

York University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English
Memorandum

From: Kim Ian Michasiw, Chair
To: Bernie Lightman, Administration Co-Chair, JCOAA
Penni Stewart, YUFA CO-Chair, JCOAA
Re: Faculty Workload
Date: 10 August 2000

The shortest answer to the question of calculating “normal teaching load” in the Department of English (Arts) is that nothing has been counted except the teaching of full-course equivalents. Arts English is also anomalous in that the normal workload is 3 full-course equivalents. In 1999-2000 the Department passed a motion reducing the “normal teaching load” of pre-tenure members to 2.5 courses.

Without entering into a long historical essay attempting to explain how this circumstance came into being, allow it to be said that Arts English has a much higher than average percentage of YUFA members who are not appointed to the graduate programme (or, more precisely, were once appointed but have at one point of another been discarded). This group has been active and influential and has made any attempts to include graduate supervisions, for instance, as a portion of workload more or less impossible. The semi-official position of the Department has been, for a number of years, that, as graduate courses are smaller than undergraduate classes, those privileged to teach such courses are receiving a form of workload relief which compensates for other forms of labour in the graduate programme.

Over the past decade there have been several attempts to move to a more inclusive method of calculating workload. The first of these fizzled inconclusively in 1992; the second foundered on the questions of scholarship and extra-academic responsibilities in 1997. A spate of recent appointments and the encroachment of a large number of retirements have, however, realigned the Department. By the end of the 00-01 academic session 27.16 of our 35.16 active FTEs will be appointed to the Graduate Programme in English. This transformation, together with the new language regarding workload in the YUFA Collective Agreement, gives us hope for a more productive outcome to our current project. We are currently engaged in an exhaustive survey of various forms of academic labours undertaken by faculty members. This research will result in the creation of a workload database which, we hope, will permit a fully informed collegial reopening of these issues.

In the absence of a formal policy beyond the blanket statement that all full-time faculty will teach 3 full-course equivalents, there has evolved a relatively coherent, but perhaps not always equitably administered, attempt to apportion additional course releases to those carrying exceptional burdens whether in the graduate programme or in Service to one level or another of the University community. Because of the inequality of supervisory loads in the Grad Programme in English, it has not been difficult to identify 7 or 8 members of Arts English who do vastly more than their nearest competitor colleagues. Allowing these colleagues an additional .5 FCE release when the budget allows is increasingly the norm.

As noted, we are trying to develop a workload database that will effectually factor in all of those elements that make up workload. Not wishing to overburden this memo, I will send these under separate cover, \in case they might be of use.

I hope that the foregoing serves to answer the questions posed to departments by the JCOAA and I apologize for the long delay in responding. Should further information be required, please do not hesitate to ask.

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Associate Professor & Chair