

SRA MAROON PAPERS



THE McMASTER STUDENTS UNION | KEY POINTS & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SRA POLICY PAPERS

POLICY PAPER SUPPORTING HIGH QUALITY CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

PREAMBLE

With Ontario universities facing the challenges of inflationary costs and increased undergraduate enrolment, maintaining educational standards is highly important to students. In order to ensure that these challenges are adequately met, the need for resources in teaching and learning, including certified instructors and teaching assistants, pedagogical and professional development, and rewarding the professors who teach well are critical to the success of current and future McMaster students.

Students believe that a combination of inputs contribute towards student academic success, both within the classroom and within the greater university infrastructure. The current reality is that Ontario universities are facing hyperinflationary cost pressures and a limited provincial emphasis on investing into quality of education. Thus, universities are finding it more challenging to maintain a high-quality teaching and learning environment for students. This policy addresses student concerns over quality of education that students are currently facing, and advances recommendations to invest in quality-driven initiatives at McMaster University.

PRINCIPLES

The MSU believes that:

- Student learning is dependent on quality teaching in the classroom.
- Instructors must have the resources to develop their teaching skills.
- Teaching assistants should be encouraged to take advantage of the resources at MIIETL.
- Teaching-stream faculty are critically important members of the University community, as students benefit from their expertise and passion for teaching.



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CONCERNS

The MSU is concerned that:

- Class sizes are increasing for McMaster students.
- The number of full-time faculty (teaching-stream or traditional tenure faculty) has not kept pace with increases in undergraduate enrolment over the past ten years.
- Teaching-stream faculty members are not held in high-enough regard as valuable members of the academic community.
- Teaching-stream positions are paid less than other full-time faculty, creating a disincentive for faculty members to initially enter this pathway.
- The process for removal of teaching-stream faculty members is much simpler than removal of tenure-track professors, and acts as a disincentive towards teaching.
- McMaster University policy places a cap on the number of teaching-stream faculty members for each faculty.
- McMaster instructors receive irregular formal training or new faculty orientations and are not expected to attain certification in teaching.
- McMaster teaching assistants (TAs) do not receive mandatory training in teaching or classroom leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The MSU recommends that McMaster University:

- Appoint a teaching and learning leader in each department to work with their colleagues in improving the department's teaching, learning, and assessment strategies to assist in reviewing and designing curriculum.
- Amend McMaster policy to reflect a growing appreciation for teaching, by readjusting remuneration, removal processes and governance abilities for teaching-stream faculty, and with raising the cap on the number of teaching-stream faculty members, in conjunction with increasing instructor hiring by approximately ten (10) percent to address the trends in increasing class-sizes and student-faculty ratios.
- Mandate that all new teaching assistants attend paid, institution-wide training from MIETL before entering the classroom.
- Ensure new faculty orientation programs are longer, and focus on developing connections between new faculty while also updating these individuals on current pedagogical research and innovative practices.

FURTHER READING

For more information about High Quality Classroom Instruction, visit the **General Policies section** of the MSU website to read the full Policy Paper.



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POLICY PAPER

Supporting High-Quality Classroom Learning

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Introduction

With Ontario universities facing the challenges of inflationary costs and increased undergraduate enrolment, maintaining educational standards is highly important to students. In order to ensure that these challenges are adequately met, the need for resources in teaching and learning, including certified instructors and teaching assistants, pedagogical and professional development, and rewarding the professors who teach well are critical to the success of current and future McMaster students.

Students believe that a combination of inputs contribute towards student academic success, both within the classroom and within the greater university infrastructure. The current reality is that Ontario universities are facing hyperinflationary cost pressures and a limited provincial emphasis on investing into quality of education. Thus, universities are finding it more challenging to maintain a high-quality teaching and learning environment for students. This policy addresses student concerns over quality of education that students are currently facing, and advances well-reasoned recommendations to invest in quality-driven initiatives at McMaster University.

Universities in Ontario actually lag behind the college sector and K-12 in regards to teacher preparation – at most universities, McMaster included, university instructors and teaching assistants do not receive any mandatory training or teacher's education before entering the classroom. Studies show that a lack of preparation and background knowledge on teaching & learning pedagogy has fostered a disconnect with the ways that students actually learn best. While teaching-stream faculty members have garnered considerable positive feedback from students, their roles are largely undervalued by peers and McMaster University administration, thus limiting their positive impact within the university community. Furthermore, while tuition costs have increased at rates faster than inflation in recent decades, class sizes and student-to-faculty ratios at McMaster have consistently worsened. These facts are concerning for all students, yet show little sign of improving in coming years.

Based on these concerns, students put forward the following recommendations:

- Increase the cap on teaching-stream faculty members at McMaster University;
- Reallocate operating funding towards hiring new professors to address large class sizes and the high student-to-faculty ratio;
- Mandate that all new faculty members undergo training and familiarization with the best-practices of teaching students and encouraging student learning;
- Mandate that all graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants participate in a paid comprehensive and holistic training program.

Principle One: Student learning is dependent on quality teaching in the classroom.

Past and emerging pedagogical research continues to support the idea that students are unique and varied in their approach to learning. A report titled “Student Learning Styles and Their Implications for Teaching” published by the University of Michigan in 1996 states that faculty should, “strive to provide a variety of learning experiences, such that at one point or another each learning style is addressed.” The report goes on to state that, “faculty should be teaching to a sufficient diversity of student learning styles to encourage innovation in their fields.”¹ Also, a recent book titled “Motivation for Achievement: Possibilities for Teaching and Learning,” investigates the various factors contributing to student success and failure, amongst these social-cognitive processes, the classroom climate, and teaching efficacy. Within the teaching section for instance, the author states that, “A classroom in which students are engaged does not just happen; it is the result of interactions among students, teachers, and curriculum.”² The book goes on to cite various studies and researchers who have identified the important role teachers have in increasing student motivation. In addition, a report by the Australian Council for Educational Research titled “Teachers Make a Difference: What is the Research Evidence?” had some substantial findings. The report included a table that showed the range of influences on student success, and the majority of positive influences were found to stem directly from the teacher. Some of these teaching traits were feedback, instructional quality, class environment, and teacher style.³ In addition, many Ontario universities currently honor teaching excellence; another testament to the role of teachers in student success. At McMaster, the MSU offers Teaching Awards to professors of each faculty, while York University offers University-Wide Teaching Awards. Therefore, in order to ensure McMaster’s standards on quality education are upheld, the MSU wishes to draw the connection between student academic success and teaching excellence, and advocate for faculty and staff to adhere to successful educational practices.

Principle Two: Instructors must have the resources to develop their teaching skills.

Instructors are offered teaching support primarily through the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence (MIETL), formerly known as the Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL). While the CLL offered services to faculty and student teachers in the realm of education and teaching, MIETL grew to also carry out research work as an institute for Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL). Currently, MIETL’s primary pillars are pedagogy, teaching technologies, and scholarship (Table 1).

Under the three core functions, MIETL offers a multiplicity of services available to faculty and graduate students (Table 2).

Faculty instructors at McMaster University have a plurality of resources available to them provided by MIETL. While the sheer number of services is an accomplishment, students are concerned over whether faculty actively utilize these resources consistently and whether these resources are efficient and effective in providing substantial training and guidance for faculty. The MSU believes the success of these programs is important to ensure that faculty are best-prepared to fulfill their teaching responsibilities.

¹ Montgomery, S. M., Groat, L.N. (1998). *Student Learning Styles and their Implications for Teaching*. Page 3 – 5 . Retrieved from https://www.eecs.umich.edu/cse/cs_connections/cs4hs_presentations_09/Student_Learning_Styles.pdf

² Alderman, M. K. (2008). *Motivation for Achievement: Possibilities for Teaching and Learning*. London: Routledge.

³ Hattie, J. (October 2003). *Teachers Make a Difference – What is the Research Evidence?* Page 4. Retrieved from http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/hattie_teachersmakeadifference.pdf

Table 1: Core functions of MIETL

Pillar	Description
Pedagogy	Trained and professional educational consultants at MIETL work with McMaster educators to advise on course/curriculum design, provide feedback on in-class teaching, and assist in developing teaching dossiers for tenure/promotion. ⁴
Teaching Technologies	MIETL offers instructors educational videos, information, and training to use teaching technologies such as Avenue to Learn, iClickers, multimedia, and MacLive. ⁵
Scholarship	As of 2013, MIETL hosts workshops to introduce faculty and staff to current research opportunities in Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL), but this component is likely to grow in future months. ⁶

Table 2: Services offered by MIETL

Service	Description
Communities of Practice	Groups of faculty, staff, and student representatives that facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience in unique pillars: accessibility, pedagogy, teaching professors, teaching with technology, research on teaching and learning, and social justice and critical pedagogies. ⁷
Conferences & Symposia	Events designed to allow members from multiple Ontario institutions to share their best and most innovative teaching techniques and styles. ⁸
Instructional Skills Workshop (ISWs)	A three-day workshop which provides more rigorous experiential training on teaching styles. Participants receive a recognized certification upon completion. ⁹
Facilitator Development Workshop	A five-day workshop that continues on learning from ISW. Aims to improve facilitation skills in the classroom for graduate students and faculty members. Participants receive a recognized certificate upon completion. ¹⁰
New Faculty Program	An annual meet-and-greet organized for new faculty members to interact and expand social and professional networks. ¹¹
Seminars & Workshops	Events organized around a range of topics that instructors are able to attend throughout the year. ¹²
Teaching & Learning Grants	Grants may be awarded to educators for projects focused on research into innovative teaching pedagogy. ¹³

⁴ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Consultation*. Retrieved from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/services/consultation.html?_l=i

⁵ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Teaching Technologies – Teaching Technologies*. Retrieved from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/teaching_technologies.html

⁶ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Scholarship - Research on Teaching & Learning Resources*. Retrieved from <http://cll.mcmaster.ca/scholarship/resources/resources.html>

⁷ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Communities of Practice*. Retrieved from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/communities_practice.html

⁸ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Conferences and Symposia*. Retrieved from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/conferences_symposia.html

⁹ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Instructional Skills Workshops*. Retrieved from <http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/ISW.html>

¹⁰ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Facilitator Development Workshop*. Retrieved from <http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/FDW.html>

¹¹ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – New Faculty Orientation to Teaching at McMaster*. Retrieved from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/faculty_orientation.html

¹² Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Seminars and Workshops*. Retrieved from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/seminars_workshops.html

Awards	Similar to MSU Teaching Awards, MIETL has 9 awards designed to celebrate and promote teaching innovation and excellence. ¹⁴
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Principle Three: Teaching assistants should be encouraged to take advantage of the resources at MIETL.

MIETL also offers an abundance of opportunities to strengthen the skills of both undergraduate and graduate TAs so that students are learning from competent and knowledgeable upper year students (Table 3).

Table 3: MIETL Resources for Teaching Assistants

Resource	Description
Teaching & Learning Forum	Annual event which aims to prepare graduate students for being teaching assistants (TAs). The half-day event features a wide menu of sessions on professional development, teaching & learning, student learning, and campus communities. ¹⁵
TA Network	A platform for McMaster TAs to share experiences and knowledge concerning their academic positions. ¹⁶ This platform is based around teaching-development workshops, which allow experienced and skilled TAs to share their knowledge with new TAs.
Education 750	A graduate course offered to graduate and post-doctoral students that aims to provide essential knowledge and skills in teaching, such as how to develop curriculum and structure problem-based learning and inquiry-based classes. ¹⁷
Teaching Assistant Workshop Series	A series of workshops scheduled throughout the semester to help TAs better their classroom performance. ¹⁸
Online Resources	Examples include reading material (ex. TA Survival Guide from the University of Guelph ¹⁹) and links to teaching career opportunities at Ontario universities and colleges. ²⁰

Similar to the opportunities provided for McMaster’s faculty, it is apparent that there are many resources for teaching assistants to learn and improve their skills in the classroom. In order for these resources to be successful however, a high proportion of teaching assistants must use these resources in order to improve their competencies as teaching assistants. Participation and usage statistics for these services at McMaster have not been compiled in

¹³ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Awards and Grants – Teaching and Learning Grants*. Retrieved from http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/awards_and_grants/grants.html

¹⁴ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Awards and Grants – Teaching and Learning Grants*. Retrieved from http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/awards_and_grants/index.html

¹⁵ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – Teaching and Learning Forum: Professional Development for Graduate Students and TAs and graduate students*. Retrieved from <http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/graduatestudentdayinfo.html>

¹⁶ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – TA Network*. Retrieved from <https://ccl.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/resources/tanetwork.html>

¹⁷ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – TA Programs*. Retrieved from http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/ta_program.html

¹⁸ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Pedagogy – TA Programs*. Retrieved from http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/pedagogy/programs/ta_program.html

¹⁹ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Resources – Teaching and Learning Resources*. Retrieved from http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/resources/G/Graduate_Student_Resources.html

²⁰ Centre for Leadership in Learning, (2013). *Programs & Services – Teaching Career Opportunities*. Retrieved from http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/programs/teaching_opportunities.php

recent years; however, system-wide studies across universities indicate that their usage is somewhat low.²¹

Principle Four: Teaching-stream faculty are critically important members of the University community, as students benefit from their expertise and passion for teaching.

In order to continue to provide the same level of educational excellence at Ontario universities despite rising enrolment and limited budgets, universities have begun investigating the benefits of teaching-stream faculty. These are faculty who, unlike traditional research/tenured faculty, receive permanence rather than tenure and are employed for the main responsibility of teaching, rather than conducting research (Figure 1). Although teaching-stream faculty have been subject to debate over their merits, students strongly believe that teaching-stream faculty represent a strong step forward in improving teaching and learning.

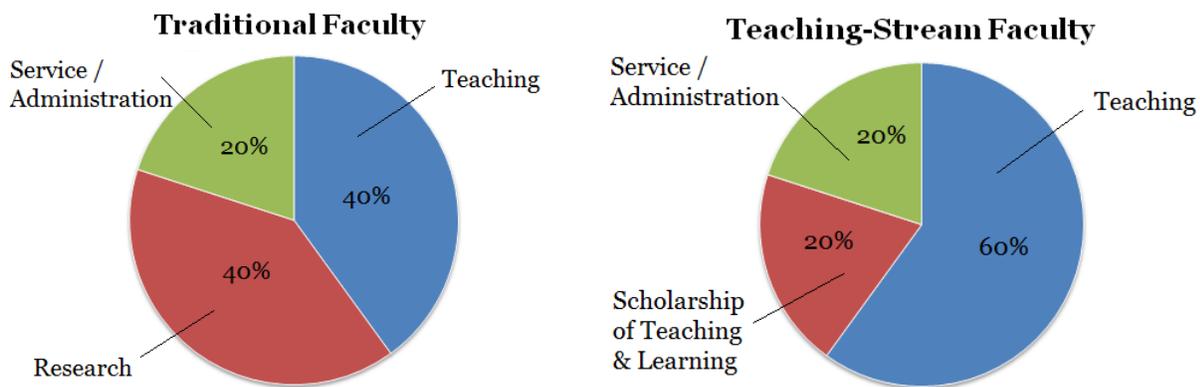


Figure 1: Average time spent on teaching for tenured faculty vs. teaching-stream faculty

In 2011, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario published the report *Teaching-Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities*. The study’s purpose was to “explore whether or how the use of teaching-stream faculty (TSF) assists universities in addressing the pressures of increased enrolment and of expanded institutional research activities while maintaining and enhancing teaching and learning quality.” The study found that 87% of TSF participants found they have a positive impact on both teaching quality and the student learning experience. The study also found that teaching-stream instructors tend to spend more time on their teaching responsibilities and developing pedagogy. Also, 60% TSF participants believe their position positively impacts their colleagues in their department, 69% believe it positively impacts their institutions, and 84% believe it positively influences their discipline.²²

Teaching-stream faculty are increasingly being employed at Ontario universities. A September 4th, 2013, Globe and Mail article “For a new kind of professor, teaching comes first” investigated the recent initiative by York University to attract approximately 200 faculty to the

²¹ Grabove, V., Kustra, E., Lopes, V., Potter, M., Wiggers, R., & Woodhouse, R. (2012). *Teaching and Learning Centres: Their Evolving Role Within Ontario Colleges and Universities*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

²² Vajoczki, S., Fenton, N., Menard, K., Pollon, D. (2011). *Teaching – Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities*. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Page 5, 24, 26. Retrieved from <http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Teaching-Stream%20Faculty%20in%20Ontario%20Universities.pdf>

university that have only one obligation: teaching. York's new teaching-faculty would be required to spend around 80% of their time doing teaching or teaching-related work. York's provost, Rhonda Lenton, states that, "There can be greater flexibility in how we distribute the workload, so that it really plays to people's strengths." The article also features Lovaye Kajiura, a biology Professor at McMaster, who is required to spend 80% of her time teaching and researching into innovative teaching methods (i.e. scholarship of teaching & learning, or SoTL). She explains, "We do research in teaching...so we can improve upon how we deliver the material to the students, so that they're engaged and motivated to follow that field." The article also highlights the benefit for professors, who are constantly stressed by the research-driven "publish-or-perish" culture.²³

On October 12th, 2013, The Chronicle of Higher Education published a lengthy research article titled "Today's Faculty: Stressed, Focused on Teaching, and Undeterred by Long Odds". The article refers to a survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCA, called "Undergraduate Teaching Faculty: the 2010-2011 Heri Faculty Survey."²⁴ The article found that 97 percent of faculty ranked teaching an essential aspect of their position, with 79 percent for research and 63 percent for service. However, the study found that faculty members admitted to teaching and preparing for classes less than before – 44 percent of professors teach 9 or more hours per week, while only 20 years ago this proportion was as high as 63 percent. The decrease in teaching is indicative of universities' growing dependency on contingent faculty, and as result, professors are stressed because they cannot share their responsibilities with other professors.²⁵

A focus group conducted with teaching-stream faculty at McMaster also reflected the benefits that these unique faculty members offer to students. Of the instructors present, many strongly believed in the merits of their position to advance student academic success by focusing on teaching over research. They cited their tendency to attempt to engage students outside of the traditional lecture-style format by using technology or various forms of active learning. These professors explained how their use of novel teaching methods in smaller classes initially alienated students, although students consistently positively responded to these teaching practices by the end of courses. This was mainly attributed to the fact that students saw the value of learning independently, rather than focusing on fulfilling rubrics and achieving specific grades. This speaks strongly towards the benefit of teaching-stream faculty.

Since there is extensive research supporting the benefits of teaching-stream faculty, these faculty should be treated on equal footing to traditional faculty, and used effectively in McMaster's teaching environment.

Concern One: Class sizes are increasing for McMaster students.

McMaster's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis yearly publishes data by Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) regarding instructional faculty and class sizes. By compiling the percentage frequency of specific first-year class sizes from 2005 to 2011, general

²³ Bradshaw, J. (September 3th, 2013). *For a new kind of professor, teaching comes first*. Globe and Mail. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/new-breed-of-university-faculty-puts-focus-on-teaching-over-research/article14117866/>

²⁴ Hurtado, S., Eagan, K., Pryor, J., Whang, H. & Tran, S. (2011). *Undergraduate Teaching Faculty: The 2010 – 2011 Heri Faculty Survey*. Retrieved from <http://heri.ucla.edu/monographs/HERI-FAC2011-Monograph.pdf>.

²⁵ Berrett, D. (October 24th, 2012). *Today's Faculty: stressed and Focused on Teaching*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Todays-Faculty-Stressed-and/135276/>

trends of class size frequency emerge.²⁶ Most concerning to students is the recent increases in the proportion of classes sizes with 101 – 251+ students while classes with <100 students are decreasing. This is demonstrated in the following graph.²⁷

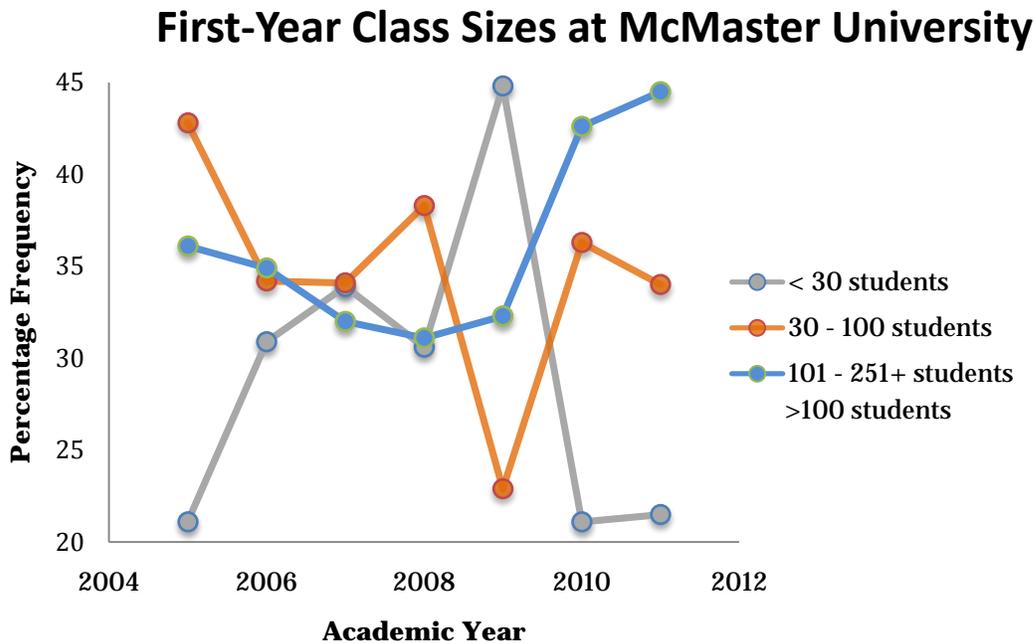


Figure 2: Changes in first-year class sizes at McMaster University
[Common Universities Database Ontario (CUDO)]

Recent inclines in class sizes at hold important negative implications for the quality of student learning at McMaster University. While teaching and learning quality may not explicitly depend on class size, class size is certainly a contributing input to student success in the classroom. Multiple higher-education studies have shown that class size negatively correlates with student satisfaction, ratings of instructor effectiveness, grade performance, and learning outcomes.^{28 29} Some possible explanations for this data may include limited individual student-faculty interaction, increased potential for classroom disruption/limited participation, or lower attendance. Another likely reason for poorer student outcomes is that larger classes do not easily lend themselves to innovations in pedagogy, such as experiential hands-on learning or peer-based learning.³⁰

²⁶ McMaster University Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. (2012). *Common University Data Ontario (CUDO)*. Retrieved from <http://www.mcmaster.ca/avpira/cudo.html>

²⁷ McMaster University Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. (2012). *Common University Data Ontario (CUDO)*. Retrieved from <http://www.mcmaster.ca/avpira/cudo.html>

²⁸ Rios, R.J. (1998). Class Size: Does it Really Matter? *Johns Hopkins School of Education*. Retrieved from <http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/Transforming%20Education/Articles/Class%20Size/>

²⁹ Bandiera O., Larcinese V., Rasul I. (2010). The impact of class size on the performance of university students. *Vox: Research-based policy analysis and commentary from leading economists*. Retrieved from <http://www.voxeu.org/article/impact-class-size-performance-university-students>

³⁰ Monks, J., & Schmidt, R. (2010). *The impact of class size and number of students on outcomes in higher education*. Robins School of Business, University of Richmond.

Concern Two: The number of full-time faculty (teaching-stream or traditional tenure faculty) has not kept pace with increases in undergraduate enrolment over the past ten years.

Between the 2004-2005 and 2011-2012 academic years, full-time undergraduate and graduate enrolment at McMaster increased from 19,837 to 25,002 students, an increase of 26.0%. Regarding full-time faculty, between the 2005-2006 and 2011-2012 academic years, full-time faculty increased from 1,173 to 1,377, representing an increase of only 17.4%. OCUFA also published a 2011 briefing note with findings that support these trends. The note appealed to the fact that the average ratio of students to professor in Ontario universities is 26:1, which is drastically higher than the national average (excluding Ontario) of 19:1. The report also stated that between 2006 and 2009 faculty hiring was 7% lower than the projected hiring made by universities in the Multi-Year Accountability Agreements (MYAA) with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The briefing note also highlights the fact that hiring plans during the 2009–2010 year were down 40% from the previous year as a result of university hiring freezes and slowdowns.³¹ This is cause for concern from students, as larger class sizes result in decreased student-professor interaction and a learning environment that is less conducive to student-centered learning.

Members of McMaster’s teaching-stream community have also expressed frustration with the large class sizes at McMaster. Many of these faculty have stated that implementing new pedagogical teaching methods within smaller class sizes is easy and successful, while doing so in larger class sizes is much more challenging. This structural problem inhibits their ability to improve and progress the existing teaching at McMaster, despite willingness for change from both teachers and students at the university.

Concern Three: Teaching-stream faculty members are not held in high-enough regard as valuable members of the academic community.

In 2011, HEQCO published a report titled “Teaching-Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities.” The study’s purpose was “to explore whether or how the use of TSF assists universities in addressing the pressures of increased enrolment and of expanded institutional research activities while maintaining and enhancing teaching and learning quality.” The report found that 87% of TSF surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with their position.³²

However, teaching-stream faculty (TSF) indicated key areas that they considered the largest drawbacks of their position.

1. Lack of value placed on role by the academy and peers

- TSF respondents considered being treated like second-class and were not allowed to teach at the graduate level for many courses;
- TSF are denied the opportunity to chair a department despite many TSF having more administrative experience

³¹ Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. (August 2011). OCUFA Briefing Note. Retrieved from <http://ocufa.on.ca/wordpress/assets/faculty-shortages-briefing-note-election-2011.pdf>

³² Vajoczki, S., Fenton, N., Menard, K., Pollon, D. (2011). *Teaching – Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities*. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Page 3 – 4. Retrieved from <http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Teaching-Stream%20Faculty%20in%20Ontario%20Universities.pdf>

- TSF spend more time on campus while tenured faculty are off campus conducting research;
- Feeling second-class because of job title (lecturer rather than associate professor), lack of sabbatical, denial to achieve superior administrative appointments, and differences in pay structure.

2. Workload

- This was due to TSF needing to constantly maintain their teaching materials and technology, as well as being fully engaged in developing pedagogical expertise and teaching initiatives
- TSF also said they felt their work went underrepresented and/or unacknowledged

3. Insufficient remuneration

- Despite university's claiming they value teaching, TSF pay is lower than research-stream faculty who have equal seniority;
- There is also a large distinction between TSF and research compensation for bonuses in addition to salary³³

Based on a roundtable discussion with teaching-stream faculty members at McMaster, the report's finding are indeed applicable to teaching-stream instructors at McMaster: an impression that they are less valued than their faculty counterparts, both by their superiors and by their fellow academics. This impression would be highly reduced if McMaster took the step to better integrate teaching-focused faculty into the legion of traditional faculty, by paying them equal rates and allowing them equal rights as employees.

Concern Four: Teaching-stream positions are paid less than other full-time faculty, creating a disincentive for faculty members to initially enter this pathway.

In 2008, OCUFA published a Policy Background Paper entitled, *Career Limiting Move? Teaching-only Positions in Ontario Universities*. The paper investigates the trends in Ontario universities concerning types of faculty appointment, and draws conclusions about the advantages and disadvantages for teaching-stream faculty. The paper states that with occasional exceptions, teaching-only faculty in Ontario are generally paid 70% to 90% of Assistant Professor floor salaries. The study also cites Statistics Canada data, which states that teaching-only faculty earns 70 – 75% of the average salary of other faculty. The only outliers listed in the study were that of the University of Toronto and York University, meaning that McMaster would be included in these percentages.³⁴

Findings by Leslie Sanders of York University also support this research. The report, *Teaching-Stream Positions: Some Implications*, states that teaching-stream faculty “teach courses at one or more institutions at salaries far lower than those paid to full-time faculty, have little or no job security, and few to no benefits.” The report goes on to say that universities use teaching-stream faculty because they lower teaching costs and are more easily expendable than traditional faculty. Also, it argues that teaching-stream faculty is limited because these

³³ Citation: Vajoczki, S., Fenton, N., Menard, K., Pollon, D. (2011). *Teaching – Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities*. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Page 29 – 30. Retrieved from <http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Teaching-Stream%20Faculty%20in%20Ontario%20Universities.pdf>

³⁴ Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. (September 2nd, 2008). *Career Limiting Move? Teaching – only Positions In Ontario Universities*. Page 11. Retrieved from <http://www.yorkdemocraticforum.org/sites/yorkdemocraticforum.org/files/teachingonlypositions.pdf>

individuals have little time to engage in research and thus would not have a competitive application for tenure-track positions against traditional tenure-track positions.³⁵

In addition, in a report titled “Overview of Tenure and Promotion Policies Across Canada” from the University of Toronto it is stated that teaching-stream faculty is “required to engage in the scholarship of teaching in learning.” Teaching responsibilities also include:

- Peer review of in-class teaching and course content
- Contributions to program and curriculum development
- Creating and maintain a teaching dossier
- Publishing research regarding teaching and learning and pedagogical innovations
- Involvement with teaching awards³⁶

At McMaster, evidence of scholarship (in teaching & learning or otherwise) is not required for a teaching-stream faculty to achieve permanence, but it is looked upon favorably.

Thus, teaching-stream faculty are required to do a sizable amount of work, and are consistently tasked with many responsibilities, and thus their compensation should be equivalent to tenure-stream instructors. These findings replicate those present in the HEQCO report, as TSF believe they have both a significant workload but insignificant remuneration.

All these factors serve as a general disincentive for faculty to enter teaching-stream positions. The MSU believes reduced pay is not only a disincentive for faculty to enter this stream, but is also unjust for the level of work these faculty do. Since these faculty members are required to remain up-to-date on current pedagogical research and developments, attend teaching and learning conferences, and teaching high numbers of students, their decreased pay is a cause of major concern.

Concern Five: The process for removal of teaching-stream faculty members is much simpler than removal of tenure-track professors, and acts as a disincentive towards teaching.

In McMaster University’s Appointment, Tenure and Promotion (Tenure and Promotion Policy) document, Section VI and VII deal with procedures for removal of all types of faculty at the university. For tenured or permanent appointment faculty, termination of their position must be conducted with “adequate cause,” which can include the faculty having, “neglected his or her academic responsibilities, or has been guilty of such unethical academic behavior.” In addition, if the President intends to remove a faculty member, they must notify the faculty by mail and schedule an appointment with them to discuss their behavior. If the faculty member decides to contest this action, “the President shall so inform the Senate and the senate shall proceed immediately to establish a Hearing Committee.”

This entire process shows how dignified and controlled potential termination for these faculty members is. For teaching-track and permanent teaching appointments however, individuals may be removed without any adequate cause due to, “curricular change or removal

³⁵ Citation: Sanders, L. (April 2011). *Teaching – Stream Positions: Some Implications*. York University. Page 3. Retrieved from <http://www.cou.on.ca/publications/academic-colleague-papers/pdfs/ac-discussion---teaching-stream-positions---april->

³⁶ Gravestock, P. & Greenleaf, E. G., (2008). *Overview of Tenure and Promotion Polices Across Canada*. University of Toronto. Page 3. Retrieved from <http://www.malaspina.ca/integratedplanning/documents/OverviewofTPPoliciesinCanada.pdf>

of an area or field.” The policy also states that, “the academic merits of, or financial savings from, a curricular change or removal of an area or field that leads to termination of a teaching appointment cannot be the subject of a grievance.”³⁷ This effectively provides the university justification for eliminating teaching-stream positions that may negatively affect the academics of a program for financial savings. Since the MSU’s stance is for teaching-stream faculty to be given equal footing with their faculty counterparts, the current treatment of teaching-stream faculty contradicts this belief.

Concern Six: McMaster University policy places a cap on the number of teaching-stream faculty members for each faculty.

McMaster’s 2011 Policies, Procedures and Guidelines document includes a table of the maximum number of teaching–stream appointments that can be made vs. the number of the rest of the faculty.³⁸ Figure 3 further illustrates the disparity between the number of teaching-stream appointments and the number of other faculty appointments.

From a student perspective, McMaster professors are individuals largely concerned with student academic learning and success. The above data confirms the opposite however, with research rather than student education being the priority of a large majority of professors. This is a major concern for the MSU, since the majority of professors do not have the time to keep up-to-date on pedagogical innovation in their field, because they are enveloped in the research and publishing aspects of their jobs.

The notion of a cap in the first place devalues the role that teaching-stream faculty members play in stimulating a stronger culture of teaching, learning, and pedagogy. The university should not see teaching-stream faculty as entities to limit; rather, the decision to hire a teaching-stream faculty member versus a traditional tenure-track faculty member should be done as needed.

Table 4: Teaching-Stream Faculty Caps and Proportion of Total Faculty

Faculty	Maximum # of Teaching-Stream Appointments	Number of Total Other Faculty Members	Representation of Teaching-Stream Faculty
Business	6	63	8.7%
Engineering	8	149	5.1%
Humanities	9	131	6.4%
Science	15	213	6.6%
Social Science	13	123	9.6%

³⁷ McMaster University. (May 7th, 2009). *Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*. Page 37, 41. Retrieved from http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/faculty/Appointments/Tenure_and_Promotion_January%202012.pdf

³⁸ McMaster University. (May 7th, 2009). *Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*. Page 71. Retrieved from http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/faculty/Appointments/Tenure_and_Promotion_January%202012.pdf

Teaching-Stream vs. Tenure Faculty

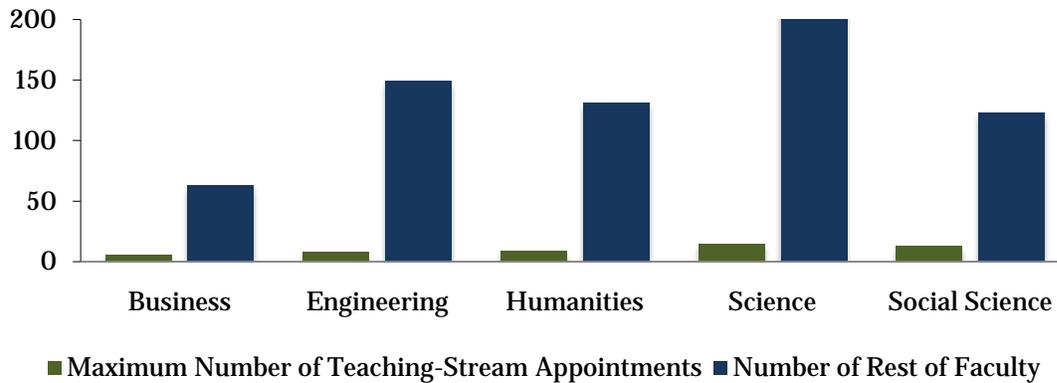


Figure 3: Teaching Stream Appointments vs. Traditional (Tenure) Faculty

Concern Seven: McMaster instructors receive irregular formal training or new faculty orientations and are not expected to attain certification in teaching.

Students are concerned that faculty members have very few expectations placed on them regarding development or certification in teaching. Although a doctorate (PhD) is a typically expected credential for most new faculty members at Ontario universities, the PhD itself does not reflect any qualification in teaching or classroom leadership capacities. Students are concerned that professors have very little job expectation to initially build and continually develop teaching practice, especially in comparison to the Ontario K-12 system, where two years of teachers' college (B.Ed.) and further certification by the Ontario College of Teachers are currently necessary before entering the classroom.

In the teaching-stream faculty focus group, professors also expressed concern with the absence of any mandatory training for newly hired faculty. One professor explained their experience with Education 750, which is an optional course offered several times per year for faculty by McMaster's Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Their experience was extremely positive with the course, because they benefited from learning new pedagogical teaching methods and discussing with other professors their teaching practices through experiential workshops. The focus group thus expressed concern over why this course was not university-wide and mandatory for all new faculty, since without this training many professors simply teach in the style they were taught years ago, which inhibits innovation.

Concern Eight: McMaster teaching assistants (TAs) do not receive mandatory training in teaching or classroom leadership.

When it comes to classroom teaching, students believe that the enthusiasm of the instructor and their care for student success is important. If teaching assistants are invested in the success of their students, they will most likely put in the effort to understand the class content and teach effectively, and spend extra time on concepts that are particularly difficult for students. However, there is a wide student opinion on the level of investment into

undergraduate student learning. In a 2013 MSU survey of teaching assistant satisfaction, only 30% of students believed their TAs were invested in their success, while 40% responded sometimes and 24% responded that they were not invested. Furthermore, students indicated major gaps between expectations and reality when it came to critical characteristics of their teaching assistants, including setting a supportive classroom environment, using effective pedagogies, and communicating expectations for submitted work.

The Collective Agreement between McMaster University and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is a mutually binding contract that encompasses all undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants, as well as tutors, demonstrators, super tutors and markers.³⁹ The agreement states that before a teaching assistant begins work they are required to fill out an Hours of Work form with their instructor that outlines how many hours will be designated to each aspect of the position. McMaster's Teaching Assistant guide 2012 – 2013 also states that the Collective Agreement between CUPE and McMaster University designated 130 hours for TA work per term.⁴⁰

The only training required by the Collective Agreement between McMaster University and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is three additional hours per term for either:

- An orientation to provide TAs with information to help them perform their duties
- Required health and safety training
- Or any required assignment-specific health and safety training⁴¹

³⁹ Canadian Union of Public Employees. (2012). *Collective Agreement*. Page 1. Retrieved from <http://cupe3906.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/TA-Collective-Agreement-Final-for-printing.pdf>

⁴⁰ Centre for Leadership in Learning. (2012 – 2013). *Teaching Assistant Guide*. Page 6. Retrieved from https://ccl.mcmaster.ca/resources/pdf/TA_guide.pdf

⁴¹ Canadian Union of Public Employees. (2012). *Collective Agreement*. Page 20, 35. Retrieved from <http://cupe3906.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/TA-Collective-Agreement-Final-for-printing.pdf>

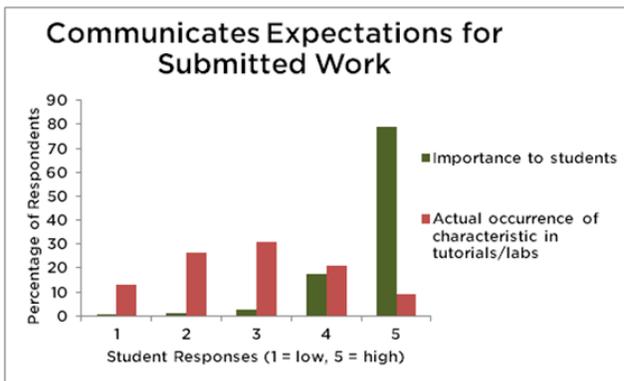
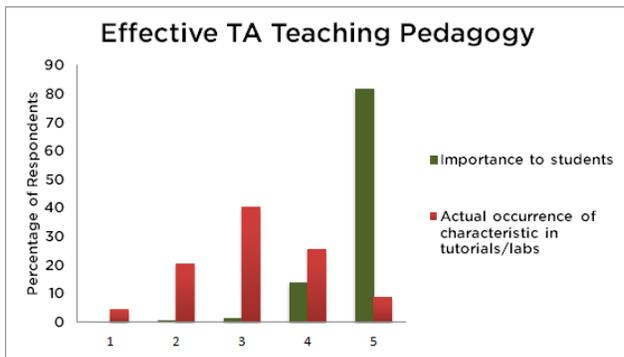
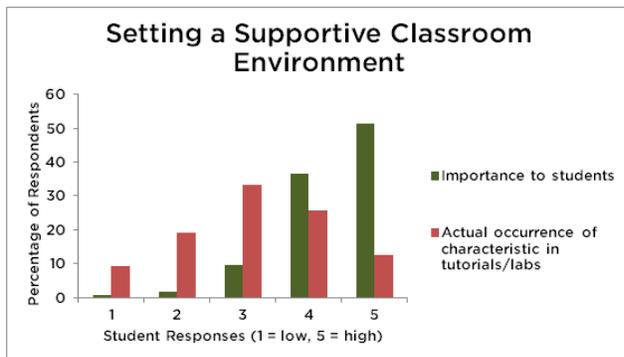
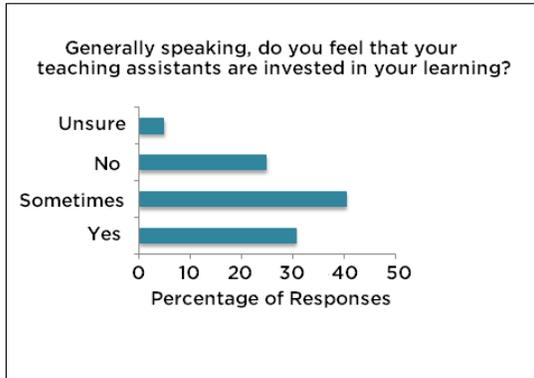


Figure 4: Results from 2013 MSU TA Survey. When the MSU asked students if they felt their teaching assistants are invested in their success, the results indicated that only slightly greater than 30 percent of respondents felt that their TAs were generally invested into their learning. There was also a large discrepancy between expectations for teaching assistants and the actual occurrence of these characteristics in the classroom.

Since the Hours of Form constitutes the hours to which TAs are required to be paid, CUPE stands for TAs being paid for necessary training to do their jobs properly. The MSU is similarly concerned over the fact that McMaster's teaching assistants may not be compensated for training, and that there is no department-wide training infrastructure put in place to ensure rigorous but efficient training.

McMaster currently offers an optional TA training day every September through MIETL. While teaching assistants are encouraged to attend, estimates of turnout rates currently sit between one-third to one-half of all teaching assistants. The training day offers a wide menu of teaching workshops to choose from, but TAs are limited to attending only 3 sessions throughout the day. However, classroom leadership and good teaching involves a wide array of necessary skills that cannot be covered in only three hour-long sessions.

Recommendation One: The University should appoint a teaching and learning leader in each department to work with their colleagues in improving the department's teaching, learning, and assessment strategies to assist in reviewing and designing curriculum.

Students respect that universities operate under a decentralized model with each faculty and department utilizing different approaches to teaching and learning based on the discipline. Due to McMaster's decentralized nature, a top-down approach on teaching and learning will have limited traction within the classroom. In order to shift the culture of teaching and learning to a more student-centered approach, leadership must be undertaken at the departmental level.

In 2005, The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) was created by the Government of Ontario to ensure that post-secondary institutions continued to improve in their delivery of education. In 2008, the council sponsored a symposium titled *Taking Stock: Symposium on Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education*. The symposium's ultimate goal was "to have more faculty adopt teaching approaches that are consistent with what is known about student learning." From this symposium came the report *Taking Stock: A Report on the Symposium on Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education*. *Taking Stock* notes that, "researchers have already discovered much about teaching and learning in higher education, but that dissemination and uptake of this information have been limited."⁴² The report also emphasized inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, community based-learning, case-based learning, and clickers as innovative approaches which have been found to improve student learning. As a result, by appointing a teaching and learning leader in each department, departments would benefit by remaining up-to-date on current developments in pedagogical innovation around the world.

In addition, some findings of the report that support the idea of having a teaching and learning leader to increase faculty understanding of student learning are:

- Students also vary their learning approaches based on their perceptions of the teaching-learning environment (and therefore there is much that can be done to foster deep learning and organized effort);
- Traditional lecture-styled teaching tends to cause students to develop a surface approach to learning, which lowers their rates of retention and understanding of key concepts;

⁴² Hughes, J.C., Mighty, J. (2008). *Taking Stock: A Report on the Symposium on Teaching and Learning – Research in Higher Education*. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Page 2. Retrieved from <http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Taking%20Stock%20Report%20EN.pdf>

- Contrarily, innovative and alternative student-centered teaching tend to cause students to develop a deeper approach to learning, which raises their retention of understanding of key concepts;
- Science departments tend to teach in atomistic ways with a teacher-focused perspective, while humanities and social science departments tend to teach holistically with a student-focused perspective;
- The report recommends to “let go of content and focus on the bigger picture, developing an integrated understanding, and learning processes” since content serves as a barrier for students’ understanding;
- A teaching and learning leader could investigate issues and questions regarding classroom content, pedagogy, and evaluation on within their department, and act as a role model in tailoring their own courses to reflect
- Some of the questions that the Teaching & Learning leader could address:
 - What are the implications of teaching “less” content?
 - What is the relationship between what is written on course outlines and the reality of the classroom experience?
 - How can we help students develop “soft” or generic skills? How well are we doing?

Thus, the MSU recommends a campus-wide adoption of a teaching and learning leader for each department, to ensure that departments maintain a strong focus on introducing innovative methods for their students’ benefit.

Recommendation Two: Amend McMaster policy to reflect a growing appreciation for teaching, by readjusting remuneration, removal processes and governance abilities for teaching-stream faculty, and with raising the cap on the number of teaching-stream faculty members, in conjunction with increasing instructor hiring by approximately ten (10) percent to address the trends in increasing class-sizes and student-faculty ratios.

If McMaster wants to continue its reputation and celebration of teaching and learning, multiple university policy changes should be made by senior-level administration. Firstly, teaching-stream faculty members often perform similar amounts of highly valuable work (although in the domain of teaching and learning) – and thus, base salaries should be equitable with a faculty member who embarks on the 40-40-20 model of teaching and research. This recommendation is strongly supported by the sentiments of teaching-stream faculty, who believe that they are continually fulfilling the same level of responsibility as their traditional faculty counterparts. These professors have stated that they are still required to conduct research, while also teaching a higher quantity of classes. They are also consistently required to learn and update their knowledge on current pedagogical research and development, of which many actively use in their classes.

Secondly, policies for removal of teaching-stream faculty members should ideally be identical to traditional faculty members. Job security is a major factor for individuals wishing to begin a career, and McMaster should remove any barriers that exist for attracting the most qualified, talented individuals as teaching-stream faculty members. Within the teaching-stream faculty focus group, instructors expressed disdain with the disparity between traditional and teaching-stream faculty on this point. Traditional faculty can receive job security through tenure, while teaching-stream faculty receive permanence. The fundamental difference between tenure and permanence is that tenure appointments cannot be terminated except for sufficient cause,

whereas permanence appointments can. If teaching-stream faculty members are to be appreciated on equal grounds with traditional faculty, this difference must be corrected.

This point holds additional importance within university governance bodies such as councils, committees and McMaster Senate/Board of Governors, on which students, administration and faculty members (teaching-stream, tenure track, or otherwise) sit. Traditional university governance systems operate under a model whereby members should be able to speak freely without fear of discipline. Current policies for teaching-track positions may act to limit input from these individuals due to potential for dismissal. In order to advance issues or voice concern to university policy or priorities, it is essential that all members of faculty the council, committee or senate know that their job is not under threat.

Thirdly, the number of full-time faculty hires has not kept pace with increased student enrolment since 2005. As student enrolment increases represent increases in university revenues from tuition and basic operating grants, students expect the university to reflect student growth with faculty growth. A 10% increase in faculty hiring, approximately 100 new faculty members, will bring student-faculty ratios up to pre-2005 levels. Also, since students support increasing the number of teaching-stream faculty because of their positive effect on student success, the cap on these faculty should be raised to ensure that this 10% increase is comprised largely of teaching-stream faculty hiring.

McMaster's policy SPS A9 – Allocation of Teaching-Stream Positions Across Faculties sets a cap on the number of teaching-stream positions in each Faculty; each faculty shall not exceed these caps. Students recommend that in order to promote a stronger culture of teaching and learning, these caps should be raised, encouraging faculties to allocate teaching-stream faculty as necessary.

<p>Recommendation Three: Mandate that all new teaching assistants attend paid, institution-wide training from MIETL before entering the classroom.</p>

As outlined previously, there are numerous opportunities for teaching assistants to receive training, assistance or feedback regarding their responsibilities in their position. However, the lack of incentives and infrastructure in place for these individuals results in a lack of use of these facilities.

Over 75 percent of undergraduate respondents to the MSU's 2013 survey on Teaching Assistant Satisfaction believed that training for teaching assistants would benefit their learning (Figure 5). Student written responses indicated that training would help TAs build confidence, better engage students in discussion, and be extremely helpful to ensure consistency across the board in this regard.

A wide range of skills are necessary in order to be a truly effective teaching assistant, as outlined in Table 5. Students suggest that McMaster University design a comprehensive and holistic TA training to be modeled after a multi-day orientation. New teaching assistants would be paid for their participation and required to complete the orientation before teaching in the classroom. The orientation would teach TAs best practices in teaching and encouraging student learning, in combination with small-group sessions to improve interpersonal skills, creativity, leadership and teamwork. Finally, events and activities could be provided to encourage forming closer connections with fellow teaching assistants. An ideal TA orientation would ensure that

TAs are equipped with the necessary skills to achieve success in their position, while also encouraging a closer identification within the university community. The orientation would foster leadership and responsibility to their students, rather than just fulfilling a requirement of graduate school.

Do you feel that providing training to TAs would benefit your learning?

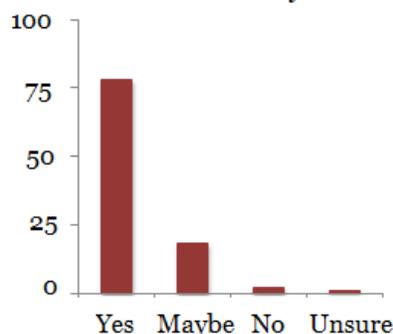


Figure 5: Results from 2013 MSU Survey on TA Satisfaction

Table 5: Necessary Skills for Teaching Assistants:

- Setting a comfortable and inclusive classroom environment
- Explaining concepts clearly
- Encouraging participation from students
- Facilitating group discussion
- Marking assignments fairly and effectively
- Mentorship and non-academic support
- Using effective and engaging pedagogy
- Teaching as an ESL students
- Mental health training
- Responding to academic integrity issues
- Proper use of online technology, such as Avenue2Learn or email
- Inspiring interest and passion in the subject
- Maximizing use of class time
- Dealing with challenging classroom situations or students
- Anti-oppression training

Recommendation Four: New faculty orientation programs should be longer, and focus on developing connections between new faculty while also updating this individuals on current pedagogical research and innovative practices.

Students are concerned with the lack of credentials required for new faculty members to begin teaching, and recommend that the university act to implement a longer, more in-depth faculty orientation program. Students recommend that upon each round of new hiring, these faculty members be required to attend an orientation organized by MIETL. The orientation can be considered a type of retreat, and would serve as a credential for teaching at McMaster. Some examples of activities/processes to include could be in-depth conversations with peers on

teaching and learning, introductions to teaching and learning leaders/role models within their faculty, and a deeper understanding and familiarity with the services of MIETL. The cost of this program would not be overly prohibitive, considering that the average new faculty orientation program currently costs approximately \$279/new faculty⁴³. Cost-sharing with other institutions of similar size and scope would also be an option.

Conclusion

Students expect to see a return on investment for their hard work, time commitment and financial contribution into their university education. However, in terms of core metrics of quality, universities are declining considerably from where we were only a few decades ago. Furthermore, our educators cannot be expected to be classroom leaders without incentives to succeed and proper support and development from the university. Without increased investment in teaching and learning, students cannot expect to see an improvement in quality of education. Students are confident that a renewed focus in the core mission of learning at McMaster university will translate into a better classroom experience, preparing students with the necessary skills for better for their future livelihoods.

⁴³ Miles, C., & Polovina-Vukovic, D. (2012). The Role of New Faculty Orientations in Improving the Effectiveness of University Teaching – Part 1: University Sector. Toronto. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Policy Statement

Whereas:

- Student learning is dependent on quality teaching in the classroom;
- Instructors must have the resources to develop their teaching skills;
- Teaching assistants should be encouraged to take advantage of the resources at MIIETL;
- Teaching-stream faculty are critically important members of the university community, as students benefit from their expertise and passion for teaching;
- Class sizes are increasing for McMaster students;
- The number of full-time faculty has not kept pace with increases in undergraduate student enrolment over the past decade;
- Teaching-stream faculty are not held in high-enough regard as valuable members of the academic community at McMaster;
- Teaching-stream positions are paid less than other full-time faculty, creating a disincentive for faculty members to initially enter this pathway;
- The process for removal of teaching-stream appointments is much simpler than removal of tenure-track positions, and acts as a disincentive towards teaching;
- McMaster University policy places a cap on the number of teaching-stream faculty positions for each faculty;
- McMaster instructors receive irregular formal training or new faculty orientations, and are not expected to attain certification in teaching;
- McMaster teaching assistants (TAs) do not receive mandatory training in teaching or classroom leadership;

Be it resolved that:

- The university appoint a teaching and learning leader in each department to work with their colleagues in improving the department's teaching, learning, and assessment strategies and to assist in reviewing and designing curriculum;
- Amend McMaster policy to reflect a growing appreciation for teaching through readjusting remuneration and removal processes for teaching-stream faculty, raising the cap on the number of teaching-stream faculty members, and by increasing instructor hiring by approximately 10 percent to address the trends in class sizes and low student–faculty ratios.
- The university mandate that all new teaching assistants attend paid, institution-wide training from MIIETL, before entering the classroom;
- The university adopt a longer and more comprehensive new faculty orientation, with a focus on developing connections between new faculty while also teaching new faculty about current pedagogical research and innovative teaching practices.

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