

A FAIR DEAL

Protecting the University



TEACHING WORKLOAD

from the NUFA CC: Wendy Peters, Susan Srigley & Richard Wenghofer

What is the optimal teaching load we can handle while continuing to research and publish?

- According to “Trends in Higher Education,” published by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), with increased pressures on faculty to secure outside funding, there has been an increase in research-related tasks and expectations from funding institutions (2007, 30).
- SSHRC has been encouraging teamwork and collaboration to obtain funding. Punishing faculty who collaborate, which the employer is proposing, is counterproductive in terms of furthering research.

Our reality according to the AUCC:

Canadian university faculty members have an average workload of 50 hours a week. To meet the increasing demands for research,

1. the AUCC suggests “to make the fullest use of the time and talents of the current faculty complement by providing them with the tools and supports they need to work effectively and efficiently” (2007, 30), and
2. they propose “to recruit and retain more researchers efficiently” (2007, 30). It appears the employer’s new recommendations conflict with the report’s suggestions, as faculty spends more time teaching more classes (potentially increasing the student/professor ratio), and less time conducting research.

The employer’s new proposals ultimately fail to promote a genuine research environment at Nipissing. It is time for us to consider if these conditions are conducive to a fair working environment.

Manuel Litalien

manuel@nipissingu.ca

In 2005, the Normal Teaching Workload at Nipissing was 3-3. NUFA successfully negotiated a new normal teaching allocation of 3-2. These gains are in danger of being lost. The employer’s new workload proposal calls for a change from a Normal Teaching Workload of 3-2, to a Teaching Intensive Workload of 3-3 when the level of productivity is considered “unsatisfactory” by the Dean (measured by the faculty member’s volume of peer-reviewed publications). The employer’s intention to adopt a Teaching Intensive Workload as incentive for more production and research allows the Dean, effectively through the “back door,” to return us to a teaching intensive 3-3 workload, *something we fought hard to change in our last round of bargaining*. Increasing our teaching workload does not encourage research. It does the opposite. It is transforming Nipissing into a

teaching-only institution *while maintaining research and publication expectations*. With the number of teaching hours increasing, faculty must allocate less time to research.

The employer’s intentions are clearly expressed in its “new” Research Intensive Workload proposal which states that to be on a research intensive workload, faculty must also be “the principal investigator on an external research grant.” An examination of current applications success rates from SSHRC indicate that Nipissing University had a 16.7% success rate in acquiring research grants in 2011. The overall average at Nipissing since 1995 for acquiring SSHRC is a 14.9%. That means that the vast majority of faculty will remain on a 3-2 workload where the norm in the province is 2-2.