commit to a workload that is higher than average. That said, positive working conditions have contributed to high job satisfaction relative to other countries. In a study conducted by HEQCO, results concluded that:

“Canadian researchers comparing full-time academic staff around the world found that Canadian faculty work more hours but enjoy better job satisfaction than their counterparts in other countries (Weinrib et al., forthcoming). When Canadian junior and more senior faculty are compared on their levels of satisfaction, there are minimal differences, and they experience generally positive work environments (Jones et al. 2012, p. 189).”<sup>60</sup>

According to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, the efficient and effective allocation of faculty time is central to the productivity of a university. In a report released in 2012, HEQCO states, “The government of Ontario has signalled the need for Ontario’s publicly funded universities to seek additional productivity gains while sustaining access and quality in light of fiscal constraints... Implementation of [this direction] likely involves consideration of how universities deploy their faculty to meet their differentiated teaching and research mandates. In fact, a preliminary examination by HEQCO of productivity in the Ontario public postsecondary system suggested that how universities deploy their faculty resources may be one of the most promising opportunities for universities to increase their productivity.”<sup>61</sup> The AMS believes that the allocation of faculty workload has a transformative impact on our institution, and should be an area of careful consideration going forward.

**Principle 11: Faculty should receive recognition for the diversity of contributions they make in service of the Queen's community.**

Faculty are tremendous contributors to Queen’s University. Their teaching and research are central to the academy, and they influence the institution more broadly through university service and diverse areas of engagement with the Queen’s community. As teachers and subject matter experts, faculty are uniquely positioned to contribute to the broader learning environment. Students believe that faculty should receive recognition for

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<sup>59</sup> Principal.

<sup>60</sup> Maldonado, V., Wiggers, R., & Arnold, C. (2013). *So You Want to Earn a PhD? The Attraction, Realities, and Outcomes of Pursuing a Doctorate*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario

<sup>61</sup> HEQCO study.

the various manners in which they improve our campus environment, whether through traditional service on university committees or by assisting student groups as mentors and issue experts.

**Principle 12: Compensation packages should be structured such that year over year increases do not surpass the incremental increases in revenue of the operating budget in a given year.**

It is crucial that Queen's operates within the scope of its resources. To maintain the quality of programs and services across the institution, growth in certain areas cannot exceed the incremental increases in revenue for the university on a year over year basis. The practice of committing to expenditures in excess of new revenue in some areas of the budget diverts funding away from other parts of the university, and does not account for inflationary increase or the need for increased resources brought about by increases in enrolment. The result is resource starvation in all areas of an institution that are not subject to unhealthy cost inflation, with general quality suffering to accommodate the shortfall caused by uncontrolled growth.

Students have undeniably borne the burden of rising costs through increased tuition and fees, which in 2014 comprised 51% of university operating budgets<sup>62</sup>, up from 18% in 1988<sup>63</sup>. This burden is not solely due to provincial disinvestment in the PSE sector, either – in real dollars, operating budgets and provincial funding has increased, indicating alternative cost drivers, such as compensation packages that increase beyond incremental increases in revenue, ask students to pay the difference. The AMS therefore finds that new spending on compensation packages can only be justified if the revenue required to support it does not create unhealthy pressure on another area of the budget. Put simply, where Queen's does not generate new revenue in excess of that which will cover normal inflation and enrolment growth across the university, it should not commit to substantial increase in any form of spending, particularly in areas such as compensation that constitute a major component of the operating budget.

### *Concerns*

**Concern 18: Evidence suggests that workload varies substantially between faculty members.**

Although faculty workload is poorly measured, several studies analyzing this issue suggest that substantial inconsistencies exist across the academy. Despite the balance universities such as Queen's attempt to achieve between teaching and research, OUSA's recent

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<sup>62</sup> Based on comparisons of data from Snowdon & Associates, Revisiting University and College Revenue Data (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2009); Council of Ontario Universities, "Common University Data Ontario," 2014,

<sup>63</sup> Snowdon & Associates, Revisiting University and College Revenue Data (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2009) 29.

publication entitled *Educated Reform* cites the following: “A controversial report on academic instruction at the University of Texas at Austin found that well over half of the instructional activity was conducted by approximately 20 per cent of the total number of faculty employed by the institution, and that increases in teaching productivity could save the state nearly \$77 million.” York university sessionals report similar numbers, corroborating the Texas example<sup>64</sup>. Queen’s lacks data in this regard, and therefore is poorly positioned to engage constructively with its own faculty on workloads.

A recent HEQCO study used publicly available data in an attempt to measure workload variances between faculty, obtaining samples of teaching workloads, research volume and impact, and remuneration for assistant, associate and full professors in the economics, chemistry and philosophy departments at 10 Ontario universities. From this data, they concluded the following:

“...the average course load during the 2012 academic year was 2.8 courses. The average teaching load varied across disciplines – 3.0 for economics, 2.4 for chemistry and 2.9 for philosophy. We further observe differences in average course loads across the universities in our sample... Extrapolating from our sample, we suggest that if research non-active faculty members were to teach twice the teaching load of their research-active colleagues (as might be suggested by the typical 40%-40%-20% expectation of effort across teaching, research and service), the overall teaching capacity of the full-time professoriate in Ontario would be increased by about 10%, a teaching impact equivalent to adding about 1,500 additional faculty members across the province.” (HEQCO report)

While evidence is insufficient to comprehensively analyze the discrepancies in workload between faculty members, it is clear that some faculty are assuming a large burden between their teaching and research responsibilities, while others are undertaking a comparable teaching load with a greatly reduced research output. In particular, students are concerned that some faculty may be required to assume large workloads as a result of their colleagues contributing comparably less to the teaching mission of the university. To be clear: this is a problem because of the systemic obstacles in place that prevent teaching and research loads from being flexible throughout a career, from being perceived as equal, and from providing equal security.

**Concern 19: At present time, faculty workload is poorly measured, inhibiting the ability of the institution to respond to harmful discrepancies.**

In conducting a study related to faculty workload, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario articulates the lack of understanding within the sector of how time is allocated across the academy. According to this study, “Little is now known about how faculty members actually allocate their efforts across their two major requirements – teaching and research – and how these distributions may differ in institutions with different characters.”

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<sup>64</sup> Usher, Alex. Sessionals, Nursing Degrees, and the Meaning of University, March 9, 2015 Higher Education Strategy Associates <http://higheredstrategy.com/sessionals-nursing-degrees-and-the-meaning-of-university/>

(HEQCO report) The study goes on to assert that, “the reality is that there are few institutional data available that document teaching and research outputs of faculty, particularly teaching, and for the moment the data posted publicly are the best we can obtain to advance these analyses.” (HEQCO report) Particularly in light of the fundamental role faculty play within the university context, students are concerned that the lack of understanding of the distribution of their workload creates fundamental barriers in effective planning and resource allocation pursuant to the university’s stated goals.

**Concern 20: At present time, yearly increases in faculty compensation outpace the university's incremental increases in operating revenue, diverting resources away from the student experience.**

Queen’s is part of an Ontario-wide trend that has seen reinvestment in higher education diverted disproportionately towards increases in faculty compensation. This phenomenon is articulated by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, stating, “Expenditure on salaries comprises 60 per cent of total university expenditure, and 70 cents out of every new dollar spent on per student funding since 2007 has gone towards salary-related costs<sup>65</sup>... The majority of this increase has been in academic salaries and benefit costs, [with academic salaries comprising] 70 per cent of all salary spending at Ontario universities.”<sup>66</sup> This is shown in Figure One. While increases in tuition and government commitments should see renewed funding resulting in improvements across the university sector, disproportionate increases in salary and benefit costs – particularly for faculty – have assumed the lion’s share of any new commitment. This has occurred while students, deferred maintenance, and support services have not seen corresponding or adequate growth at Queen’s.

Benefit costs have experienced a parallel increase in recent years. This is another trend that has been reflect across Ontario, where, “the portion of the general operating expenditure devoted to benefits [over the past 5 years] has been increasing at approximately 9 per cent annually for a cumulative increase of 45 per cent over the last five years.” (OUSA System Vision) COU states clearly that this is coming at the expense of our ability to adequately educate students<sup>67</sup>.

The extent to which rising compensation constitutes a cost driver in the sector can be examined through the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI). This tool measures the the level of inflation across the post-secondary sector, and can be juxtaposed against CPI to ascertain universities’ cost pressures and changes in buying power on a year-to-year basis. HEPI offers an accurate measurement of increased cost inflation in the system because it is able to account for areas where yearly costs rise more rapidly than those measured in the

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<sup>65</sup> Cite System Growth.

<sup>66</sup> Council of Ontario Finance Officers. Financial Report of Ontario Universities: Fiscal Year 2011-12. (2013).  
Council of Ontario Universities.

Canadian Association of University Business Officers. Financial Information of Universities and Colleges.  
Taken from report years 2007 to 2012.

<sup>67</sup> 1 Council of Ontario Universities. Final Report of the Working Group on University Pension Plans. (Toronto, February 2010).

CPI. OUSA examines the impact of HEPI in 2013, observing, “while the percentage of growth in both the HEPI and the CPI were similar (1.6 per cent and 1.7 per cent respectively), the relative amounts of growth over the preceding 30 years highlight the cost pressures of the universities. Compared to the 1983 baseline, in which both the CPI and HEPI are valued similarly, the value of the things that constitute the CPI have increased 235 per cent while the value of the HEPI basket of goods has increased by almost 300 per cent.” (OUSA System Vision) This means that higher education is less affordable, both to fund, and to purchase. Arguments about increase in value conflate inflation in salaries and the perceived increase in value of an expensive product – namely the construction of the university degree as a Veblen good. This perceived value corresponding with the price increases does not mitigate the negative impacts on students from having to pay inflated costs for a university degree.

### **A Word from OUSA: HEPI and the Ontario Context**

In its *System Vision* paper, OUSA examines the effect of HEPI in the Ontario context to illustrate the impact of rising costs.

*“The self-referential nature of the HEPI, in which the salaries of staff within the basket are only compared to themselves, can be misleading in understanding the cost pressures. While salaries may be increasing 2 to 3 per cent within the HEPI (not incomparable with CPI), it is important to remember that these salaries are higher than the broader buying power considered in the CPI and so represent higher numbers. Further, in Ontario, staff and faculty salaries are subject to unique pressures and considerations beyond the HEPI. Salaries compose the largest part of any post-secondary price index (60 to 75 per cent in most measures), and so the Ontario salary context is important to consider. Ontario’s senior university administrative staff have been operating under a compensation freeze for several years, and will be for the near future. Ontario’s faculty, however, are among the highest paid in the world. Further, due to aggressive recruiting from outside of Ontario and the demands created by both 2003’s double cohort and the government’s growth agendas have offered faculty a unique bargaining position around salaries and benefits: this has meant that faculty were able to negotiate larger than average packages; have been able to use those historic negotiations in ongoing ones; and that even years where percentage salary increases have been comparable to general price indices, they have been comparably larger in terms of magnitude.*”

Despite an influx in funding that has occurred as a result of increasing tuition, fees, government funding, and alternative revenue streams, students have yet to feel the direct benefit of this investment. According to OUSA, “Total expenditures for 2009/10 can also be examined according to sub-categories. An analysis of total university expenditure in 2009/10 by function reveals that salary and benefit costs accounted for nearly 60 per cent of university spending. In contrast, the next largest category, buildings, contributed only 6.8 per cent to the total. This shows that changes in salary and benefit expenditures have the most significant impact on the overall expenditure profile of universities, much more so than any of the other categories.”<sup>68</sup> The AMS is concerned that, despite unprecedented contributions on the part of students to the operating budget of the university, the budgetary pressures surrounding salary and benefit costs have resulted in the structural diversion of funding away from its fundamental purpose: the student learning experience.

**Concern 21: The practice of hiring adjuncts to augment teaching capacity in response to insufficient allocation of faculty time causes the university to pay twice for the same service.**

The growing reliance on sessional instructors to meet the teaching capacity of universities is a pervasive discussion across the sector. Alex Usher touches on this dialogue in a piece entitled *Sessionals, Nursing Degrees, and the Meaning of University*, remarking, “One thing the labour disputes in Ontario highlight is the amount of undergraduate teaching done by non-tenure track professors. Numbers on this are hard to come by, and poorly defined when they are. York sessionals claim to be teaching 42% of all undergraduate classes... it is not uncommon at larger universities to at least see between 40 and 50% of all undergraduate credit hours ... taught by sessionals.” (Alex Usher, “Sessionals, Nursing Degrees, and the Meaning of University”)

Students are concerned that sessional instructors are not be subject to the same stringent requirements around hiring and evaluation, and may lack adequate quality assurance measures as a result. OUSA addresses this issue in their “System Vision” paper, stating, “Increasingly, adjunct and sessional professors are being hired to meet the growing demand for undergraduate teaching, a less-than desirable trend as these instructors ... have less experience teaching and may be balancing multiple positions at various institutions, making them largely unavailable to consult with students outside of the classroom.” At The Forum conference, Queen’s faculty told students about the struggles to adequately service students in their courses, corroborating the above findings. Whereas the hiring, renewal, tenure, and promotion practices for tenured and tenure-track faculty are rigorous and frequent, similar requirements are absent for contract faculty, leaving inadequate mechanisms to ensure quality delivery and insufficient recourse in the event of poor job performance.

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<sup>68</sup> OUSA “Rising Costs: A Look at Spending at Ontario’s Universities”

Beyond this, sessional instructors lack the job security and compensation commensurate with the important work they are performing at Queen's. According to a HEQCO report, "Further, part-time and contract faculty have poor job security, are often under-compensated and report low levels of job satisfaction."<sup>69</sup> Alex Usher touches on these issues in a blog post entitled *Sessionals*, asserting that across the Ontario sector, "Wage data is scarce... though last year *University Affairs* produced a worthwhile survey on sessionals' working conditions. The numbers vary from place to place, but ... relying solely on sessional wages must be pretty challenging." (Alex Usher, "Sessionals").

Although sessionals may receive lower compensation than their tenure-track counterparts, their substantial and growing role in the university presents a financial burden. Students are concerned with the increasing financial commitment to positions of this nature, particularly recognizing that they are performing work that should already be performed by tenured faculty. In this light, the university is paying for the same service twice. Due to the nature of sessional faculty appointments and their relationship with the existing teaching mandate of faculty, the AMS does not believe that non-tenure track faculty are a sustainable option for addressing faculty shortages.

**Concern 22: At present time the definition of "university service" in the collective bargaining agreement is restricted to time spent serving on official university bodies.**

The collective agreement defines university services as: "participation in the work of the University through membership on appropriate bodies, for example, Department, Faculty, Senate, and University committees. Committee work such as serving on the Association's Executive or interdisciplinary or interdepartmental committees are also examples of such service"<sup>70</sup>. This definition does not acknowledge the breadth of organizational citizenship behaviours that faculty are engaged in to the benefit of the student experience and the overall learning environment at Queen's.

In failing to recognize the broader involvement of faculty in initiatives across campus, the agreement creates a disincentive for supporting groups that are not directly affiliated with the university and increases the opportunity cost of important faculty engagement as mentors and issue experts for students.

### ***Recommendations***

**Recommendation 15: The University should work with students and faculty to establish an effective mechanism for quantifying faculty workload with the objective of improving metrics for workload expectations in next round of collective bargaining.**

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<sup>69</sup> Vajoczki, S, Fenton, N, Menard, K and Pollon, D. (2011). Teaching Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. OUSA, Educated Reform, 18

<sup>70</sup> Collective Agreement, 15.5.1, QUFA and Queen's University

Students believe that the allocation of faculty time has a profound impact on the student learning experience, and must occur on the basis of established measurements and figures related to faculty workload. As such, students believe that the university should undertake to address the current lack of data or metrics surrounding faculty workload. In particular, the measurement of workload incurred with respect to graduate teaching load should encompass a large component of this discussion, addressing questions around the relative responsibilities associated with graduate supervision in research-based and course-based graduate programs. As well, this exercise should pursue the assessment of differences in workload that result from variable lecture sizes at the undergraduate level.

Through this process, the university should look to Western University's "Teaching Assistant Training Program" as an example of a method to begin quantifying improved metrics in workload and performance through training programs. In addition, the analytics being offered through the new Bright Space system provide an avenue for potential support. Overall, students recommend that the university work with faculty to better assess the allocation of faculty time across Queen's with the ultimate objective of improving allocation to best support the dual missions of teaching excellence and research intensity in future years.

**Recommendation 16: Total possible compensation increases for faculty as provided for in the collective agreement should not exceed the projected year-over-year revenue growth of the university operating budget.**

Students believe that the university must spend within its means to offer a high quality educational experience in a sustainable manner. It can be argued that the current rate of salary rise has been passed onto students in the form of increasing tuition, with increases in tuition above inflation subsidizing the growing salary mass of the institution. This is not to say that professors or executive heads are overpaid or undeserving of competitive compensation. It has already been cited in principle nine that on average, Ontario faculty are comparatively well-paid, competitively with the private sector<sup>71</sup> and perhaps especially so at Queen's. In a context where Canada's post-secondary expenditure leads the world, yet still struggles to invest adequately in quality for students, more must be done to bring inflating costs under control.

Students believe that the university has a responsibility to ensure spending increases in any substantial area of the budget do not exceed the budgeted incremental increases in revenue in a given year. A component of this requires a substantial focus on spending growth, of which faculty compensation is a key driver. Through this budgeting process, students believe the budgeted revenue must be determined in recognition of the need to rely on stable and predictable revenue sources, with realistic estimates in the context of declining government support. Further, the budgeting exercise should not pass the burden of unsustainable cost inflation along to students in the form of rising fees. Rather, the AMS believes that students, faculty, and the university have role to play in ensuring the long-term viability of our institution.

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<sup>71</sup> Despite common misconceptions

**Recommendation 17: The definition of University Service in the Collective Bargaining Agreement should be revised to include involvement in select student organizations.**

Students believe the definition of “University Service” in the Collective Agreement should recognize the full complement of contributions faculty make outside the realms of teaching and research. In particular, the AMS believes that involvement in mentorship or as an issue-expert with select student organizations plays a marked role in enhancing the broader learning environment at Queen’s. As such, students recommend that engagement of this nature be recognized as a contribution to university service alongside formal service on committees. A best practice for this model is provided by the University of California Berkeley, which has a Guide to Evaluation and Service that states, “BIR will consider the service record just as it considers the teaching and research records in merit and promotion cases. Evidence of *interest* in campus service, such as a faculty member’s volunteering for committee service in response to the annual call for service by COMS, in addition to *actual* service to the Campus, will be considered by BIR.” Finally, this involvement also constitutes a strategic advantage to our university, which is distinguished based on the strength of our student-driven broader learning environment, an environment undoubtedly enriched with faculty service.

# The Pension Plan

## *Principles*

**Principle 13: The Queen's Pension Plan should produce stable and fruitful returns for current and future plan members.**

The Queen's Pension Plan constitutes an important component of a fair compensation package for faculty. Recognizing the necessity of establishing a plan that consistently yields substantial benefits for its members, it is important that the structure of the plan ensures stability during market fluctuations while appropriately accounting for the contribution a plan member has made to Queen's over the course of their tenure. Students believe that current and future faculty should be assured of appropriate pension benefits upon retirement on the basis of a well-formulated plan.

**Principle 14: The structure of the Queen's Pension Plan should ensure the long-term viability of the plan at a sustainable cost to the university.**

In order to engage in any level of short- or long-term planning, Queen's must first possess a firm understanding of the current and future state of its finances. In any case where large institutional expenses such as the pension plan and associated payments are prone to substantial and unpredictable fluctuations, it will present a barrier to ensuring short-term consistency, and will undoubtedly cripple any efforts to chart a path for our future. Beyond this, recognizing the importance of pensions as a benefit to faculty members, it is imperative that the plan be able to produce appropriate returns on an ongoing basis. As such, students believe that it is essential for both the University and pension plan members that the QPP operates under a structure that is focused on its long-term viability.

## *Concerns*

**Concern 23: The Queen's Pension Plan carries substantial going concern and solvency deficits, indicating that the current Plan is unsustainable.**

According to actuarial results determined as of August 31, 2014, the Queen's Pension Plan continues to carry a significant funding deficit. As articulated in the Pension Plan Guide produced by Queen's in January 2015, "The QPP currently has unfunded liabilities of \$175.6 million (on a smoothed going concern basis) and \$285.4 million (on a solvency basis) as set out in its actuarial valuation of August 31, 2014. As a consequence, in addition to the Minimum Guarantee contributions... the University will be required to make special payments into the Plan in accordance with the Pension Benefits act and the Ontario government's temporary solvency relief measures."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Pension Plan Guide, January 2015, p.4

While an institution like Queen's is unlikely to close its doors at any point in the foreseeable future, the solvency deficit has been used by the university and Province as an indicator of the overall financial health of the plan. In effect, a solvency deficit of this magnitude indicates that there is significantly too little money in the plan to pay out all of its pension obligations in the event of the plan's closing. While this has no immediate effect on the plan's members, Queen's has an obligation to ensure the plan remains well-funded, and a burdensome solvency deficit is a clear indication that the plan's current structure does not afford sufficiently stability.

**Concern 24: Pension costs have increased substantially over the past 10 years, necessitating that a growing proportion of operating funding be diverted towards these costs.**

Pension costs have risen substantially in recent years, placing an increasing burden on university operating budgets at a detriment to the student learning experience. The Council of Ontario Universities provides general information on solvency deficits resulting from poor market performances in 2007-2008, articulating: "The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) has estimated that as of July 1st 2009, going concern deficits were \$2.83 billion and solvency deficits were \$2.27 billion for Ontario university pension funds."<sup>73</sup>

Over this same period, benefits have also increased by 9% per annum, leading to a 45% increase over the past 5 years. This is leading towards detrimental trends whereby pension surplus funds are being used to compensate funding shortfalls which resulted from recent increased market uncertainty, and the extreme solvency effects posed by the onset of the 2008 recession. This is correspondingly creating a direct impact on the funds available for student educational opportunities, as the operational costs of Queen's budget are increasingly being redirected in the attempt to secure a sustainable, fully funded pension fund which can prevent solvency deficits from occurring. As articulated by the Council of Ontario Universities, "With tight operating budgets and little capacity to generate additional revenue, the outcome is very direct—any additional pension costs divert spending from educating students."

**Concern 25: The University is provincially mandated to pay into its going concern deficit, posing a significant budgetary challenge that will negatively impact the student experience.**

The implications of the university sector pension crisis are grossly exacerbated in the context of the current legislative environment, whereby institutions are mandated to eliminate solvency deficits within a five year timeframe unless solvency relief measures are obtained from Government. While students understand the importance of maintaining a well-funded pension plan, the negative ramifications associated with pension deficit payments see resources diverted away from the operating budget that would have otherwise been utilized for positively impacting student experience.

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<sup>73</sup> Cite.

The QPP's current solvency deficit amounting to \$285M will require payments of \$20M annually, set to begin in 2015. This cost would represent 6% of the University's operating budget, which would bring pension contributions to a total of 20% of salary payments. The potential effects of these long term, destabilizing, and prohibitively expensive solvency deficit payments would in turn directly detract from student experience at Queen's. Moreover, with current market instability, and the potential for new recessions looming, Queen's remains at risk to have its solvency deficit amount increase in the future, undoing current progress<sup>74</sup>.

**Concern 26: Pension plans that include a minimum guarantee make the University operating budget vulnerable to market volatility.**

While students recognize the importance of ensuring pension plans appropriately afford for a faculty member's service regardless of market performance, inherent dangers exist to pension plans that encompass a minimum guarantee. The notion of assuring certain benefits upon retirement carries many similar concerns to entirely Defined Benefit pension models because, "the minimum guaranteed benefits contained within most hybrid agreements still commit universities to spending that is greater than available funds. In most hybrid plans, only those who have earned few pensionable years or who have managed to accumulate very significant funds are likely to choose to not take the minimum guaranteed benefit."<sup>75</sup> The Council of Ontario Universities reinforces the budgetary pressures that can be imposed by plans of this nature, stating that, "[in the case of hybrid pension plans] a decrease in interest rates (increasing the value of the solvency liabilities) combined with low or negative asset returns (lowering the account balances) can have a significant impact on the solvency position of the pension plan."<sup>76</sup> Students recognize the justification for the presence of a minimum guarantee in the QPP, but are concerned that unless a reasonable minimum guarantee has been established, the plan is subject to market volatility that could result in significant budgetary pressures for the entirety of the institution.

**Concern 27: The investment options for the Pension Fund are limited by the relatively small size of the Queen's University.**

As a mid-sized institution, the scale of Queen's as a single pension payer limits the university's purchasing power with regards to investments and rates. In consideration of this challenge, it is worthwhile to analyze two alternative systems that face similar challenges but benefit substantially from the purchasing power afforded by their size.

The Ontario Teacher's Pension Plan was burdened under earlier retirement ages, longer life after retirement, an increasing number of retirees, and the 2008 financial crisis. That said, their pension, which is 103% funded, has allowed them to maintain a constructive

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<sup>74</sup><http://www.queensu.ca/humanresources/totalcomp/pensions/reports/yearend2011.html>

<sup>75</sup> OUSA System Vision.

<sup>76</sup> Source

approach to ensuring the stability of their plan<sup>77</sup>. Similarly, the Province of Alberta created a university pension program with the objective of harnessing the purchasing power of its institutions. Following the creation of the plan, its performance makes a strong case for the impact of size in its success<sup>78</sup>.

Recognizing the clear benefits afforded by sizeable pension plans, students are concerned that Queen's relatively small size is a substantial barrier to achieving the long-term sustainability of the QPP.

**Concern 28: At present time, Plan members are eligible to receive pension payments while still receiving a salary from Queen's.**

The Queen's Pension Plan allows pensioners who are re-employed by the university to, "elect to continue to be paid [their] pension during the period of re-employment"<sup>79</sup>. Given that re-employed plan members receive appropriate compensation from the university through the terms of their employment, the employee should not have the ability to collect their pension while still receiving salaries or wages from their employer. Recognizing that pensions are meant to provide income during a member's retirement in a manner that recognizes their contribution to the university, the receipt of a pension while a plan member is employed constitutes double payment on the part of Queen's.

### *Recommendations*

**Recommendation 18: The Queen's Pension Plan should move towards a Jointly-Sponsored Pension Plan model.**

In recognition of the risks and burdens associated with the QPP's current Single Employer Pension Plan model, students believe that the Queen's Pension Plan should transition towards a Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan structure. This would address the legislative requirement for the university to pay into its solvency deficit, alleviating a significant financial pressure on the institution. In addition, by conferring joint responsibility for governance and funding shortfalls to the employee and the employer, the university is able to reasonably distribute risk while also allowing substantive engagement and involvement from plan members in the future of the plan.

**Recommendation 19: Queen's should work with applicable unions to investigate the possibility of creating or joining a Multi-Employer Pension Plan, with consideration of the inclusion of university sector pensions in the CAAT Pension Plan and the creation of a dedicated pension plan for Ontario universities.**

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.otpp.com/documents/10179/712513/-/4fc371f9-5c3f-41c0-a625-a4512020113e/Annual+Report.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.uapp.ca/media/953/annual-report-highlights-2013.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Revised Pension Plan of Queen's University, 2012, page 13

At present time, Queen's is engaged in conversations surrounding the possibility for establishing or joining a Multi-Employer Pension Plan. In recognition of the many benefits associated with the stability of a larger plan, students are supportive of this process. The AMS believes that QUFA and Queen's must work together alongside Ontario partners pursuant to the goal of creating a sustainable plan for the province.

One option to be investigated is the creation of an Ontario-wide plan for pensions across the university sector. As articulated by the Ontario Confederation on University Faculty Associations, "we have been working with stakeholders in the Ontario university sector to explore options to ensure secure and strong pensions for faculty and staff. Most recently, alongside the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and our union allies, we have launched a project to explore the feasibility and advisability of a multi-employer jointly sponsored pension plan for the sector. The goal is to design a voluntary defined benefit (DB) arrangement that offers our members access to affordable, attractive and secure pension benefits – as well as added control over the longer-term governance and management of any future plan." (OCUFA pension website) Students are supportive of this project, and look forward to being engaged in discussions around the potential structure and impact of a new plan.

In addition, the colleges' pension plan (CAAT) has approached Queen's alongside other Ontario universities with an offer to merge with their existing JSPP, which if permitted by enabling legislation could lead to a permanent solvency funding exemption. The proposed 2014 Ontario budget included enabling legislation that would have permitted the government to create regulations setting out the procedures and requirements for such a transfer to a JSPP in order to take advantage of a permanent solvency exemption. Queen's should continue to investigate the relative merits of this opportunity alongside the pilot project around a university sector plan, with particular emphasis on the relative merits of a large plan against the reduced flexibility regarding plan structure and governance when joining an existing plan.

**Recommendation 20: The Pension Committee of Board of Trustees should strike a committee to evaluate whether the current minimum guarantee in the Queen's Pension Plan's is best tailored to the needs of the Plan members and the University.**

Students believe that a minimum guarantee is a necessary component of a pension plan that adequately recognizing the career contributions of retirees. That said, given the concerns imposed by a volatile market with a plan containing a provision of this nature, students recommend that the Pension Committee of the Board of Trustees strike a committee that will undertake to examine the current hybrid model of the QPP with the objective of evaluating its efficacy and making recommendations surrounding the ideal balance for the plan.

**Recommendation 21: Queen's should eliminate the ability for pensioners to receive pension payments while still employed by Queen's in the event that their employment exceeds 30 days per annum.**

Students believe that the current provision in the Queen's Pension Plan that allows a re-employed plan member to, "suspend receipt of his or her pension and participate in and contribute to the Plan from the date of rehire to his or her date of subsequent Separation From Service" is a fair mechanism to ensure faculty are not being paid twice for by the university while still recognizing the entirety of their contribution to the institution upon their retirement. As such, students recommend that this exist as the sole provision for re-employed pensioners, and that pension payments cease following 30 days of consecutive employment by the university.

## Policy Statement

**WHEREAS** given the profound impact of collective bargaining on the student experience, avenues should exist for students to be involved in the collective bargaining process.

**WHEREAS** recognizing the impact of strike activity on academic progression, students should be adequately informed of the potential for, or details and ramifications of, strike activity resulting from the bargaining process.

**WHEREAS** tuition fees are designed to cover core costs of education, students should not be expected to pay for education not received when faculty go on strike.

**WHEREAS** students should have meaningful access to a diverse and sizeable complement of faculty.

**WHEREAS** teaching constitutes a fundamental component of the university's mission, and should be appropriately incentivized and recognized as a result.

**WHEREAS** adequate incentives should exist to support the teaching mission of the university and should be granted on the basis of high expectations for performance.

**WHEREAS** faculty should be responsible for designing assessment strategies and styles that best suit the material they are delivering.

**WHEREAS** the University should rely on accurate and robust statistical and qualitative mechanisms to evaluate teaching, for the purposes of reviewing performance, providing feedback on course design, and identifying areas of improvement

**WHEREAS** faculty are fundamental contributors to the university, and should receive fair compensation and benefits for their work.

**WHEREAS** all faculty at Queen's should have a fair and appropriate workload that contributes to the broader mission of the university.

**WHEREAS** faculty should receive recognition for the diversity of contributions they make in service of the Queen's community.

**WHEREAS** compensation packages should be structured such that year over year increases do not surpass the incremental increases in revenue of the operating budget in a given year.

**WHEREAS** the Queen's Pension Plan should produce stable and fruitful returns for current and future plan members.

**WHEREAS** the structure of the Queen's Pension Plan should ensure the long-term viability of the plan at a sustainable cost to the university.

**BIFRT** the University should consider the viability of instituting a student representative to be present at the table during collective bargaining.

**BIFRT** students should be appraised of developments in collective bargaining discussions, and should be formally advised in the event of a vote for a strike mandate.

**BIFRT** in the event of a strike, students should receive regular updates regarding academic disruption, progress through mediation and arbitration, and the impact of strike activity on their academic involvement.

**BIFRT** the University should provide reimbursement and educational accommodations to students who experience a strike that results in a university closure or class cancellations.

**BIFRT** the University should hire teaching-focused faculty in the tenure-track stream to reduce student-faculty ratios and increase the quality of teaching.

**BIFRT** the University should continue to prioritize hiring equity in future appointments for tenure and tenure-track positions, and should seek to hire faculty in early stages of their career.

**BIFRT** the University should remove provisions that allow faculty to “buy out” their teaching obligations, instead introducing mechanisms that allow faculty to have more flexibility in establishing a balance between teaching and research throughout their career.

**BIFRT** where contract instructors are hired, the University should establish institution-wide standards for the appointment process coupled with the introduction of minimum guarantees surrounding compensation and job security.

**BIFRT** a lack of success or competitiveness in teaching metrics should no longer be able to be compensated for by success or competitiveness in research in the renewal, tenure, and promotion process.

**BIFRT** the University should protect and reward innovative course design through strong metrics and temporarily waiving the USAT form for that course.

**BIFRT** the compensation gradient for “special points” should be substantially steeper, with higher expectations for full achievement.

**BIFRT** the JCAA should strike a task force to examine the decision making process for the granting of tenure, with specific focus on the expectations currently laid out in the RTP process and how they are evaluated. Students should be included as members of this committee.

**BIFRT** the JCAA should strike a task force to re-examine the USAT system with the objective of making recommendations regarding the tool itself and the process for implementation and use. Students should be included as members of this committee.

**BIFRT** the university should work with students and faculty to establish an effective mechanism for quantifying faculty workload with the objective of improving metrics for workload expectations in next round of collective bargaining.

**BIFRT** total possible compensation increases for faculty as provided for in the collective agreement should not exceed the projected year-over-year revenue growth of the university operating budget.

**BIFRT** the definition of University Service in the Collective Bargaining Agreement should be revised to include involvement in select student organizations.

**BIFRT** the Queen's Pension Plan should move towards a Jointly-Sponsored Pension Plan model.

**BIFRT** Queen's should work with applicable unions to investigate the possibility of joining a Multi-Employer Pension Plan, with consideration of the inclusion of university sector pensions in the CAAT Pension Plan and the creation of a dedicated pension plan for Ontario universities.

**BIFRT** the Pension Committee of Board of Trustees should strike a committee to evaluate whether the current minimum guarantee in the Queen's Pension Plan's is best tailored to the needs of the Plan members and the University.

**BIFRT** Queen's should eliminate the ability for pensioners to receive pension payments while still employed by Queen's in the event that their employment exceeds 30 days per annum.