

CHAPTER TWO:

Core Findings of the Study

After more than a year of studying the issue of overwork, the Committee made the findings listed below:

1. Overwork was found in every employing unit studied, and, in many units, it is encouraged by commission and/or omission.
2. Most overwork occurs in preparation and marking.
3. The employees who are most commonly overworked are course instructors and those who are teaching assistants for the first time.
4. Many factors contribute to the intractability of the overwork problem. They include:
 - a) Inattention to workload on the part of both the employee and her/his supervisor;
 - b) Lack of training in the pedagogical aspects of teaching and also in such administrative aspects as time-budgeting and overwork avoidance procedures;
 - c) An atmosphere which does not encourage the resolution of workload problems;
 - d) Overt encouragement of overwork by departmental officials, and sometimes by other employees;
 - e) Ignorance of and/or failure to use the procedures of the Collective Agreement;
 - f) Funding and budgeting practices;
 - g) Inadequate training and other support for employees who are early in their "careers" as bargaining unit members;
 - h) Inadequate support (such as clerical assistance, office space, xeroxing budget, TA support for instructors) and teaching resources (reference materials, tutorial outlines, marking guides, etc.) from the employing department.
5. A substantial proportion of overwork is engaged in out of conscience -- i.e. the employee engages in overwork because to do otherwise would offend her/his sense of responsibility to her/his students.

6. Many department administrators, supervisors, and CUEW bargaining-unit members do not take job descriptions, and/or the Collective Agreement itself, seriously. They are unacquainted with them, they ignore them, they view them as "ineffective" or "inflexible".
7. Many department officials and supervisors lack any training with respect to the Collective Agreement, their supervisory responsibilities, and proper administrative techniques.
8. Despite the fact that overwork is common, and despite the fact that the Collective Agreement deals with procedures for addressing overwork in some detail, most departments have no process for reviewing job descriptions and revising them.
9. There is almost no monitoring of the adequacy of job descriptions as they are written, or of the progress of the employees' employment so as to avoid overwork.
10. "Model job descriptions", where they are used, are often over-simplified and inflexibly employed.
11. Departments with standard appointment sizes often suffer from systematic overwork.
12. Writing and monitoring of job descriptions and employees' duties is almost always left to the supervising professor. Insufficient guidance, accountability and tracking leads to overwork problems.
13. When an employee attempts to resolve a workload problem, it is typically seen (by department officials and employees alike) as "complaining", rather than as a legitimate, regulated process for making adjustments.
14. Employees do not raise overwork problems because:
 - a) Many fear, with some justification, repercussions, including bad evaluations, not being re-hired, and academic penalties, if they "complain";
 - b) Some view all teaching experience as personally beneficial, and so are disinclined to complain about unpaid increases in their duties;
 - c) Some feel that their overwork now will pay off later, either later in the current appointment, or when they are re-hired in a similar appointment at a later date, or perhaps in the form of some other "reward" for their diligence;
 - d) Some don't realize they are being overworked until they consider it "too late" to raise as an issue (not having kept track of their hours);
 - e) Departmental "complaints" mechanisms are not well known or they don't exist;

- f) Some enjoy the work so much that they don't mind not being paid;
 - g) Some (along with some departmental officials) feel they are overpaid and that overworking makes up for it;
 - h) Some feel that they would appear to be "incompetent" if they told their supervisors about their overwork;
 - i) Many feel that nothing can be done about overwork because of tight department budgets;
 - j) Many, out of loyalty to their department or the professors in it, don't want to exacerbate the department's tight funding situation by "complaining".
15. Departmental provision of TA training is scattered. The efforts of the Teaching Development Advisory Committee (TDAC) and the Teaching Development Service (TDS) are positive, but they are funded well below the level necessary to ensure adequate training for first-time teaching assistants and instructors.

More detailed elaborations of these findings are found sprinkled throughout the remainder of the report, particularly in Chapter Four. The point of the report, of course, is to address these findings in such a way as to correct the problems identified. The recommendations which arise from our findings are found in Chapters Five through Ten and are summarized in Chapter Eleven.