

NUFA News. Issue 2. January 2008.

Welcome to the second issue of **The NUFA News**, the monthly newsletter of the Nipissing University Faculty Association. Our goal is to publish the newsletter monthly, fostering communication and discussion among NUFA members on issues related to NUFA members.

In this issue: An Interview with Larry Patriquin, CASBU FAQs, NUFA's President on the President's Forum, and a feature on Nipissing's Full-time Faculty numbers

An Interview with Larry Patriquin, Chief Negotiator for FASBU
by Rob Breton

What do you think the CBC did right during the last round of negotiations and what do you think it did wrong?

We came out, I think, with an agreement that got something very important, which was the transition to three-and-two: that was the most important thing we did right. In terms of what we did wrong, I would say it was along the lines of preparation. We need to involve membership a lot more than we have in the past; we have to do a lot more planning, and a lot more research; but we especially need to keep the membership informed from the very beginning as we start planning out the process of deciding what we want to negotiate for. We need to get more input than we got last time. We'll see a major change in the next round of bargaining.

I think another problem that we had last time is that FASBU and CASBU did not communicate very well and we've dealt with that through the revision of the constitution, where we wrote in a collective bargaining committee that has us joined together and we have the chief negotiators sitting on each other's subcommittees. This will enhance the transfer of knowledge in regards to what is happening with each bargaining unit.

How do you plan to get the membership more involved?

We are again going to conduct a survey but we will do it a lot earlier than last time. This is part of changing the planning process. And one of the things I would like to see – we would need to discuss this with the bargaining committee and the Executive – is for the membership to actually approve the language that we bring into the room. Now I know that this is not very common. Carleton does it but many others do not, so we may not end up doing it. But I am leaning heavily in that direction. Especially given issues like teaching overload in Education (the AQ and AB courses), we could have avoided the problem we had if all the membership had received the exact language. There were education members on the committee, but they did not teach the courses that would have been affected – it was just a fluke in a way. If we had sent the language out to everybody we would have spotted and avoided the problem. What we want is for all our membership to read these proposals very carefully and to get back to us with their input, with their criticism, and with their suggestions.

What do you think are the worst parts of the current collective agreement and why? What personally do you think it is most important to rewrite?

We did a major rewrite in the last round. We had a lot of barely acceptable or just plainly bad articles. Things like programme redundancy did not protect the membership at all, or just hardly, and it was just a very brief statement hidden in another article. We broke it out and it's 3 to 4 pages long now. We also did a major rewrite of grievances, of discipline, of confidentiality. I think we tackled a lot of the major problems last time. My very preliminary survey this time is that there is nothing left that is really bad; there are some articles, like sabbaticals, that are badly organized. I think what we are looking at this time is to have a much narrower focus: salaries and benefits.

The last agreement was ratified with the lowest support of the NUFA membership ever. Do you think that NUFA and the university are possibly in for a stalemate or for long talks again this round? In other words, what do you think will be the outcome of the next round of talks?

I think the low approval was our own fault. I think the main objection had to do with the overload question and I think we can avoid that next time by bringing the membership in right at the very beginning. It is going to be interesting. It really is going to depend on what people see as the major problems and if they feel that what we get at the table is sufficient to meet those problems. One of the major problems is certainly workload. Everyone I know feels overworked. There is data in this issue of the newsletter that compares Full-time Equivalent faculty to students. It is clear that, for whatever reason, other institutions seem to have more full-time faculty per student than we do, and that really affects people, especially in terms of service. We end up taking a much heavier service load because we don't have the same number of full-time colleagues to do that work.

So at the end of the day my message to the membership is that what we get really depends on you and what you want. If you are satisfied very easily then the negotiations will be very short. If you feel that we need to negotiate for more full-time faculty that might be a much tougher slog, in that I suspect that the administration is not just going to give us this. So the message I want to get out to faculty is that if you want a good collective agreement do not depend on the savvy skills of your negotiator, as it depends on you, on how powerful you are and how strong you are and how organized you are.

I've heard members complain that the University and especially the Office of the Registrar annually or quarterly or at least regularly and conspicuously predict doom and gloom in terms of enrolment, telling us that enrolment projections and thus the University's financial outlook are down. The complaint is that at other points in time we are told that enrolment continues to rise. How does the CBC plan to challenge the bleak picture that seems inevitably to be painted by the administration?

Well I agree. I've been here for ten years and for every year it has been doom and gloom. But every year the students come and they come in record numbers. So I think that our response will be to ignore any doom and gloom scenario. They can sing that song till the cows come home; we won't believe it anymore. Even if it's true, we couldn't believe it. It's like the boy who cried wolf. They do not seem to be very good at predicting the future, and the future seems to be that students want to come here. With the A⁺s in *The Globe and Mail* our reputation just grows and I don't think we are going to have a problem attracting students to Nipissing.

We also don't believe doom and gloom around finances. If you check out the university's audited financial statements, it had a surplus of 5.8 million dollars in 2006-2007 on a 60 million dollar budget. That's a huge surplus, and so any doom and gloom about how poor we are is something that we also will ignore.

How does the CBC ensure that all of its members (and their various interests) are represented during talks?

We have FASBU and CASBU. We have representation based on discipline. We have it enshrined in our constitution that we have 3 people from Education and 3 people from Arts and Science, tho' we may have to revise that with the new professional schools. It is certainly important to us to develop proposals that meet everybody's needs. One of the things that we have to be very careful about is that groups that are very small in number have their priorities met. We can't sell those people short. We have to in effect bend over backward to protect those people when they are small in numbers. At the end of the day it is really up to the membership to make sure that we are doing our jobs.

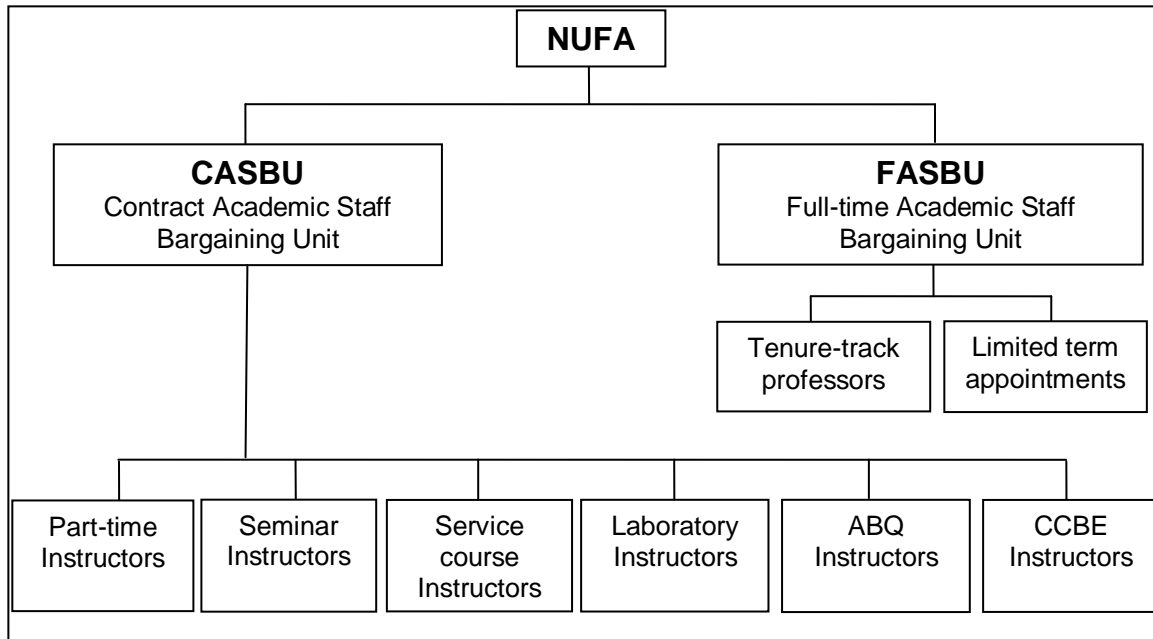
CASBU FAQs

The following are answers to some frequently asked questions about CASBU

By Joseph Boivin

Laboratory Instructor in the Department of Biology

- **If I'm in CASBU (i.e. on contract), am I a member of NUFA?** Yes. The Nipissing University Faculty Association (NUFA) represents all teaching staff. All academic staff (both contract and full-time) are equal partners in NUFA.
- **How many other members of CASBU are there?** A lot. During the 2006/2007 academic year the ratio of contract academic staff to full-time academic staff was approximately 1:1. This year that ratio is about the same and there are approximately 160 full-time academic staff.
- **How does CASBU fit into NUFA?** Here's a schematic breakdown:



- **Is it true that a new contract was recently negotiated?** Yes. Negotiations for the current collective agreement ended in December of 2006, which was retroactive to May 1 of 2006. The current CA (CASBU) is in effect until April 30, 2010.
- **What were some of the major outcomes of negotiations?**
 1. Financial increases of 3%, 3.5%, 3.5%, 4% per year over 4 years
 2. Longer term contracts for Laboratory, Seminar, and Service Course Instructors
 3. Changes to the wording of articles that were unclear and/or obsolete.

Check out the current CA at: <http://www.nipissingu.ca/NUFA/nufadocs.htm>

- **What has CASBU been up to lately?** The CASBU officer, Bill Dew, and the “Member at Large,” Catherine Murton Stoehr, sit on the NUFA Executive and devote much time and effort dealing with day-to-day problems faced by CASBU Members. One of the biggest challenges CASBU faces is creating a dialogue with its Membership. Dialogue can ensure that the needs of Members are being met. Therefore...

Do YOU have any questions about CASBU or FASBU?

If so, send them along in an e-mail to: nufanews@gmail.com

A letter from Roman Brozowski, our President, on the President’s Forum

Dear Members

From Jan 11 to 13 I attended A CAUT sponsored Forum for Faculty Association Presidents which dealt with a large number of issues confronted by Faculty Associations across the country. There were approximately 40 Association Presidents or their representatives at this meeting in Ottawa. Interestingly it included the President from Victoria University who was on the airbus flight that dropped several thousand feet. Aside from telling us about all the things that were

flying around in the cabin including a few people who did not have their seat belts on, he described what happened to his unfortunate colleague who was in the washroom. Evidently he was elevated to the ceiling of the washroom where he hit his head. Fortunately he was all right except for a bump on his head. Let me explain briefly some of the topics covered which I think you will find apply to Nipissing.

Association Renewal

Over the last five years large numbers of young academics have entered the profession. An equally large number of association activists are set to retire. How do we engage our junior colleagues, and get them involved, and hopefully committed, to the association? This seems to be a problem right across the country.

Dealing with Member to Member Disputes

Member to member disputes seem to be increasing. Bullying was identified as a major concern.

Association Outreach

Much of an association's work remains almost invisible even to our membership. How can associations increase their visibility on campus, maintain good working relationships with other stakeholder groups on campus and promote outreach programs? This included communication with Administration. In some Universities Administrators and Faculty associations do not talk to each other except during negotiations while others work hard at having open communication on a regular basis with Administration. It was mentioned by several Association Presidents that it often depends on the type of University President in office at the time.

Compensation

At the bargaining table we confront two issues: How do we get a fair share for our members? How can that share be equitably distributed? This dealt with market differentials for some disciplines ie Business or engineering or sciences. Evidently this has caused some major problems at a good number of Universities. It was pointed out that it was important when hiring new faculty that there be fair and consistent criterion applied to everyone when they are getting their first contract.

Teaching-only Positions

Despite our best efforts, an increasing number of teaching-only positions are being created. What kinds of problem does this create and how can associations protect the integrity of our work, as well, protect these new members?

Governance: Policy Making Outside the Collective Agreement

Administrators are regularly adopting general policies outside the collective agreement which have significant impact on terms and conditions of employment. At the same time new management responsibilities are being downloaded onto our members. This referred to downloading administrative responsibilities at quite a few Universities onto Department Chairs.

What's Happening to Collegial Governance

For close to 50 years, academic staff have been prevented from having their full rights under collegial governance. Senates have been a particular source of discontent in many institutions.

What can be done to ensure academic staff play their proper role in the governance of our institutions? It was pointed out that it was important to maintain at least 2/3 of the seats on Senate as member academics. Evidently in some places there are almost as many administrators and others as there are faculty on Senates

I found that these were interesting and relevant topics that are facing Universities throughout Canada. It was a most informative forum. If you have any thoughts on any of these topics please feel free to talk to me or send me an email. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warmest Regards
Roman Brozowski
NUFA President

Pages 6-10

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT
Should Nipissing Have More Full-time Faculty?

By Larry Patriquin

In many of the upcoming issues of the NUFA News, we will be providing information on a number of matters that concern the negotiations for the Full-time Academic Staff Bargaining Unit (FASBU), which will begin in February 2009. You can file these bits and pieces of information in your mind, under the folder "Something to Think About."

Have you ever felt overworked and exhausted? You no doubt answered "yes"; the attached tables will provide a partial explanation as to why this is the case. They are a comparison of full-time equivalent (FTE) students to full-time (FT) faculty. It is important to note that the tables do not compare students to *all* faculty, but rather just to *full-time* faculty. In other words, the data for faculty at each university do not include the equivalent of our Contract Academic Staff (CASBU) members who teach on a "per course" basis. As a result, the student-faculty ratio is *not* equivalent to the average class size at the university.

Nevertheless, the data do tell us something. If Nipissing has a very low average class size vis-à-vis other universities (something the Administration consistently claims but something NUFA disputes), then the data suggest that Nipissing is relying too heavily on faculty who are teaching on a per course basis. Per course faculty at Nipissing and elsewhere are saddled with low wages and poor working conditions. Contract faculty like these do have a necessary role to play at all universities, yet the over use of such faculty suggests that work which is insecure and not well paid is serving as a substitute for work that is secure and properly remunerated. Indeed, many per course faculty are seeking the type of full-time employment that is less and less available as universities have moved further in the direction of hiring cheap labour.

One of the results of Nipissing's past hiring practices is that full-time faculty who are trying to offer comprehensive programs lack the number of full-time colleagues that they might have if they were employed at another university. For sure, all the courses get taught, but more full-time colleagues means, for example, that the service workload could be spread out among a larger

group, resulting in less service work for each individual Member. With what seems like an unusually heavy service load, given that Nipissing is a small undergraduate university undergoing many changes, the addition of full-time faculty would no doubt be of great benefit to our membership. Anything that reduces service hours and frees up time for research and classroom preparation will improve the quality of our work.

Table 1 compares the FTE student-FT faculty ratios for all Ontario universities in 2004-05 (the latest year for which data are available). The reason we typically make comparisons to other Ontario universities is that we are all in the same boat, all funded by the same government, receiving the same BIU's per student, having to follow consistent regulations on tuition fees, and so forth.

As you can see, Nipissing is *dead last* in Ontario, with 39.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) students for each full-time (FT) faculty member. The column on the far right shows how important this ratio is. It tells us how many *more* full-time faculty Nipissing would have had if we had that particular university's FTE student-FT faculty ratio. For example, if we had Laurentian's ratio, we would have had ninety-two (92) more full-time faculty in 2004-05!

An Administration critic would surely describe a Laurentian-styled ratio as "pie in the sky." So what happens if we look at a more typical scenario? The average FTE student-FT faculty ratio for Ontario was 29.2. The provincial university that comes closest to matching the average is Waterloo (noted in the middle of the table in bold italics). If we had had Waterloo's ratio, we would have had thirty-two (32) more full-time faculty. Now, can you imagine the improvement in your quality of work if you had that many more colleagues (never mind a number closer to 92) to share the burden, especially in areas like service?

We generally do not make comparisons with out-of-province institutions because funding is provincially-based. We are, however, by far the smallest university in Ontario, and it is worth noting how we stack up against our "primarily undergraduate" competitors elsewhere.

We can see this comparison in Table 2. Once again, Nipissing's ratio puts us in last place. Three other universities are highlighted in this table. They are Acadia, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the University of Prince Edward Island, the three primarily undergraduate universities in Canada that are closest in size to Nipissing. The results of this comparison are nothing short of astounding. If Nipissing had the FTE student-FT-faculty ratio of these universities, we would have had between ninety (90) and ninety-five (95) more full-time faculty.

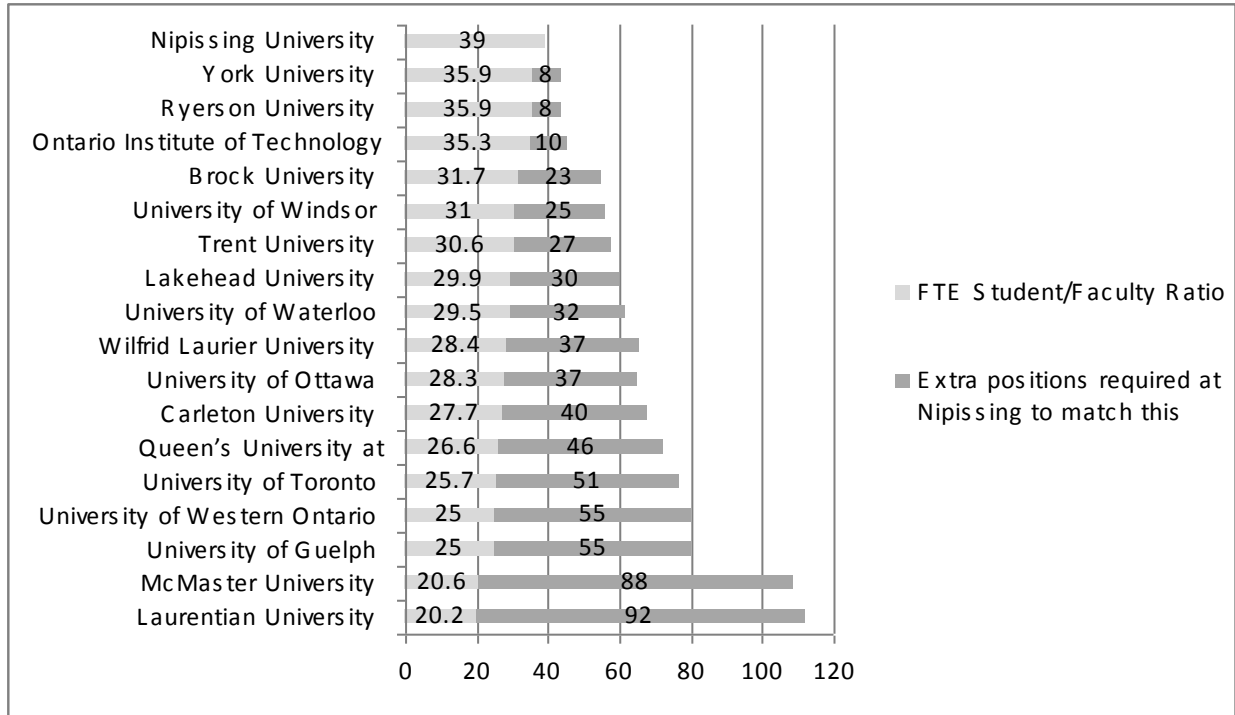
While these data are from 2004-05, the ratios for all institutions have likely remained unchanged. Nipissing has grown in the last few years but other universities have grown as well.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that we are seriously understaffed in the area of full-time faculty. That may be one of the reasons why your latest research project is gathering dust in a dark corner of your office while – yet again – you attend your departmental/ divisional meeting, write a report for the University Curriculum Committee, revise your program's Academic Master Plan, prepare for that Senate committee that's drowning in paper ... and so on. Something to think about.

TABLE 1

**University Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Students and Full-time (FT) Faculty,
Ontario, 2004-05**

Institution	FTE Students	FT Faculty	S-F* Ratio	Extra NU Faculty **
Laurentian University	7,515.0	372	20.2	92
McMaster University	20,806.3	1,011	20.6	88
University of Guelph	18,936.0	756	25.0	55
University of Western Ontario	30,341.1	1,215	25.0	55
University of Toronto	62,463.0	2,430	25.7	51
Queen's University at Kingston	17,785.3	669	26.6	46
Carleton University	20,106.4	726	27.7	40
University of Ottawa	27,194.1	960	28.3	37
Wilfrid Laurier University	11,683.7	411	28.4	37
<i>University of Waterloo</i>	24,062.6	816	29.5	32
Lakehead University	6,539.6	219	29.9	30
Trent University	6,710.6	219	30.6	27
University of Windsor	14,419.3	465	31.0	25
Brock University	14,091.0	444	31.7	23
University of Ontario Institute of Technology	1,801.3	51	35.3	10
Ryerson University	18,827.6	525	35.9	8
York University	42,927.0	1,197	35.9	8
Nipissing University	3,858.0	99	39.0	n/a



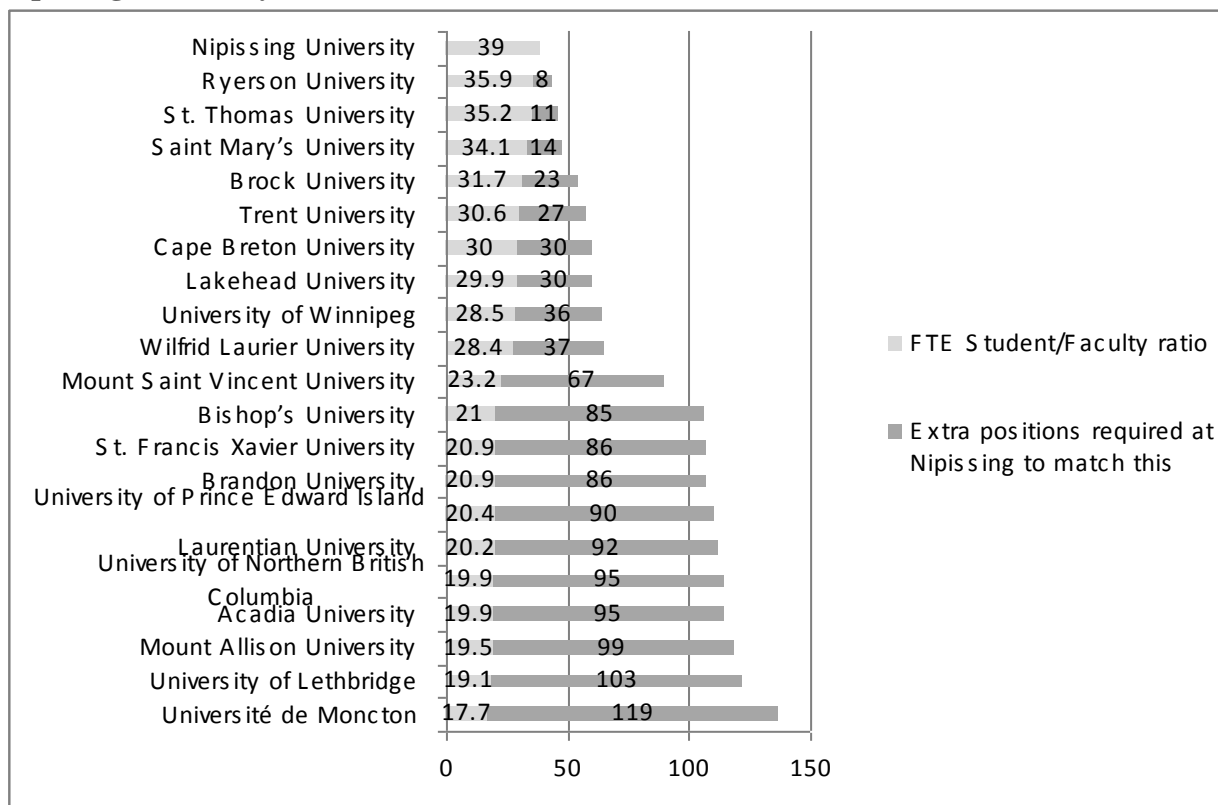
- Average FTE student-FT faculty ratio = 29.2
- S-F Ratio = Student-Faculty Ratio
- ** This is the number of extra full-time faculty Nipissing University would have (above the FT faculty complement of 99) if we had this university's FTE student—FT faculty ratio.
- Source: Adapted from *CAUT Almanac of Post-secondary Education in Canada, 2007*, Table 4.6, page 43, which is based on Statistics Canada, Centre for Education Statistics.

TABLE 2

University Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Students and Full-time (FT) Faculty, Canada, Primarily Undergraduate Universities*, 2004-05

Institution	FTE Students	FT Faculty	S-F** Ratio	Extra NU Faculty ***
Université de Moncton	5,351.6	303	17.7	119
University of Lethbridge	7,094.1	372	19.1	103
Mount Allison University	2,163.9	111	19.5	99
<i>Acadia University</i>	<i>3,757.3</i>	<i>189</i>	<i>19.9</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>University of Northern British Columbia</i>	<i>3,102.0</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>19.9</i>	<i>95</i>
Laurentian University	7,515.0	372	20.2	92
<i>University of Prince Edward Island</i>	<i>3,551.1</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>20.4</i>	<i>90</i>
Brandon University	2,504.1	120	20.9	86
St. Francis Xavier University	4,710.0	225	20.9	86
Bishop's University	2,391.4	114	21.0	85
Mount Saint Vincent University	2,852.6	123	23.2	67

Wilfrid Laurier University	11,683.7	411	28.4	37
University of Winnipeg	6,508.3	228	28.5	36
Lakehead University	6,539.6	219	29.9	30
Cape Breton University	2,791.7	93	30.0	30
Trent University	6,710.6	219	30.6	27
Brock University	14,091.0	444	31.7	23
Saint Mary's University	7,064.6	207	34.1	14
St. Thomas University	2,852.1	81	35.2	11
Ryerson University	18,827.6	525	35.9	8
Nipissing University	3,858.0	99	39.0	n/a



- Average FTE student-FT faculty ratio = 26.0
- As categorized by *Maclean's*.
- ** S-F Ratio = Student-Faculty Ratio
- *** This is the number of extra full-time faculty Nipissing University would have (above the FT faculty complement of 99) if we had this university's FTE student—FT faculty ratio.
- Source: Adapted from *CAUT Almanac of Post-secondary Education in Canada, 2007*, Table 4.6, page 43, which is based on Statistics Canada, Centre for Education Statistics.

Bar charts by Chad Thompson