

WORKING
CONDITIONS FOR
PROFESSORS
IN QUEBEC
UNIVERSITIES



TEACHING
AND EDUCATION

Communicating or bargaining?

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Communicating or bargaining?

This publication is an initiative of the Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université (FQPPU). It is the fourth in a series of four brief reports resulting from an action research project undertaken by the FQPPU's Committee on Working Conditions for Professors. This research was made possible by the ongoing support of the FQPPU and its staff, and in collaboration with the executive committees of unions and associations of professors. We appreciate their help and want to thank all of the professors who participated in the focus groups and shared their experiences and thoughts; their accounts greatly contributed to the analysis. This research was funded by the FQPPU.

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AT THE TIME OF DATA COLLECTION, CODING, AND PRE-ANALYSIS**

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www.fqppu.org.

- 1. The Juggling Act | Thriving or surviving?**
- 2. Collegiality and Management | Organizing or being organized?**
- 3. Research and Creation | Conducting quality research and creating or overproducing?**
- 4. Teaching and Education | Communicating or bargaining?**



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Introduction

Universities have undergone drastic changes over the past few decades, as has the work of professors. University professors in Quebec are still deeply committed to teaching, research, and service. Many, however, worry about the trend to commercialize knowledge and the resulting changes to working conditions for professors, which insidiously reduce autonomy, lead to work overload, and warp the rules of collegiality through the introduction of competition.

In order to better understand what can improve or compromise health and commitment to a university career, and to supplement the quantitative data already available on the issue, the FQPPU funded an action research project that included professors from ten Quebec universities. In total, 145 professors from different professions and disciplines, at various career stages, participated in the study.¹

The focus groups illuminated certain aspects of professorial work that are deeply ingrained in universities, but also uncovered hidden, more difficult aspects of such work. The stories and the exchanges in the focus groups, as well as the analysis, lead to a broader understanding of professors' working conditions, including how they developed and what pitfalls exist. The interview excerpts are freely included, while respecting anonymity. They were chosen for their authenticity, because they go beyond the anecdotal and reflect widely shared perceptions and experiences. The personal accounts are excerpts from interviews conducted from 2010 to 2013, which were obtained in 18 focus groups of five to fifteen participants. In total, 145 professors from ten universities (École Polytechnique, Concordia University, Université de Montréal, Université de Sherbrooke, UQAM, UQO, UQAR, UQTR, Université Laval, and McGill University) took part in the interviews.

The dissemination of these research results in brief reports constitutes an invitation to other professors who may want to be heard. These documents are intended to mobilize them to protect what is important and to contribute to solutions.

With this in mind, the FQPPU would like to join forces with union executives to support professors who are prepared to lead initiatives in their workplaces and make real commitments to changing some aspects of their work.

¹ Details about the methodology of this action research project can be found in the methodological appendix of the first brief report (Macé, C, M.X. Noël, and C. Leclerc, *The Juggling Act: Thriving or Surviving?*, FQPPU, 2015, p. 37–38).

TEACHING AND EDUCATION

This is the fourth in a series of brief reports dealing with different aspects of the daily work of professors. While the other reports address the difficulty of finding a balance between work, family responsibilities, and personal time, the erosion of collegiality and the arduousness of administrative tasks, and the production-oriented nature of research-creation, this report focuses on the most visible aspect of a professor's work: teaching and education. How do professors view this component of their workload? What specific challenges are associated with it? Other than time spent in the classroom, what is involved in teaching at the university level? Why do teaching and education seem to be on the bottom rung of the mission of universities? This report will attempt to shed light on these and other issues.

TEACHING AND EDUCATING: A STIMULATING CHALLENGE

The Heart of the Job: Students

Historically, teaching and education have been at the heart of the mission of universities and of the academic workload.² In a model in which professors are teachers, researchers, and co-managers of universities, the ideal would be to combine these

components to result in the best possible learning for students. Students are of primary importance to colleagues, who see them as the main purpose of teaching and education.

I say it all the time: without students, we wouldn't be here!

For many, a large part of their job satisfaction comes from interactions with motivated students with a thirst for knowledge. It can be a source of great pleasure for professors to feel useful when sharing knowledge with curious people who are interested in the same field as them.

² The teaching component of the academic workload includes preparation and delivery of accredited teaching activities (courses, seminars, laboratories, internships, etc.), evaluation, and the resulting supervision of students, as well as supervision of graduate students writing theses or dissertations.

When I see my students' eyes light up after a class and hear them say "Wow, we learned something!", it's so rewarding. It's worth a million dollars!

Professors who significantly involve themselves in teaching help their students better achieve their learning objectives and are motivated to see them progress.

It's a pleasure to teach them, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It's also wonderful to see how they improve, but at the same time, I feel that we aren't given the resources or the time to be able to truly deliver what we hope to and what we know we can give them.

Educating students cannot be reduced to the hours spent teaching in the classroom. An effective learning relationship is long term and only occurs after a significant investment of time, which some professors regret not being able to offer students.

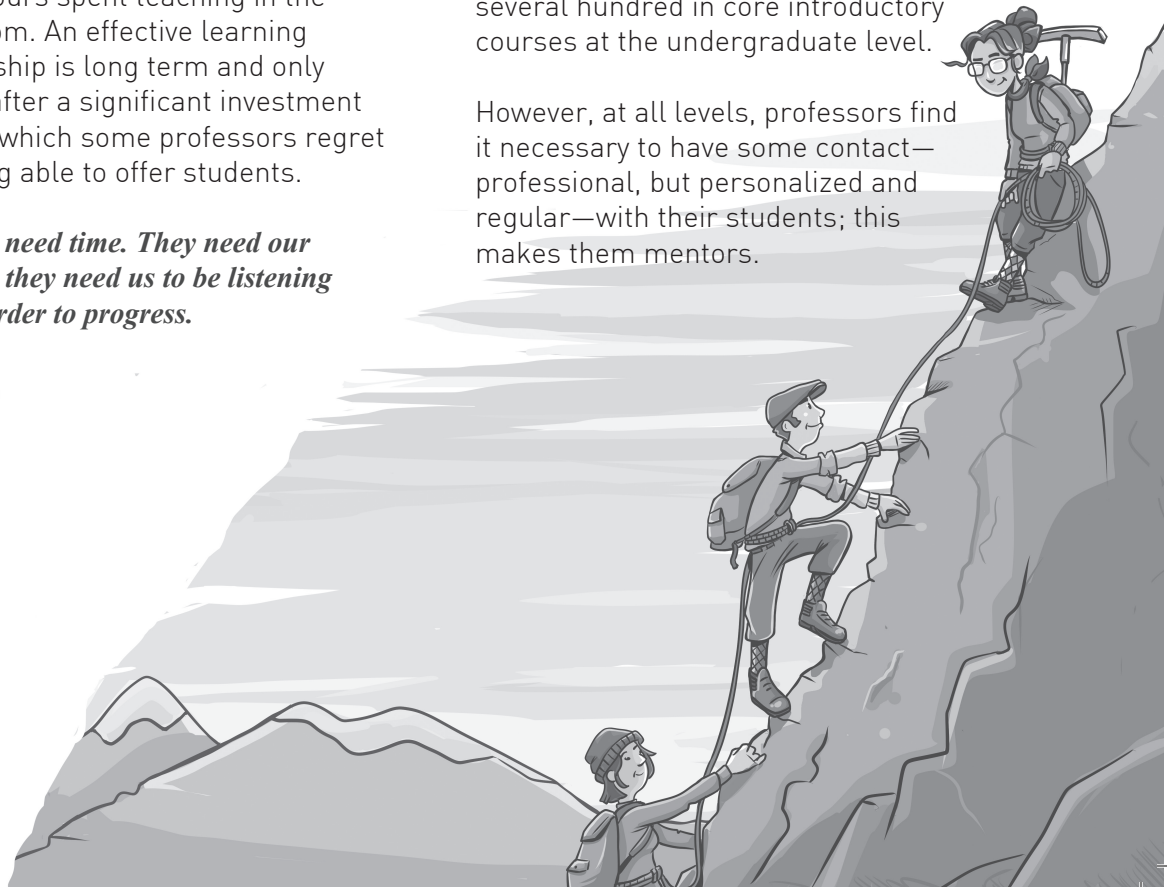
Students need time. They need our time and they need us to be listening [...] in order to progress.

The existence of universities holds particular importance with regard to providing access to high-level knowledge for those who can and want to have it, which has become a societal choice. Providing high-quality university teaching and education is more demanding than would be expected.

Communication, Exchanges, and Listening

Teaching can occur within a wide range of conditions. The most common model is, of course, the classroom, where there is a professor and a highly variable number of students. This number can fluctuate between a few students, in doctoral seminars, to several hundred in core introductory courses at the undergraduate level.

However, at all levels, professors find it necessary to have some contact—professional, but personalized and regular—with their students; this makes them mentors.



It is important to have fairly frequent and cordial contact with students, always very professional, and to tell them: we're here.

Professors prefer to have personalized contact with each of their students in order to offer high-quality education that allows them to progressively integrate new and prior knowledge. Listening is therefore paramount when carrying out teaching and educating duties, particularly at the higher levels.

For some colleagues, communication must be bidirectional so that there are benefits of having feedback at the level of learning. While this can be gratifying for professors, who see that their work is being appreciated, it is also very demanding and not necessarily sought after by students.

When I used to grade work, [...] I read each paper three times in a systematic fashion and I provided detailed commentary. Now it's no longer the case: I read it once. I do my work very seriously, but at the same time, I realized that I cut it. [...] I realized that my students are less inclined to want feedback.

While they feel that they have “the best job in the world,” professors described many sources of dissatisfaction that affect this aspect of their work.

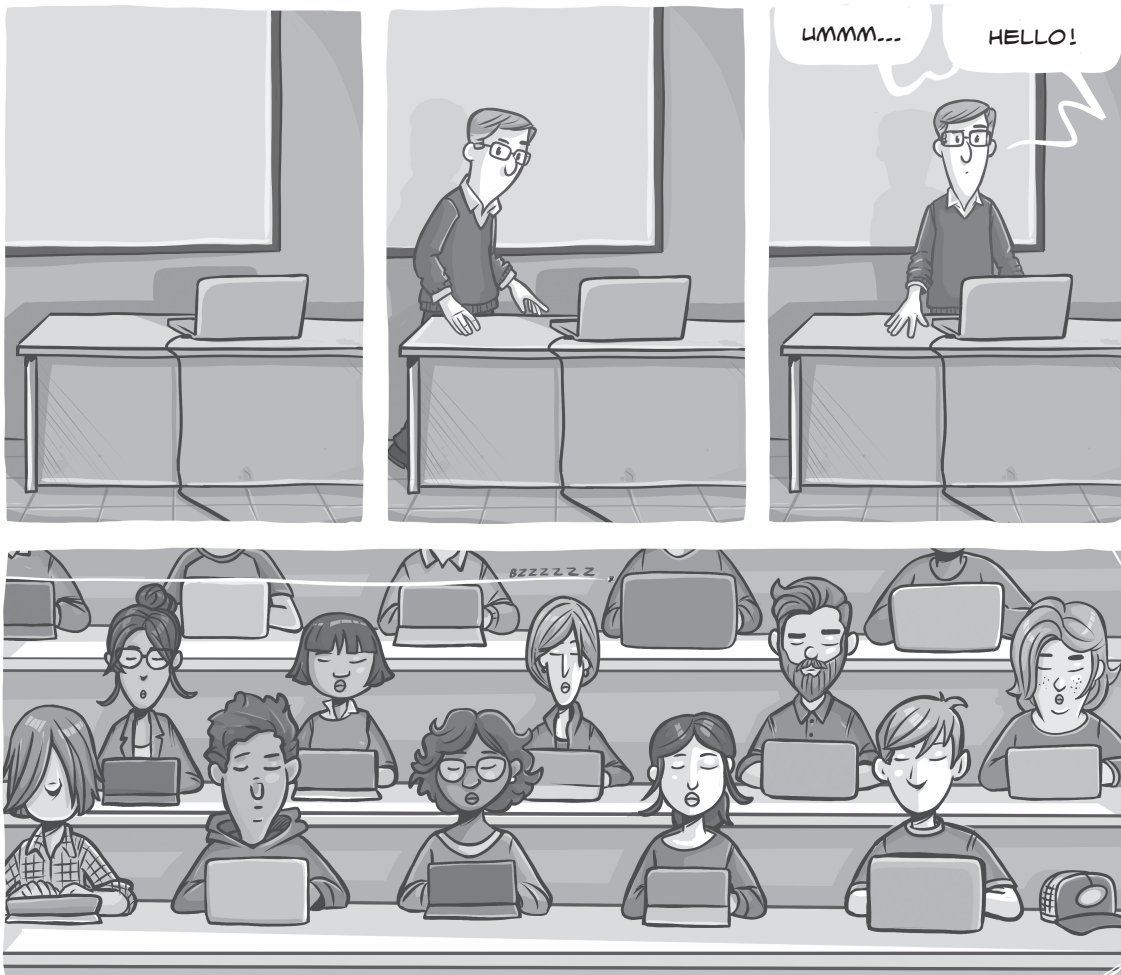
The Masses, Special Cases, and the Elite

Teaching conditions are far from monolithic and there are different levels of satisfaction with the task according to the involvement that may or may not occur with certain types and groups of students. In general, the more distance from a difficult dynamic with large groups of undergraduate students, the closer professors are to prolonged contact with small groups of bright graduate students and the more appreciation they have for teaching.

For example, fundamental concepts of written French (grammar) that should have been learned in elementary and high school are still a mystery for far too many students, a situation that is becoming worse with each passing year.

They need to pass French tests [...] and the entrance exam is absolutely [...] ridiculous. [...] Even programs with quotas, in terms of level of French, it's really terrible.

Depending on the university and program, lecturing is usually the favoured undergraduate teaching method due to class size. It is necessary to have certain skills to meet the challenge of large groups. Many teaching formulas cannot be used in groups of this size and lecturing does not meet all learning objectives.



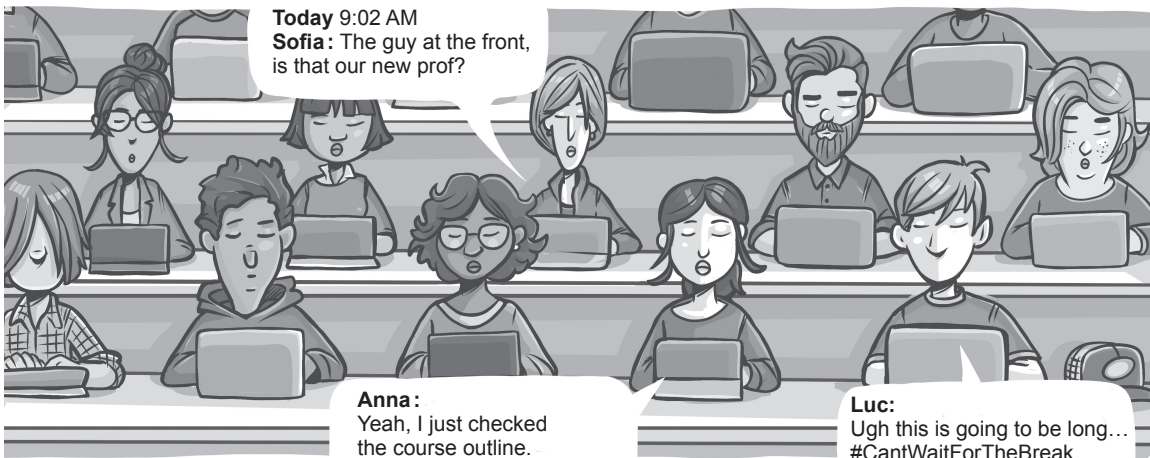
There is a growing demand for larger classes where personalized contact with students is not possible. This pressure is felt at all levels, and I feel that I'm no longer able to get to know my students in the way that I should in order for them all to get the type of teaching they need.

In addition, sometimes professors feel alone when classroom interactions deteriorate, which can also have a

negative impact when students complete course evaluations.

When there's a truly disastrous group dynamic, what do you do with that?

The fear of receiving negative evaluations from students at the end of each term is a great source of worry. The temptation is strong for professors to reduce course requirements and



appeal to students by giving them better grades than they deserve.

We sometimes give excellent grades to students for average work, and I think it's horrible.

Reducing our requirements for the sole reason of keeping them in our course at all costs, it's way too much.

Groups with negative attitudes or with big age or culture gaps require that professors adjust their methods. Professors may, especially at the beginning, feel powerless.

Students with difficulties or disabilities quite rightly need special attention from the professor, and their situations can be a challenge to manage.

I think that what happens to us most often is that we identify students with disabilities in our groups. It's increasingly frequent and very difficult to manage.

Another issue is related to students with what I will call a referential gap. These are students that have returned to their studies and are completely behind compared to the rest of the group. They seek special attention from us, which takes so, so, so much time and energy, and also need special treatment during classes.

According to many colleagues, interactions are clearly more favourable to learning in graduate teaching environments, since master's and PhD students are more central to professors' concerns.



Our graduate students are the ones who end up getting to know us, not the undergraduates. When we arrive on stage, we teach, and then the curtain closes. Our graduate students see us work, etc.

For some colleagues, the best students are almost by definition those who get to the PhD level, and they tend to see this future “elite” in a more positive light.

Tomorrow’s elite is not the student sitting in the back of the class in your group of 150, but the one who does a master’s and a PhD.

New Technological Requirements

The pervasiveness of information technology has led to a significant change in how the profession is carried out. Professors are now virtually required to use digital media in all of its forms. Who can give a lecture in class without having prepared a digital visual presentation? Moreover, this presentation should ideally be given to students in advance, not only on paper, but on an Internet platform created by the university to facilitate course management and control. Professors manage, therefore, the posting of various course notes, the student discussion forum, and grades through these platforms that are aimed at simplifying their work. However, these techniques are probably just as harmful as they are helpful.

But there is also pressure that comes from all of the electronic material that is supposedly available to us. I sometimes feel [...] like it's a ball attached to my foot or a chain tied around my ankles. [...] All of my class notes must be prepared in advance [...] on PowerPoint.

The considerable presence of digital technology and the applications that accompany it (tablets, smart phones, social networks, YouTube, etc.) bring new challenges for professors. In class, students often disrupt not only their professors, but their peers, by abusing these technologies, which add to other sources of distraction. Many professors question their usefulness and their impact on teaching.

Should we ban iPhones, tablets, etc. in classrooms or not? If we don't ban them, [...] we cannot be behind all of the students, checking what they are doing on their computers, if they are taking notes or chatting with their neighbours. We need to reflect broadly on the place of new technology in teaching, not only about support for Moodle, but also how it affects the atmosphere of the classroom.

While a great deal of students come to class with a computer, teaching in front of rows upon rows of laptop computers does not allow for eye contact with the audience. To make matters worse, some colleagues become so suspicious with regard to social network and instant messaging use while they are teaching, that they lose concentration and self-confidence.

Facebook in class, what can we do? Sometimes they are on Facebook talking to each other. [...] We see two students start laughing and it's obvious that they are communicating.

Internet access in class can also lead to worry or even anxiety for professors who are afraid of making an error with regard to content. How can professors, who in the past were seen to hold and transmit knowledge on a subject, rival the wealth of data available to students who can access it just by searching on their phones?

How can you compete with students who have access to all knowledge?

Students send emails at all times, sometimes confusing formal written communication with informal text messages, and this is a major frustration for a number of professors. They are already overwhelmed by astronomical amounts of information, and now have to rapidly respond to messages that may or may not be clear and appropriate, or face open criticism.

Email, it's the same thing. [...] We receive so many emails from students.

Multiple aspects of new technology are changing teaching, not only in terms of pedagogical organization, but also the quantity of additional work involved in their use.

THIS COURSE IS ABOUT...

SEMIOLOGY OF THE IMAGE.



THE GOAL WILL BE TO DEVELOP THE TOOLS NEEDED... CAUGHT IT!



TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE THE DISCOURSE ON THE IMAGE...

GOTCHA!

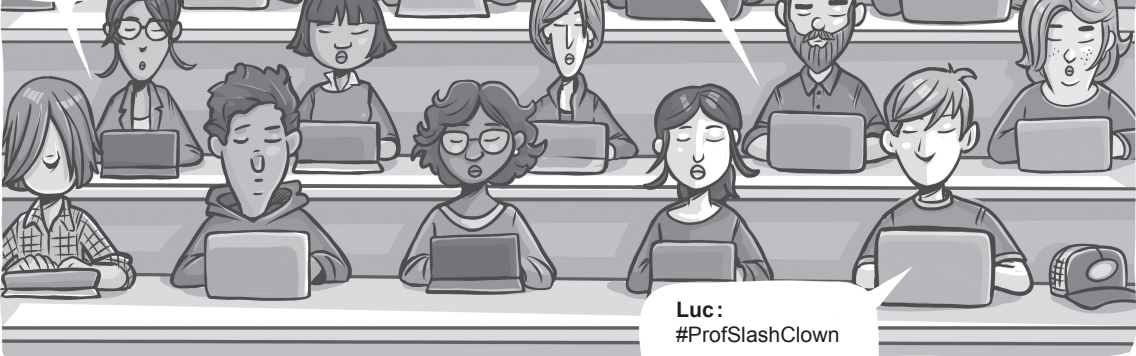


IT WORKS! THEY LOOKED UP...



Today 9:08 AM
Kim:
Did anyone film that?

Christopher:
I did... I'm about to put it on YouTube...



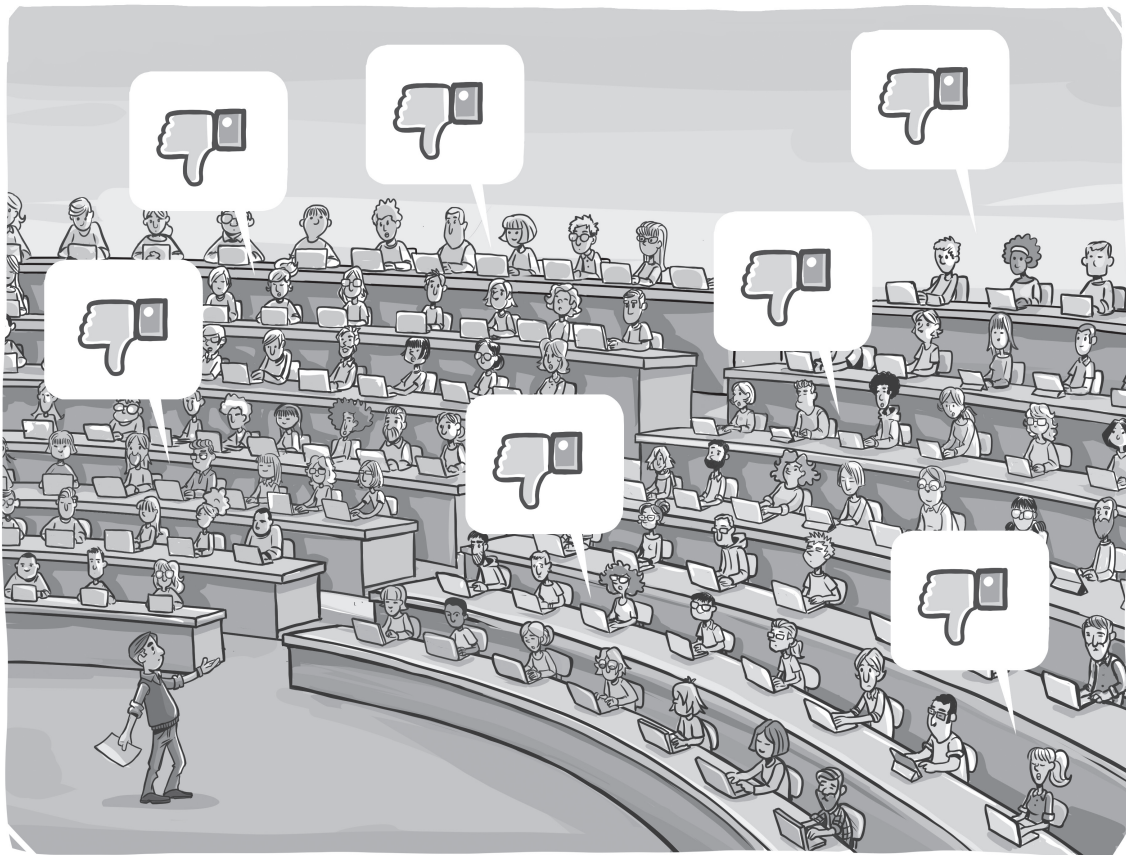
Luc:
#ProfSlashClown

I'm all for ICTs. I feel that it's very important to integrate new technology, but we need to be careful when we use it.

The impact of technology adds to everything else. We aren't giving more courses, but we have a lot more peripheral work [...] to carry out for our courses.

WORK BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: UNSEEN, UNACKNOWLEDGED

In general, it is easy to picture teaching as what a professor delivers in class. However, the very demanding work that occurs beyond the classroom is a different story. Course preparation, meetings with students, grading papers and exams, etc. are certainly





some of the tasks involved in teaching, but it goes beyond these aspects.

Many participants complained because this work is, for the most part, invisible, overlooked, and recognized very little or not at all, even by university administration.

Even though professors are administrators and rectors, [...] the teaching component is not valued. They say: “Oh, that’s easy. You give courses, you only have four to prepare each year. [...] It’s settled: four courses.”

Relationships With Students

Teaching and listening to students’ needs, both require a great deal of availability from professors that is far from limited to the classroom. Supervising students takes time, whether it be to answer emails, explain material to them in different ways during meetings, provide them with assignment instructions, or discuss how grading criteria were applied.

Answering questions outside of class is no longer limited to a permanent block of weekly scheduled office hours, during which students are able to line up to meet the professor.

Students need time. They need our time and they need us to listen. [...] This eats into evenings and weekends.

Students are now demanding, candidly and likely without awareness of the implications, their professors' constant attention. The direct consequence of the ease of sending an email and the relatively recent habit of communicating in real time translates into growing demands, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Students are always there, even at home, because they write to me.

In some cases, professors are under the impression that certain students think that they are flexible and at their beck and call. These students ask not only for availability, but immediacy, when they need to meet their professors.

In short, there are working conditions that [...] require you to be constantly available. That's another stressor [...] because if students want to talk to you on Friday and you can't see them on Friday, they have to

wait until Monday. They haven't worked over the weekend and become frustrated.

When the rules of communication with students are not clearly established from the beginning, it seems that there are no limits with regard to seeking out professors.

Normally, I tell my students: make an appointment with me, I am very, very available, even randomly, from one day to the next, but make an appointment, so that I can make time for you. But sometimes, they really exaggerate...

Colleagues reported student demands that were sometimes abusive. While professors are willingly available for students who need them, they are less open, and shocked even, when students show no regard for their own responsibilities, such as attending lectures. It is not uncommon for students, no matter their reasons for being absent, to expect a private course in order to make up for missing class.

If you have two hours to meet me Friday afternoon, it would be greatly appreciated because I was on vacation the last two weeks and had to miss class.

From: Patrick Jones
Subject: Question about last class
Date: February 14, 2016 18:03:16 EST
To: Anna Lewis<a.lewis@mcgill.ca

Can I have an extension for the final paper? I have a work emergency...

Hi, I wasn't there last class. Can you let me know which topics were covered?

From: Patrick Jones
Subject: Re: Re: Question about last class
Date: February 14, 2016 18:08:21 EST
To: Anna Lewis<a.lewis@mcgill.ca

URGENT! I'd like to meet with you before reading week...

From: Nancy Robertson
Subject: Assessment grade
Date: February 14, 2016 18:28:12 EST
To: Anna Lewis<a.lewis@mcgill.ca

Are you able to respond quickly?

I'd like to discuss the last assessment. I think I was misunderstood when we meet?

GIVE ME TWO SECONDS, I NEED TO CHECK AN... EMAIL...

EAT, EAT! DON'T WAIT FOR ME, IT'LL GET COLD!

WOW IS HE EVER INTENSE...

Can I redo the previous assignment? :)

SORRY HONEY, IT WON'T BE LONG.



I'm under the impression that our own students don't know what we do, and that they actually expect us to respond quickly because they think our only job is to take care of them.

Work beyond the classroom has become more demanding and diverse, yet it is an integral part of the academic workload. This is not the case for meeting students for reasons that do not relate to academic work, as

well as for situations that colleagues are not equipped to handle.

Students experiencing psychological distress: I think it has happened to all of us at least once that students [...] have come to our offices in tears telling us that it's the end of the world and that they will never survive.

lecturers tend to ask for a lot of support, which drains professors' time.

They come spend a lot of time with me so that we can go over content, how it works, and their questions. I spend I don't know how many hours per term welcoming them and explaining how things work.

Jumping Through Pedagogical Hoops for Programs

Another task related to teaching that is overlooked is ensuring that the university curriculum is coherent. This is not formal pedagogical administration, which consists in being responsible for a program or being a program director, but instead involves ensuring that there is continuity and coherence in the content of different courses in the same program. Program content is interrelated, and professors must coordinate the content of their respective courses.

Not only must we give a course, but we are part of programs and so we must carry out pedagogical coordination. [...] We need to be increasingly concerned with what our colleagues have said before our course and what they will

say afterwards, depending on where our course is in the program structure.

This responsibility is of particular importance in curricula where professional orders or other accreditation bodies can intervene with regard to course content. It is also greater at the graduate level, where professors must keep students' fields of research in mind in order to provide adapted content.

Similar to supervision at the graduate level, I have interns spread over a fairly large area, [...] so it also takes up a lot of my time.

These hoops are added to those that must be jumped through to support students in their academic careers. In universities, some arrangements were made when programs were created. Besides professors, technical or professional staff members are sometimes assigned to provide students with support, from welcoming them to following up on their academic progress.

To better support students in their academic careers, [...] there are program [...] advisors with a specific duty: to inform students about their academic careers, support them, and help them when they have psychological issues, academic issues, or disabilities.

These trained advisors are there to direct students to the appropriate service.

In other cases, pedagogical committees are established, and stakeholders that are involved in specific programs or in general university pedagogy meet periodically.

Once a year, we have a meeting with all of the involved parties, lecturers, internship supervisors, professors, officials, etc., to speak about the incoming cohort and what we can do to maintain connections between courses. Since it is a paid day for lecturers, their attendance is higher.

Recognition for Teaching?

Professors deplore the fact that their teaching duties are not recognized at fair value by the administration of their own university and by society in general.

Teaching is undervalued at all levels. It's the case in university, elementary school, high school, etc. In society, [...] because everyone has been a student, they all think that they can be teachers.

Public opinion with regard to teaching is largely affected by past schooling experience. People that encounter professors outside of academia are regularly surprised to learn

that courses are given at night, on weekends, during the summer, etc.

You are a professor, you give courses, you have summers off, you're lucky! But in reality, when we speak to each other, when it's time for evaluation, teaching is taken for granted and not valued.

It is not, however, the lack of public recognition that upsets colleagues the most. What is most frustrating is the lack of consideration for teaching within the university.

In fact, student course evaluations are not a primary concern when it comes to promotion or career progression. Even though it is evaluated at the end of each course, teaching performance is not taken into account for contract renewal, periodic evaluation, or requests for promotion.

We are evaluated from [...] different points of view when we teach: first, by the students, for whom [...] what happened in the course [is most important], period. [...] The fact that we spent a lot of time outside of the classroom with students doesn't count in evaluations.

Peer evaluation places little value on teaching, which is taken for granted and goes largely unrecognized in comparison to, for example, the research component of the academic workload. Finally, the fact that very little weight is assigned to teaching-

related activities during requests for promotion upsets most colleagues.

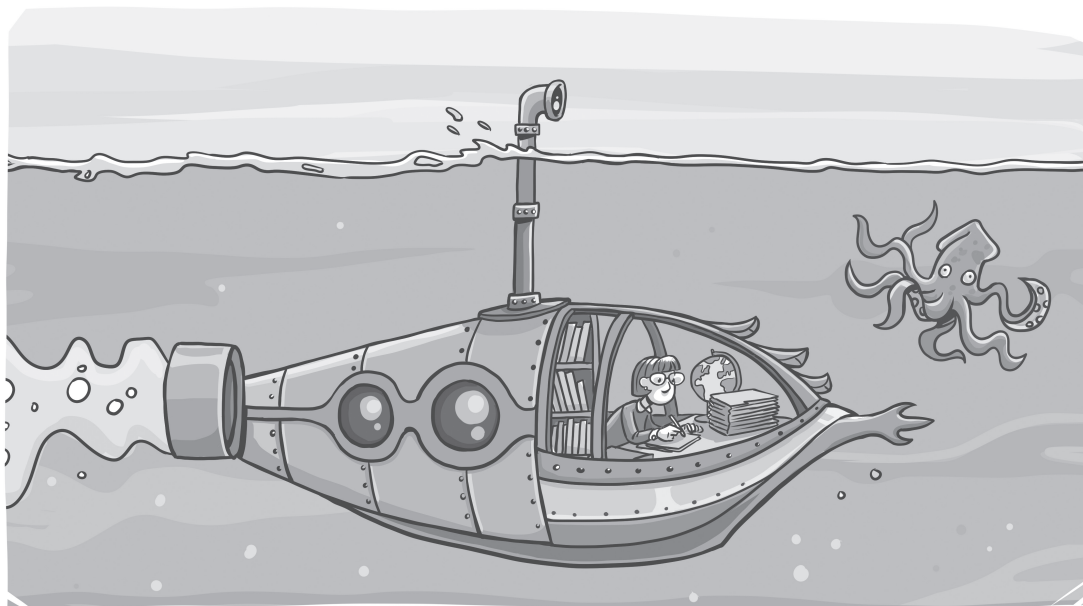
The point of view of colleagues [...] is that they don't care whether we've taught or not. What counts in the invisible hierarchy of the system is essentially publications and grants.

Consequently, colleagues ask themselves why they should deliver high-quality, up-to-date teaching. Why spend time on all of these implicit tasks that likely have no effect on their careers?

They plainly told me: "When it comes time for promotion, tenure, getting a full professorship, or whatever else, your research will be worth at least 60%, your teaching, 20%, and 20% for the other two components." And so, right at the beginning, they tell you that you're going to put time into teaching, but it won't count much when it's time for a promotion.

Young professors are not fooled for long with regard to the evaluation criteria on which they will be judged. They quickly discover that, in this case, the way in which they carry out their teaching duties does not count for much.

Competition for research grants and the number of publications associated



are clearly valued during hiring and during professors' careers. In addition, materials and support are often too limited to meet pedagogical goals, and professors consider these conditions to be indicators of the lack of consideration for the teaching component of the workload by university administrations.

Some young professors think that they are evaluated based only on publications, and others think that they are evaluated based on publications, quality of teaching, and involvement in the department, but for us, what is most important for promotion lately is producing articles and receiving grants. If a colleague is not invested in teaching or not involved in the department, it's not important.

BUDGET CUTS AND “ALL-PURPOSE” PROFESSORS

The Budget Cut Dance

As with other educational sectors, universities are paying the price for recurring budgets cuts that have been affecting public service for a number of years. The lack of human, financial, and material resources greatly encumbers teaching for many professors. This gap creates additional tasks in order to maintain student learning conditions at an acceptable level.

One thing that I have found is that we are [...] currently managing a lack of resources.

We are underfunded. [...] Underfunding is part of the issue in my opinion.

In some cases, pedagogical initiatives that used to have university support no longer do, which has led to a decrease in teaching quality.

What I've noticed since my arrival in 2004, is that the resources they give us to supervise large groups, which should be hours given to teaching assistants or graders, have been constantly decreasing. At the beginning, I had projects with lecturers, and there were sessions given outside of course hours. [...] All of this has been cut, including the pedagogical project, which could not be carried out alone...

In most universities, parallel to the decline in the recognition of teaching is, paradoxically, an increase in the burden of the teaching task. While professors do not directly pay the price of budget cuts in terms of salary, they take the hit by trying to fill all of the various gaps.

A series of elements builds up and makes preparing a course more burdensome. It's not taken into account.

“Trainee Teacher” Professors

Recently hired professors are generally students that are finishing their PhDs or post-docs. They have accumulated a number of years of experience as “trainee researchers”, and while a number of them may have lectured, some may have very little teaching experience.

You know, we hire researchers. We don’t hire teachers. We hire researchers who teach.

New professors find themselves learning how to carry out the teaching aspect of their careers, and often come to realize that it is not easy to be thrown into the position.

I learned how to teach on the job, partially to the detriment of students at the beginning, and I find it to be extremely demanding.

The first few terms are thus particularly hard for new professors, which is the reason why some collective agreements include an annual release from course loads for one or two years. The practice is not universal, however, and new hires can be assigned group courses that are large and difficult, that no one wants, or new courses that no one has time to develop.

I was hired three years ago. In three years, I’ve taught 15 courses.

I’ve prepared seven courses in two years.

Preparing courses in these conditions is clearly part of an unhealthy dynamic; however, it occurs in some departments. In addition, budget cuts lead to an increase in the number of students per class, and teaching goes practically unrecognized, so a number of new professors quickly plant their flag in research.

Young colleagues find themselves asking whether it’s worth [investing in teaching] because it seems that it’s not important in the long run.

“Administrative Assistant” Professors

Another consequence of the underfunding of universities is fewer support staff at the administrative level, and so teachers must find a way to compensate.

We lost a secretary recently. [...] They sent us an assistant cook to replace her. We couldn't refuse her. [...] She is part of the pool of support staff, so she has the right to apply to be a secretary.

In the absence of competent or sufficient support staff, professors carry out secretarial and other tasks.

When I realized I had to type my syllabus while other professors had never done so in their lives, make my own photocopies, prepare course packs, and put it all on Moodle, which is the electronic equivalent of all that, I told myself: "This is ridiculous!"

"Teaching Assistant" Professors

It is no longer necessary for professors to carry out certain teaching-related tasks, since teaching assistants are qualified to do so. However, for professors with groups that fall just under the limit allowing them to receive the help of a grader, the task becomes tedious.

Only at 41 students do we get a grader. If we make our students write papers and we have 40 papers of 20 pages each to read, that's 800 pages. It's a long period between Christmas and New Year's...

Similarly, sometimes dramatic cuts are made to the amounts allocated to hire teaching assistants, making the task more burdensome.

For example, in our department, we cut our teaching assistants by 40% from one day to the next. [...] In my class of a hundred students, teaching assistant hours decreased by 60%.

[For the administration], it was the easiest way to make cuts, because no matter the reasoning, they found these cuts to be the easiest to make. Now, I think that the quality of education is dropping and there is more stress for professors.

In addition, laboratory sessions and practical workshops that were guaranteed for teaching assistants are now reduced and sometimes given in condensed form by professors. Paper- and exam-grading hours are increasing for professors, while teaching assistants are losing their jobs.

It's terrible for graduate students who are also teaching assistants.

"Provider" Professors

Faced with reduced budgets for teaching assistants, who are frequently also master's or PhD students carrying out their research with professors, such professors try to kill two birds with one stone: save time while paying their students.



HEY, IT'S PROFESSOR CASEY!

?



HI PROFESSOR CASEY!



HAVE YOU HAD TIME TO FINISH CORRECTING?



WATCH OUT PROFESSOR CASEY!

BANG!



HONEY? ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH...

I JUST DOZED OFF A BIT...

We are stuck. Many colleagues do it. They take money from their research fund to pay people to grade so that they don't waste too much time on it. It's as though the universities don't recognize the validity or importance of giving feedback in order to educate, which is quite serious for institutions that have a main purpose of educating.

The lack of scholarships and financial resources for graduate students sometimes leads professors to lend a helping hand. Payment for a given course that exceeds the normal load is budgeted to help provide funding for their students.

We sometimes teach an extra course in order to have money for graduate students.

“Vacant or Unfilled Position” Professors

The shortage of professors has multiple causes: death, retirement, sabbatical, sick leave, parental leave, resignation, lack of qualified candidates, or hiring freeze. No matter the cause, the result is the same: the position remains vacant or unfilled. However, the associated workload must be distributed, at least in part, among the remaining professors.

The load is divided among colleagues; it's dangerous!

The university tends to increase the number of acceptances, yet the number of professors, particularly in terms of teaching and educating, is not sufficient.

In addition, in ongoing operations or in universities' enthusiasm to develop new niche markets by announcing original, attractive programs, sometimes universities do not ensure that there are enough professors to carry out such plans. It is not uncommon, under these circumstances, that positions are not created or remain vacant.

We have open positions all the time and we try to recruit [...]. The main problem is that when there is a shortage like this, when one of our colleagues goes on sabbatical, maternity leave, etc., why is this person not replaced? It is clear that replacements by lecturers, who give their courses and leave, are not enough.



BARGAINING OR PROMOTING?

Austerity's Turn

For several years, universities have been affected by recurring budget cuts, which have resulted in an increased number of students per class and decreased pedagogical support.

They asked us to increase enrolment. We doubled our class sizes. Can we have double the budget? No. No adjustments at that level.

The recent discourse dedicated to austerity as a management requirement has replaced that of performance contracts from past years and brings its own set of problems to the table. Dependent on private sector

management styles, these measures have now been announced by the government in the middle of the fiscal year, forcing university administrators to frantically review their budgets, without consulting the academic community.

Senior administrators no longer listen to us. [...] Support, in their minds, is: "Figure it out, we're in a crisis situation!" This answer becomes laughable when, as at present, the crisis lasts a long time.

The impacts of this prolonged situation on classrooms, laboratories, professors' offices, and hallways are overlooked by university administrations; there seems to be a large gap between what happens on the ground on a day-to-day basis and what senior administrators say.

They need to listen to the base of operations that is responsible for programs. [...] They would benefit from what we have to say!

Delivering the Goods

This wave of austerity doubles as a widely condemned transformation, in which university knowledge is becoming a tradable good like any other. The vision of what university should be or what it was has changed in order to develop into what governments and managers give the impression they want it to become.

For university administrators, knowledge is a good [...] and not education we are providing [...] related to societal needs; I feel as though there has been a shift in the vision of universities in Quebec.

This vision is, in fact, not specific to university teaching in Quebec.

The situation is not unique to Quebec. It's the Western world as a whole that takes part in the market logic.

In this model, knowledge becomes a good, students become customers or raw materials, universities become

factories, and teachers become service providers: they must deliver.

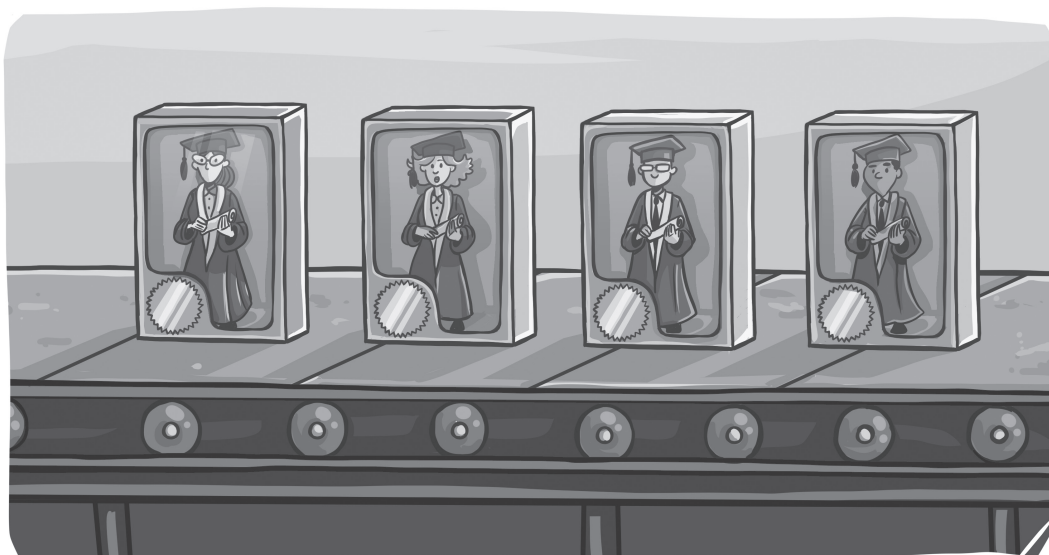
One colleague [...] received an answer from the administration saying that students are our factories. They paid, chose a niche schedule, registered, and now we must deliver. Seeing our students as customers and ourselves as service providers [...] is pressure [that is becoming standard].

What should be expected from universities and those who are a part of them? A number of those who are dissatisfied with the shift that seems to have occurred within decision-making bodies to favour the university as a business, managed as such, which must produce and deliver a good, knowledge, that has direct use in a society that values cost-effectiveness and profit.

Reasserting the Value of Teaching

Professors hoped that things would change and were ready to get involved in many ways in order to improve working conditions with regard to their teaching duties. Since this part of the workload is frequently taken for granted, methods of enacting change involve reasserting the value of teaching and education.

I think reasserting the value of teaching [...] in order to ensure that we can be



actual university professors that teach at the university level [is] very important.

Professors realize that even their students do not understand what is involved in university teaching and education, especially at the undergraduate level. Raising awareness about the added value of the most interesting aspects of teaching is difficult.

I think it would be difficult to promote academic work among my students, and I think that it is where my heart lies. [...] They push us [to give] students credit. The creative and original sides disappear.

Of course, lack of knowledge on the subject is even greater outside universities. Some professors hope for exchanges and open debates

on the expectations Quebec society has for its education system, from preschool to university.

Can we convey a message to society in a widespread, general manner in order to give prestige to this profession, which is a very, very nice profession? The first thing to do is to assert the value of teaching.

Professors are conscious that they need to learn to reassert the value of their profession so that it receives more respect, and they recognize that they share some responsibility in the lack of appreciation of their social role. The challenge begins with

universities, their internal structures, and their management methods.

When they put me on the department's pedagogical committee, I asked what its mission was. No one was able to tell me, not even the people on the committee.

There are many challenges and opportunities for action at multiple levels, but professors noted that it was necessary to restore the balance between teaching and research in their workload.

Restoring the Balance Between Teaching and Research

The third report in this series³ highlighted the fact that research occupies a significant place in formal recognition policies, as well as in informal assessments of a professor's work. In contrast, teaching does not seem to receive the same level of recognition as research accomplishments.

Teaching quality [...] and impact aren't taken into account.

However, some colleagues argue that teaching is as important as research.

We all have different strengths. [...] There are research stars, and there are others who are extraordinary professors. [...] "If you want to teach, go right ahead!"

Restoring the balance between teaching and research can occur by encouraging and asserting the value of particularly talented educators, as is currently done for established researchers. This action also accounts for the relationship between both aspects of the workload. The basis of the academic career in Quebec is the capacity to constantly go back and forth between teaching and research. It is not just about one or the other, but building a bridge between the two aspects.

I cannot imagine research without teaching.

There needs to be a relationship between teaching and research, because they cannot be dissociated.

These synergies seem to be all the more welcome in that the ability to connect them is characteristic of the academic workload, which is different from other jobs or employment categories (lecturers, industry researchers, CEGEP teachers).

³ Gagnon, M. and M. X. Noël, *Research and Creation: Conducting quality research and creating, or overproducing?*, FQPPU, 2015, 38 p.

Conditions for Reasserting the Value of Teaching

While the value of teaching and education need to be reasserted, particularly with regard to research, recognition should go beyond the distribution of an annual award issued to the best educator at a university. For colleagues, reasserting the value of teaching directly involves departmental and institutional recognition, at the same level as research during key career moments such as evaluation, tenure, and promotion.

In very concrete terms, this means teaching and research would carry the same weight in evaluations, requests for promotion, and even hiring decisions.

I would be very comfortable with a change to the workload formula that would hold teaching in higher esteem.

In addition, this recognition would not be measured only by student satisfaction, a standard too often used, exclusive of any other measures, to evaluate teaching quality, since it does not take into account pedagogical innovation, student supervision, development of up-to-date course content, etc.

What we evaluate when professors submit their files is student satisfaction. [...] It's frustrating because when we have developed pedagogical material or tried new strategies, it's not really taken into account.

In fact, since teaching and education far exceed delivery in the classroom, many professors feel that it is important to have a less limited vision in order to consider courses of action that integrate the pedagogical project as a whole, in addition to asserting the value of teaching.

Supporting the Pedagogical Project

Therefore, while the relationship with students plays a large role in teaching, the pedagogical project that supports and surrounds this relationship must again be the centre of concern. For a number of colleagues, supporting the pedagogical project would first require having one. Above all, it must also be embodied in actual practice.

We must take stock of all of the bodies related to pedagogy on a university-wide scale, favour one or two of them, but ensure that we

can develop tools and strategies that can later be shared with others.

The key here seems to be collaboration and mutual support among colleagues, even solidarity, with regard to various aspects of university pedagogy. Individual experiences must be supported by enriching them with a stimulating collective dynamic, particularly for newly hired colleagues.

When I was first hired, there was nothing. I found it difficult to teach, as it was my first teaching experience, and there was no support. Now, at least, it's fun and dynamic. Professors present things they've done, and it encourages the rest of us to develop pedagogical strategies and help each other with teaching.

Solidarity among professors means that when new professors arrive, we need to help integrate them. If we have [pedagogical] material, we should give it to them: [...] our course outlines, actually everything.

The pedagogical project, its practices, and tools can therefore be created in more or less formal manners, but a number of colleagues would also welcome professional development training about various aspects of university pedagogy.

How do we prepare course outlines, what is an evaluation agreement, how can we supervise graduate students, etc.? [...] All year long, training sessions

[...] should be held about small practical things and should be very rich, interesting, and free.

Teaching and education are therefore essential aspects of the academic workload. Teaching is the most visible component of the workload, but paradoxically, many of its aspects are overlooked, carried out in the shadows, and very time-consuming. In addition, teaching is weighed down by an accumulation of related tasks that should not be carried out by professors, or at least, could be carried out by others.

Moreover, while teaching is clearly at the bottom rung in comparison to the prestige of research, it is partially because many professors value research more. Academic conditions for recognizing and reasserting the value of teaching and education activities are within reach. They require, however, a strong foundation at the level of university pedagogy as a whole and a stimulating collaborative work dynamic between colleagues, with regard to the pedagogical project.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses, income, and any other financial activities. The text suggests that a consistent and thorough record-keeping system is essential for identifying trends, managing cash flow, and preparing for tax obligations.

Next, the document addresses the challenges of reconciling accounts. It notes that discrepancies often arise due to timing differences, errors in recording, or omissions. To resolve these issues, the author recommends a systematic approach: first, identify the discrepancy, then trace it back to the source, and finally, correct the error. Regular reconciliation is presented as a key practice to prevent these problems from accumulating and to maintain a clear and accurate picture of the organization's financial health.

The final section of the document provides practical advice on how to streamline the accounting process. It suggests investing in reliable accounting software that can automate many of the manual tasks, such as data entry and calculations. Additionally, the author encourages the use of standardized procedures and the delegation of responsibilities to qualified staff members. By implementing these strategies, businesses can improve their efficiency, reduce the risk of errors, and spend less time on administrative tasks, allowing them to focus more on their core operations.

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The second part of the document focuses on the classification of assets and liabilities. It details how to distinguish between current and long-term assets, as well as current and long-term liabilities. The text provides examples of various types of assets, such as cash, accounts receivable, inventory, and property, and explains how they should be valued and reported. Similarly, it discusses different types of liabilities, including accounts payable, loans, and other obligations, and how they should be classified and measured. The goal is to ensure that the balance sheet accurately reflects the company's financial position at a given time.

The third part of the document addresses the calculation and presentation of the profit and loss statement. It outlines the steps for determining gross profit, operating profit, and net profit, and explains how these figures are derived from the sales and expense accounts. The text also discusses the importance of presenting this information in a clear and concise manner, using appropriate accounting conventions and standards. It highlights that the profit and loss statement is a key indicator of a company's operational performance and its ability to generate profit.

The final part of the document covers the preparation of the financial statements and the role of the accountant. It describes the process of reconciling accounts, verifying the accuracy of the data, and preparing the final reports. The text emphasizes the importance of attention to detail and the need to follow established accounting principles and standards. It also discusses the responsibilities of the accountant in ensuring that the financial statements are fair, accurate, and compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

Things can change.

The FQPPU supports its members' actions that are aimed at reasserting the value of university teaching and education.



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