

Report from Lecturers Committee to FAUW Board: Identification of Issues Faced by Lectures at UW

This report represents a distillation of many months of discussion by the Lecturers Committee, which first met in April 2015. These discussions led to the launching of the Lecturers Survey in November, which gathered opinions on a range of topics and provided abundant opportunity for unstructured comment (see **Appendix A** – Highlights of Lecturers Survey). The response rate to the survey was impressive, with 83% of the 180 Lecturers participating. This level of support, consistent with the very well attended, lively meeting of Lecturers held by FAUW in summer 2014, shows the level of engagement of this group. (A complete report of this survey will be available as a separate document.)

Issues identified in this report were selected and categorized based on:

- discussions within the committee, including a priority-ranking exercise
- survey results, as an indicator of the views of the group we represent
- relevance to Policy 76, the revision of which led to the formation of this committee

The phases indicate the mechanism used to address the concerns:

A – Policy 76 Drafting Committee, **B** – Faculty Relations Committee, **C** – FAUW Board.

Phase A – Revisions to Policy 76

A.1 Time for Professional Development

Policy 76 states that all faculty members involved in university teaching are expected to engage in scholarly activity. Indeed, for Lecturers this expectation is "*regardless of whether a separate rating for scholarship is part of the performance review*" (section 2.A). Since 2009, Policy 76 has also stated that "Lecturers shall have the option to have at least one term in six be a non-teaching term". However, interpretation and implementation of this clause has been inconsistent across units. Most (70%) of our Lecturers teach three out of three terms, and only 34% of these have ever had a non-teaching term, indicating that the current practice is incompatible with professional development for many Lecturers (**Appendix A, III**). Further details are provided in **Appendix B** – Lecturer Non-Teaching Term.

We ask the FAUW Board to consider the following:

- Lecturers should have a guaranteed, regularly occurring professional development (PD) term in which they are relieved of their duty of choice and their time spent on activities that increase their effectiveness as university educators or otherwise enhance their value to the university.
- This PD term should reduce their normal work load proportionately. Fundamental to this position is that the normal work load (typically assigned teaching load) being reduced is the load Lecturers have experienced in the past few years.

Appendix B first provides the rationale for the above position and then proposes some suggestions for Policy 76 language changes that would achieve our position. Quantitative data is drawn from the Lecturers Survey (**Appendix A, III**).

A.2 Developing a Career Path for Lecturers

Beginning even as early as the initial appointment, the career path for Lecturers is fraught with inconsistencies and uncertainties (**Appendix A, I**). According to the current policy, “Lecturer” only exists as a single rank, implying that in fact there is no career path in the teaching stream at UW. While 40% of Lecturers have ongoing (‘Continuing’) contracts, 30% are on one- or two-year contracts. In many cases, there is no clear indication of the steps or timeline involved in progression, or whether career progression is even possible.

There are frequent issues associated with the timing and communication around the contract renewal process. According to existing policy, intent to renew the contract should be communicated at least six months before the end of the contract. In practice, the process often occurs much later than this, which is stressful in terms of job security and makes it difficult to commit to particular teaching or service tasks. In contrast to transition through the research track ranks, the progression to ‘Continuing’ status is unclear and inconsistent across units. The Lecturers Survey also indicated strong support for a change in titles to better reflect the role of the teaching professoriate (**Appendix A, V**).

We ask that the following be brought to the Policy 76 Committee:

- Develop ranks for the Lecturer track with associated titles, and a transparent process for progression through these ranks.
- Changes in titles may require revisions to wording referring to “professorial ranks.” We note also that the phrases “regular faculty members” and “regular appointments” throughout the policy need to be closely examined.
- Introduce wording that strongly discourages hiring on short-term contracts. Reiterative contracts should be exceptions that need to be justified, rather than defaults.

Deans and Chairs should receive reminders of renewal policies and be provided with guidance as to the HR lead time involved for contract renewal.

A.3 Language in Policy 76 regarding Sabbatical Leaves and the ‘unusual’ nature of Continuing Lecturer Appointments

In Section D, under Continuing Lecturer Appointments, Policy 76 currently states:

“Faculty members with Continuing Lecturer appointments are not eligible for tenure or promotion consideration / or for sabbatical leave. These positions are understood to be unusual and offered only in special circumstances.”

We ask that this paragraph be removed.

- The first sentence should be replaced with the wording developed in response to A.2 Developing a Career Path for Lecturers.
- The reference to sabbaticals – the *only* one in this Policy – is out of place, given that ‘Sabbaticals and other Leaves’ are covered under Policy 3.

- The second sentence is archaic given that 40% of UW Lecturers now have Continuing status.

The question of sabbaticals for Lecturers should be addressed in the future. Other U15 Universities have enacted new policies that are much more attractive than UW's in that they have teaching stream positions with the titles of Professor that have one non-teaching term per year and also eligibility for sabbaticals. Retaining our best Lecturers is likely to become harder if these differences persist.

Phase B – Faculty Relations Committee

B.1 Vacation Time for Lecturers

As stated in A.1 above, 70% of our Lecturers teach three out of three terms, yet only 34% of these have ever had a non-teaching term. Lecturer appointments stipulate either “one month” or “one month plus one week” of vacation that they are not allowed to carry forward. The wording in appointment letters reflects statement 11.2.2 in the [MOA](#):

“Vacation entitlement normally shall be used during the contract year in which it is earned. In exceptional circumstances with the prior written permission of the Department Chair, vacation entitlement may be carried forward for a maximum of one year. “

It is not possible to take this time off when teaching three terms. (See **Appendix C** for sample dates.) Wedging in holiday times in late August and possibly late April is contingent on having a) no grading after the last final exam day and b) zero course preparation until the first day of classes, neither of which are realistic. Another factor reducing the gaps between terms is that many Lecturers are involved in online course delivery, with exams trickling in over a period of many weeks. Moreover, this inflexible timing makes it impossible for Lecturers to coordinate vacation times with those of spouses, kids and extended family.

Proper implementation of the Professional Development term will enable a vacation every second year. While a welcome improvement, such a work pattern still results in the loss of vacation time (with no payment in lieu) every other year, and runs counter to the rhetoric of work-life balance.

We ask that the following be brought to FRC:

- Make Lecturers teaching three out of three terms exempt from the no-vacation-carryover rule.
- Allow carry-over of up to one week vacation for Lecturers teaching three out of three terms.
- Remove the no-carryover clause from Lecturer appointment letters.

B.2 Service Eligibility for Lecturers

The Lecturers Survey confirmed that there was lack of consistency on the part of both Lecturers and unit administrators regarding the departmental, faculty and university-wide service positions that can be held by Lecturers (*e.g.*, hiring committees, departmental merit committees, and supervision of graduate students, among others – see **Appendix A, IV**).

We ask that the following be brought to FRC:

- What service roles (if any) are Lecturers officially prohibited to fill at the department, faculty, and university levels?
- In the event that restrictions exist, what are the reasons for excluding Lecturers?
- In the event that restrictions exist, are these reasons really applicable to the Lecturer position today (are they important to maintain)? Might these reasons only apply to a subset of lectures (e.g., those few lacking a doctoral degree)?
- Once the eligibility of Lecturers is clarified, this information needs to be communicated to unit heads and Lecturers via guidelines.

Phase C – FAUW Board

C.1 Teaching Load

We recognize that there is variability across units in types of teaching, what is considered a ‘course’ for the purposes of quantifying workload and what constitutes a ‘normal’ load. Defining annual load is further complicated by the value associated with online courses, teaching multiple sections of a course within a term, and whether a unit teaches in the spring term. However, in the interests of equity and transparency, a working definition of normal teaching load should be established within each unit.

We ask that the FAUW board initiate the following:

- Each unit (department, school or faculty) should have agreed-upon normal and maximum teaching loads. Loads for teaching-track faculty should be defined as some multiple of that of research-track faculty.
- These loads should be reviewed annually at departmental meetings and appended to Annual Performance Review documentation and appointment letters.

These definitions should help prevent abuses such as giving Lecturers terms off teaching at the expense of teaching overload in the other two terms that year.

The Lecturers committee is willing to draft a Good Practices document for unit heads to try to minimize abusive practices such as continually assigning one-shot course preps to Lecturers (*e.g.*, to cover sabbatical leaves of others).

C.2 Lecturer Salaries

Concerns about floors and thresholds of Lecturer salaries were first raised at a meeting of all Lecturers in summer 2014. We request that FAUW hold another information session for Lecturers, backdated appropriately with respect to the next round of salary negotiations, to resume these discussions.

Appendix A: Highlights of the November 2015 Lecturers Survey

In association with ongoing revisions to Policy 76¹, a new FAUW committee was created focused on the concerns of Lecturers². This committee consists of eight Lecturers drawn from all six Faculties, along with several non-Lecturer members of the FAUW Board and the Policy 76 Revision Committee. It soon became apparent that the job descriptions of faculty members in Lecturer positions varied widely across this campus. To capture this diversity, a survey was administered (Nov 13-20, 2015) to explore five main topics:

- terms of appointment – the nature of Lecturer positions, how individuals got there
- teaching loads
- experience with the “option to have at least one term in six be non-teaching”
- service – understanding of eligibility for and participation in various service roles
- different titles and ranks for Lecturers at uWaterloo

The response rate to the survey was impressive, with 83% of the 180 Lecturers participating. This level of support, consistent with the very well attended, lively meeting of Lecturers held by FAUW in summer 2014, shows the level of engagement of this group. Every question provided an option for clarification, and respondents provided abundant feedback. This early report will provide highlights based on data only, but much insight will be gained by thorough consideration of the qualitative responses.

I. Terms of Employment

The majority of Lecturers (73%) competed for their positions in open searches. These positions are relatively long-term, with 68% of Lecturers in their positions for four years or more, and 28% here for more than 10 years. Despite this longevity, the process of transitioning to continuing Lecturer is far from clear – the process had been discussed with 41% of respondents, but 55% indicated that process had not been discussed or that they were unclear on it. Somewhat surprisingly, only 54% of respondents were in 80% teaching : 20% service positions. A significant proportion had research components (60 : 20 : 20, 17%), while the remainder (28%) had 50% or 70% service components.

II. Teaching Load

The most commonly reported course load per calendar year was six (33%), but 15% taught more, and 15% taught three or fewer. Further scrutiny may reveal that these lower loads are associated with the service-heavy positions. Rather than teaching portions of courses, Lecturers tend to have primary responsibility for their courses with three courses per term being the most common load (58% of respondents). Lecturers are responsible for a broad range of course types; the vast majority (84%) of respondents deliver core or required courses, but they also deliver online courses (22%) and graduate courses (28%).

¹ This policy defines appointment categories and hiring procedures for faculty at the University of Waterloo.

² FAUW officially represents all Lecturers, both continuing and definite term. Sessional instructors and certain other non-regular appointments are not recognized as being represented by FAUW.

III. Non-Teaching Term

The majority (70%) of Lecturers teach three terms out of three. Of these, only 34% have had a non-teaching term. Of the remainder, 27% believed they were ineligible, 10% were not even aware of the policy and 28% thought they were eligible but had never been offered. Of those that had a non-teaching term, 78% gained the term off teaching only by having their teaching redistributed to other terms that year. For those that have had a non-teaching term, the main activities were increased service (64%) and course/program development (60%).

IV. Service Roles

There is lack of clarity on whether Lecturers are eligible for certain service roles. While the vast majority (97%) attended and voted on issues arising at departmental meetings, only 21% had served on hiring committees, and 54% believed they were not allowed to participate in this process. While 21% had served on grad student advisory committees and/or (co)supervised grad students, 55 and 61%, respectively, believed they were ineligible for these two roles.

V. Titles

Lecturers were asked to rank the following four options in order of preference:

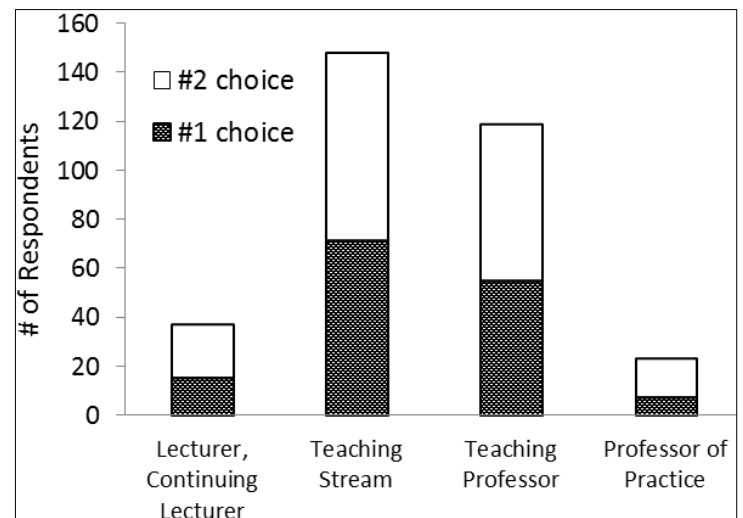
- *Lecturer, Continuing Lecturer*
- *Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor, Teaching Stream*
- *Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor*
- *Assistant Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice, Professor of Practice*

Shown at right are the first and second choices for all respondents. The designations most preferred were:

- *Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream*
- *Associate Professor, Teaching Stream*
- *Professor, Teaching Stream*

The next strongest preference was for the following designations:

- *Assistant Teaching Professor*
- *Associate Teaching Professor*
- *Teaching Professor*



The 2015 Lecturers Survey has been an important first step in understanding how FAUW can better inform the Policy 76 Committee and other levels of UW administration on how best to meet the needs of this group.

Appendix B: LECTURER NON-TEACHING TERM AND POLICY 76

Preamble

Since its October 2009 update, Policy 76 has stated that:

"Lecturers shall have the option to have at least one term in six be a non-teaching term".

The policy also acknowledges that:

"Assignment of duties must take into account the distinctive feature of university teaching (i.e., that instruction is provided by scholars who are expected to remain current in their field and maintain their scholarly competence) regardless of whether a separate rating for scholarship is part of the Lecturer's performance review."

Allocating time for such professional development is particularly crucial at Waterloo, with the majority of Lecturers teaching year-round to support the commitment of this university to the co-op model.

We laud the efforts that went into bringing the non-teaching term into policy. However, interpretation and implementation of this clause has been inconsistent across the university. Commonly, the non-teaching term does not happen at all, or it is granted with the requirement of re-allocating that term's teaching to other terms. Neither of these scenarios – uninterrupted year-round teaching or a non-teaching term associated with two terms of overload – provides Lecturers with professional development time or work-life balance.

Summary

This document outlines the FAUW Lecturer Committee concerns about the non-teaching term for Lecturers found in Policy 76. In short, we are asking the FAUW Board to consider the following position:

- Lecturers should have a guaranteed, regularly occurring professional development (PD) term in which they are relieved of their duty of choice (typically assigned teaching) and their time redirected to activities that increase their effectiveness as university educators or otherwise enhance their value to the university.
- This PD term should reduce their normal annual teaching load proportional to the length of the term. Fundamental to this position is that the normal annual teaching load being reduced is the load Lecturers have experienced in the past few years.

This memo first provides the rationale for the above position and then proposes some suggestions for Policy 76 language changes that would achieve our position. Quantitative data is drawn from the November 2015 Lecturers Survey which gathered input from 83% of the 180 Lecturers on campus.

Revisiting the Rationale for a Professional Development Term

Lecturers are essential components of UW's teaching mission. In addition to normally devoting more time and energy honing their teaching skills compared to faculty at the professorial rank, they provide increased flexibility and stability to their departments. Attracting and retaining the best Lecturers is consistent with UW's goal of academic excellence.

Lecturers at Waterloo are unique in that the majority of them (70%) are teaching at or near their maximum capacity year-round, due to Waterloo's co-op system. Despite the non-teaching term clause that has been in Policy 76 since 2009, only a third of Lecturers (34%) have ever had a non-teaching term.

These both lead to the following problems here at UW:

1. Mental health concerns for Lecturers.

- Lecturer burnout rates due to constant mental strain of continuous teaching seem anecdotally higher than regular faculty according to AF&T observations.
- Imagine teaching three courses then three courses then two courses, and repeating this year after year... Some dedicated Lecturers can no doubt handle it but it is unreasonable for UW to believe that being able to handle this in a healthy way is the norm.

2. Retaining our best Lecturers is likely to become harder in the near future.

- Other U15 universities have enacted new policies that are much more attractive than UW's in that they have Lecturer equivalents with the title of Professor who have typically one non-teaching term per year and who are *also* eligible for sabbaticals.

3. Lecturers teaching all three terms (or those focused primarily on service all three terms) have effectively zero time for professional development, course development or revision.

- The best Lecturers keep current and innovate in the classroom – in fact we expect them to do so according to Policy. But realistically, when do they have the time to reflect on a course, investigate alternative teaching methods, enroll in a specialized course, or interact with industry?

4. Work-life balance concerns re: vacation time.

- With four or five weeks of vacation that they are not allowed to carry forward, Lecturers teaching year-round are limited to fitting in a three-week family vacation between the August exam period and the start of the fall term, and wedging in one more week in late April. Note that this assumes a) no grading after the last final exam day and b) zero course preparation until the first day of classes, neither of which are realistic. Another factor reducing the gaps between terms is that many Lecturers are involved in delivery of online courses, such that exams may be trickling in over a period of many weeks.
- Moreover, the inflexible timing is *extremely* limiting if Lecturers need to coordinate vacation times with those of spouses, kids and extended family members.

Implementation of the Professional Development Term: Current Practice

The November 2015 Lecturers Survey indicated that, of the minority of Lecturers who had experienced a non-teaching term, 78% had those courses re-allocated to other terms. Indeed, many

Lecturers indicated that they would forgo the non-teaching term if it required them to teach four courses in two terms of that year.

This current practice is quite simply illogical. Consider this simple scenario:

Assumptions about Lecturer A:

- They have taught same annual course load for four or more years
- They have 80/20 duty split between teaching/service
- Their course load is six per year and distributed equally in all three terms
- They work a full work week

Analysis

- So nominally, Lecturer A spends 80% of their time on teaching, 20% on service and does this in each term.
- In the non-teach option under current Policy 76, Lecturer A has to shift 2 courses out of one term (80% of their time) into two other terms potentially leading to:
 - 120% of time in Term 1 spent teaching (3 courses), ?% time on service in Term 1
 - 120% of time in Term 2 spent teaching (3 courses), ?% time on service in Term 2
 - 0% of time in Term 3 on teaching, $\geq 60\%$ time on service (to achieve 20% for the year) and $\leq 40\%$ of time on teaching preparation and professional development
- So Lecturer A is overworked, probably drops all service in Terms 1 and 2, and is likely burned out at end of Term 2 and thus ineffective in professional development and service tasks in Term 3.
- Of course another outcome is that Lecturer A does not drop service in Terms 1 and 2 and instead 'mails it in' for the six courses spending $\frac{1}{3}$ fewer hours on each of the six courses.

Conclusions

- The math simply does not work out for the "make up the teaching" implementation of Policy 76 and Lecturer A is forced to choose one or some combination of either degrading their teaching quality/effort, ignoring service tasks for eight months or sacrificing their family time and health by working more intensely for eight months in order to acquire one term off in six.
- This conclusion holds for any Lecturer teaching in all three terms and teaching five or more courses.
- By providing no guidance whatsoever, Policy 76 allows "make up the teaching" to be the default.

The findings of the November 2015 Lecturers Survey strongly support this third point:

Of the Lecturers teaching year-round who have had a non-teaching term, 78% report a redistribution of teaching load for that year, while only 22% report a reduction in load.

Proposed Changes to Policy 76

Clearly the non-teaching term clause in Policy 76 needs to change, and change in the favour of Lecturers with respect to professional development time. Here is a Policy 76 language modification that balances concerns from all sides:

- Lecturers shall have the option to have one term in six as a Professional Development term, in which they are relieved of their duty of choice (either assigned teaching or service).
- The corresponding teaching load for that year will be reduced in proportion to the length of that term (i.e., by one-third).
- Chairs are responsible for facilitating the planning of this term and making arrangements to cover the relieved duties.
- Professional development terms cannot be carried forward.

Appendix C: Lecturers and Vacations

A letter of appointment for Definite Term Reappointment (three years) states the following:

“This appointment carries with it a provision for vacation allowance of one month in twelve to be taken at a time or times acceptable to your department head. All vacation allowance must be used before the expiry of the appointment.”

A sample letter of appointment for Continuing Lecturer states the following:

“This appointment carries with it a provision for vacation allowance of one month in twelve to be taken at a time or times acceptable to your department head. Vacation entitlement normally shall be used during the contract year in which it is earned. In exceptional circumstances with the prior written permission of the Department Chair, vacation entitlement may be carried forward for a maximum of one year. All vacation entitlement must be used prior to termination or retirement.”

Question:

Is it possible for Lecturers teaching three out of three terms to take four weeks of vacation in a typical academic year?

Term	Classes	Exam period	Gap until next term
Spring 2015	May 4 – July 28	Aug 4 – Sat Aug 15	three weeks
Fall 2015	Sept 14 – Dec 4	Dec 8 – Tues Dec 22	one day (Dec 23)*
Winter 2016	Jan 4 – Apr 4	Apr 8 – Sat Apr 23	one week
Spring 2016	May 2 – Tues July 26	Tues Aug 2 – Sat Aug 13	three weeks
Fall 2016	Thurs Sept 8 – Dec 5	Thurs Dec 8 – Thurs Dec 22	one day (Dec 23)*

*According to [Policy 38](#), the days after Dec 23 and before the start of winter term are either ‘fixed’ holidays (Christmas Day, New Year’s Day) or ‘floating’ holidays (designated at the discretion of the President) and are not considered part of the vacation period.

It is only possible to take four weeks of vacation *if*...

1. One week is wedged into the gap between winter and spring terms, *and no exam grading for the previous term or course preparation for the upcoming term is carried out.*
2. Three weeks of vacation are taken mid-August to early September, *and no exam grading for the previous term or course preparation for the upcoming term is carried out.*

Answer:

Since points 1 and 2, individually or together, are rarely if ever true, it is not possible for a Lecturer teaching three out of three terms to use the allotted 4 weeks of vacation. It would *not* be possible to take 5 weeks of vacation (annual entitlement after 10 years of employment).

Moreover, this inflexible timing makes it impossible for Lecturers to coordinate vacation times with those of spouses, kids and extended family. This restriction runs very much counter to the goal of work-life balance.