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Faculty Association of
the University of Waterloo

Lecturers Town Hall Meeting Report

March 30, 2021, 2:30–4:00 p.m., Microsoft Teams

On March 30, 2021, the FAUW Lecturers Committee (LC) hosted a virtual town hall meeting for all Waterloo lecturers on Microsoft Teams. The meeting was well attended, with 75 attendees in total including 11 LC members and invited guests. The guests included:

- Dan Brown, FAUW president
- David DeVidi, associate vice president, academic; Policy 76/77 Drafting Committee
- Kevin Hare, associate dean, operations and academics, Faculty of Mathematics; Policy 76/77 Drafting Committee
- Kate Lawson, Policy 76/77 Drafting Committee; former president and chair of the board, Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations

The town hall was divided into two segments:

- A presentation session with all attendees, including guests (2:30-3:30)
- An open discussion session for lecturers only (3:30-4:00)

Opening session: introductions and reminders

Su-Yin Tan, Lecturers Committee chair, greeted everyone and thanked them for attending. She then invited committee members to introduce themselves, specifying their affiliation and main area of interest on the committee. She also reminded the attendees about two current events of interest:

- Committee recruitment: The committee is looking for new members this year, particularly from the Faculties of Engineering, Arts, Science, and Health. [Applications are open until May 31 on the FAUW website.](#) The Lecturers Committee is interested in representing the diversity of lecturers across campus.
- The FAUW Board election: Voting was open March 31 to April 14.

Lecturers Committee: Key facts and long-term goals

The chair presented some key information about lecturers at Waterloo, emphasizing that this group of faculty has almost doubled in size since 2009 and currently constitutes a little over 18% of all faculty appointments. This dramatic growth has resulted in some chairs, directors, and deans dealing with lecturers for the first time, and also necessitates revisions of policy related to teaching stream faculty.

The chair also reminded attendees that the Lecturers Committee was created in early 2015 after a FAUW meeting devoted to lecturers occurred in 2014 and Policy 76 (Faculty Appointments) was opened for revision.

Dorothy Hadfield introduced the committee's long-term goals, which are priorities set or updated every year based on the current conditions and needs that committee members are aware of. Many of the committee's long-term goals are rooted in systemic inequities in the institution. A common experience for new committee members is realizing how much the conditions for lecturers vary between faculties, which can sometimes mask these inequities. The committee has established six long-term goals:

- **Goal 1:** Lecturers have a fair and manageable workload that does not lead to burnout.
- **Goal 2:** Lecturers have a clear, equitable, and consistent career progression pathway.
- **Goal 3:** Lecturers have salary equity and fair evaluation.
- **Goal 4:** Lecturers have the opportunity to engage in professional development and scholarship.
- **Goal 5:** Lecturers have appropriate voice and representation in University governance.
- **Goal 6:** Lecturers have a strong sense of connection and community.

The chair added that Goal 4 relates to teaching stream faculty who are interested in engaging in scholarship more actively, while Goal 5 relates to the engagement of lecturers at every level of governance. She noted that it is positive to see increased interest from teaching stream faculty in such engagement, such as running in the FAUW Board elections.

Policy 14: Pregnancy and Parental Leaves (Including Adoption) and the Return to Work

On the whole, the [new Policy 14](#) offers a big improvement, but the committee is concerned that early career definite-term lecturers (DTLs) are disproportionately affected by eligibility categories based on years of expected employment. Allyson Giannikouris presented a brief update on Policy 14: Pregnancy and Parental Leaves (Including Adoption) and the Return to Work (P14). She thanked the P14 committee involved in revising this policy and recognized the improvements in benefits due to the revisions. However, she noted that the revisions created some inequities as well, particularly for DTLs at the early stages of their career, who are more likely to be actively considering family planning.

Allyson reported that in the revised P14, the amount of supplemental benefits related to such leaves depends on the expected employment length and is tied to four employee categories. All tenure-track faculty are in Category 1 of the new policy's eligibility framework, which means they are eligible for full benefits immediately. Because lecturers start on short-term contracts, they will start in eligibility Category 3, which entails a one-year waiting period and lesser benefits. (In the previous version of the policy, everyone had a six-month waiting period before being eligible, and a requirement to continue working for at least six months after a leave.) Lecturers will get full benefits by their second or third contract (depending on the length of

each contract), but this can create a trade-off for new lecturers (and the many staff on short-term contracts) between the amount of benefits and flexibility in the timing of having children.

The Lecturers Committee received concerns from DTLs about this inequity in the revised P14 in December 2020, when the policy was open for public consultation from November 27 to December 18, 2020. In conjunction with the FAUW Equity Committee, the LC prepared a memo to the FAUW Board of Directors, outlining the inequities in P14 revisions and suggested the removal of the one-year waiting period for the benefits. The memo was co-signed by the members of the two committees.

On January 21, 2021, the representatives of the committees presented the memo, along with potential solutions to the issue, to the FAUW Board. A motion was made to ask the Faculty Relations Committee to exempt definite-term lecturers from the five-year threshold contained in the draft policy and make them eligible for Category 2 benefits upon three years of expected employment, even if this results in delayed approval of the draft policy and bringing it within the Bill 124 moderation period. The Board members ultimately voted not to bring the proposed solution to FRC for consideration in their negotiations.

In response to a question about why the Board opted not to attempt further revisions to the policy to address this inequity, Dan Brown, FAUW president, noted that the FAUW Board was motivated to get the policy approved before April 30 so it would not be restricted by the limitations of Bill 124 (which limits overall increases in salary and benefits spending to 1% a year). As this is an 'FS' policy, collaborating with the Staff Association was also a factor; faculty and staff on short-term contracts are treated analogously in the new policy—and in all benefits programs at UW—and getting agreement on changing that principle would have been a challenge, especially on a very short timeline.

The Lecturers Committee hopes that changes in Policy 76 (Faculty Appointments) will remove or at least mitigate this issue for many lecturers. Otherwise, the committee will request revisions to P14 in the future. Allyson reiterated that to maximize benefits under P14, a minimum five-year employment period (including time already served and time remaining on a current contract) is needed. She also advised lecturers to contact the [Academic Freedom and Tenure \(AF&T\)](#) Committee or the FAUW Board with any related questions and/or concerns.

Lecturers survey: preliminary results

See the meeting slides for the charts and data referenced in this section.

This year's lecturers survey was administered from February 5 to February 22, 2021, and received a very high response rate of 80% (194 respondents). A high-level summary of preliminary results was reported during the town hall by the survey analysis working group.

Amanda Garcia briefly presented data on lecturer appointment types (continuing, definite-term, and part-time), as well as the percentage of FAUW members who are lecturers in each faculty (ranging from 19 to 26%).

Paul McGrath reported on the most common distribution of workload components (teaching/service/research), the most common course loads, and most common types of course taught by lecturers. Paul also reported survey data on non-teaching terms. According to these results, 61% of respondents have had at least one such term and were expected to provide more service and engage in course development during these periods. Of the lecturers who've had a non-teaching term, 63% had their teaching workload redistributed over other terms, resulting in an overall increase in workload. The difficulty in redistributing teaching workload was reported as the most common reason for not taking a non-teaching term.

Paul also commented on preferred titles for teaching stream faculty and the importance of tenure. Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream; Associate Professor, Teaching Stream; and Professor, Teaching Stream were the first choice for titles, and 90% of respondents indicated that having tenure was either "very important" or "important." Paul added that adjusting work titles will involve a change in Policy 76.

Reza Ramezan introduced survey results related to scholarly activities among teaching stream faculty. He started by stating that 15% of lecturers have a research component formally in their workload and that scholarship is often misunderstood as activities solely related to publications. He listed other common scholarship activities and showed that four in five lecturers are actively engaged in scholarship activities. The most common scholarly activities reported by the lecturers were conference presentations, book or article reviews, pedagogical research, as well as paper and monograph publications.

Reza noted that 62% of teaching stream faculty without an explicit research component were either "definitely" or "possibly" interested in having such a component in the future. However, survey respondents were also concerned about the potential for an increased workload if research was added to their current work. Reza commented that the Lecturers Committee is advocating for a research component as an option for lecturers. He added that if such a change took place, this component would have to be built into contracts, time for research would have to be budgeted, and a sufficient support system would have to be made available. Currently, 58% of those with a scholarship weighting feel that expectations and guidelines are not clear, and lecturers with a terminal degree have a greater desire to be involved in research.

Su-Yin Tan concluded this session of the town hall by added that a complete version of the survey report is being developed and will soon be available on the Lecturers Committee page on the FAUW website.

Policy 76/77: key issues for lecturers

The update to Policy 76 (Faculty Appointments) has been rebooted, with a new committee focusing specifically on new types of appointments in Policy 76, and how tenure and promotion will work for those appointments in Policy 77 (Tenure and Promotion of Faculty Members). The committee has been given an aggressive timeline, aiming to be done drafting by the end of August. The P76/77 Revision Committee consists of four members:

- David DeVidi, associate vice president, academic

- Kevin Hare, associate dean, operations and academics, Faculty of Mathematics
- Kate Lawson, FAUW Executive Committee member
- Su-Yin Tan, Lecturers Committee chair

The Lecturers Committee is advocating for this process to result in equivalent professorial ranks for teaching faculty, as University of Toronto and McMaster have, and parallel tenure and promotion procedures.

The LC chair concluded the presentation by reiterating the committee's current priorities:

- professorial ranks for teaching stream faculties, following the lead of the University of Toronto and McMaster University
- tenure and promotion procedures (including probationary terms) for lecturers similar to those for the professorial ranks
- a more stable and consistent career progression path for lecturers
- opportunities for scholarship and pedagogical growth that should translate into higher quality teaching

She also presented a brief overview of other issues the LC has been advocating for, including:

- elimination of precarious two-years-less-a-day contracts, given to faculty other than lecturers as well, but disproportionately affecting lecturers
- time and supports for scholarship, for example in the form of a non-teaching term with a commensurate reduction in teaching and no requirement of workload redistribution
- ability to claim [vacation leave entitlement](#) (especially in continuous blocks of time)
- eligibility for sabbatical leave
- Improved ability to negotiate a change in assigned duties

The chair then specified the short-term activities planned by the committee in relation to its P76/77 priorities. These include:

- several lecturer-focused blog posts for the FAUW website, for example, detailing the teaching stream at the [University of Toronto](#) and [McMaster University](#) and on scholarship activities by Waterloo lecturers with an explicit research component and those with no such component
- LC representative meetings with lecturers from each faculty are planned in April-June to discuss survey results for each faculty and to develop a closer rapport between the LC and teaching stream faculty in all six faculties

David DeVidi offered brief comments suggesting that the new focused approach for teaching stream faculty offers some grounds for optimism. Kevin Hare thanked the LC for organizing the town hall effectively and had no further comments on P76/77.

Discussion period

Before opening the floor for questions and concerns, the LC chair thanked David DeVidi and Kevin Hare for their presence and comments, after which the two guests left the meeting. As

FAUW Executive Committee members, Dan Brown and Kate Lawson stayed for the discussion period.

Main questions and comments:

- Attendees expressed appreciation for the LC and guests.
- Attendees noted frustration with the structural issues at Waterloo and shared encouragement not to accept the failing structure.
- An attendee asked if there is university-wide support for changes to policies 76/77. Su-Yin Tan responded that the committee does not have a great pulse on this yet. This is a culture shift, but it has happened successfully at other universities.
- Kate Lawson (Policy 76/77 representative) asked attendees whether it is the word 'tenure' that is important, or the protections that come along with it, regardless of what it is called. Most comments reflected that lecturers feel both the word "tenure" and the protections of tenure are important. A lot of lecturers report feeling like second-class citizens, and frequently have to explain to students, colleagues, and administrators that they are "real" faculty members; the differences in titles and appointment types both cause and reflect that stratification. If teaching faculty are given all the protections of tenure, there is no reason except "classism" to give it a different name. Some attendees noted that they are more concerned with the outcomes (job security, legal protections related to academic freedom) than with what it is called.
- An attendee asked about the implications for lecturers with degrees other than PhDs. The response was that all terminal degrees are treated the same at McMaster and the University of Toronto.
- Some questions and comments submitted in the Teams meeting chat were addressed by LC members Amanda Garcia and Reza Ramezan. Many of these were about barriers facing lecturers who want to engage in scholarship and professional development activities, such as ineligibility for grants.
- Laura McDonald (FAUW Communications Officer) suggested via Teams chat to [contact the AF&T Committee](#) for help with any accommodations related to teaching in person in fall 2021 and with workload negotiations.

Dan Brown emphasized the important role of teaching stream faculty and encouraged attendance at the FAUW general meeting on April 16. He expressed appreciation for the work on policies 76 and 77 and noted that it is important for FAUW to hear about the conditions of lecturer members, particularly how folks are doing in light of the pandemic.

Wrap-up

Su-Yin Tan thanked all the guests and attendees for participating and reminded lecturers to vote in the 2021 FAUW Board elections.

She also announced a random draw for twenty \$10 gift cards from among the attendees, in lieu of the usual event refreshments, adding that the lucky winners would be contacted about claiming their prizes.