

The Instructor The Newsletter of TAs and Part-Time Instructors at Dalhousie, Saint Mary's and Mount Saint Vincent Universities

April 2006

What Part-Time Faculty Want

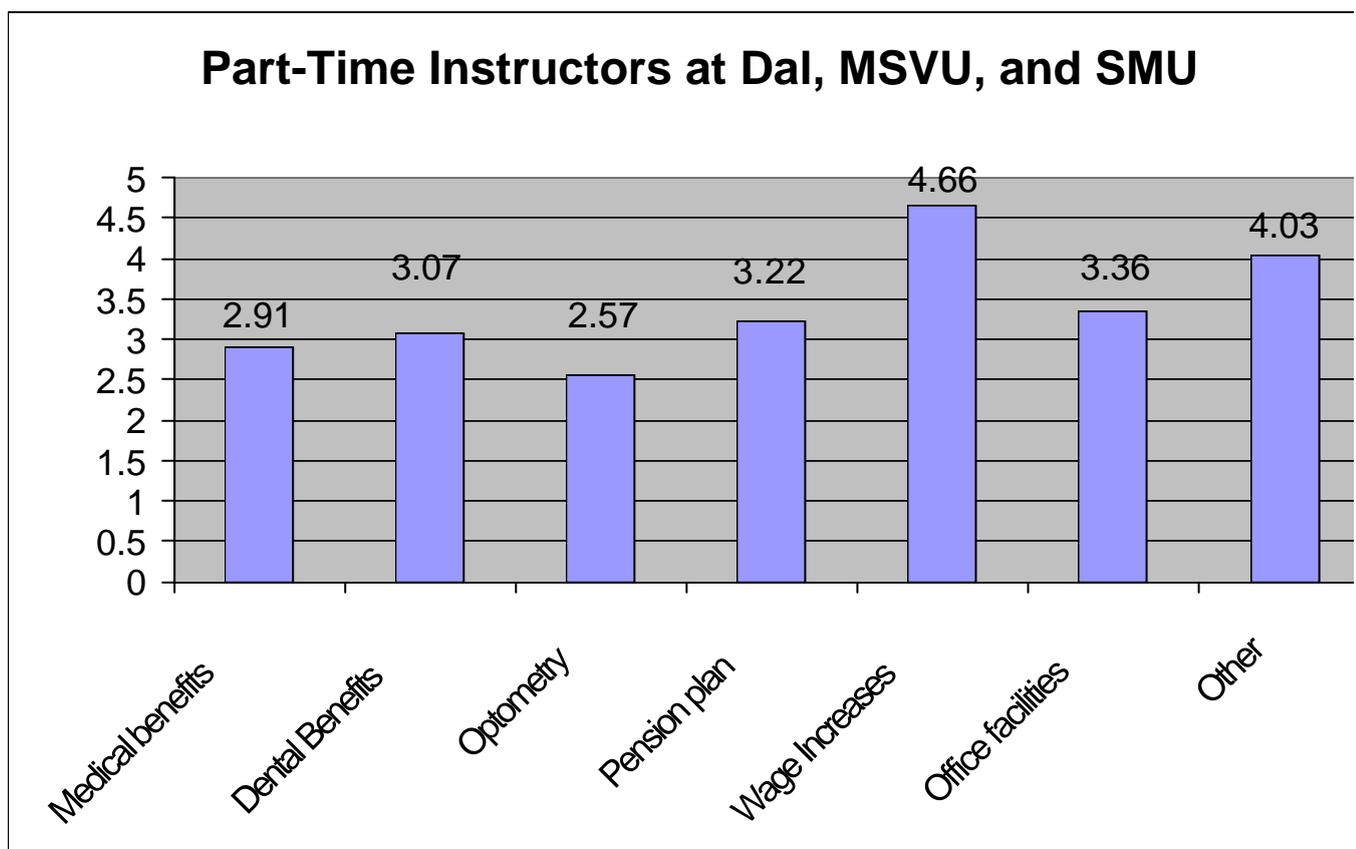
Results of our online survey indicate salaries are the biggest issue

Lori Root, CUPE 3912 Organizer

Part-time faculty members of CUPE 3912 responded to the survey informing their Executive that a wage increase was of greatest importance. The second most important was "Other," followed by office facilities. Some of the comments in the "Other" category were:

- ✍✍ Increased research funding.
- ✍✍ Tuition subsidies for family members
- ✍✍ Access to resources to attend conferences and seminars, and to conduct research for teaching excellence.
- ✍✍ Free tuition for part-timers.

Amalgamating seniority across universities



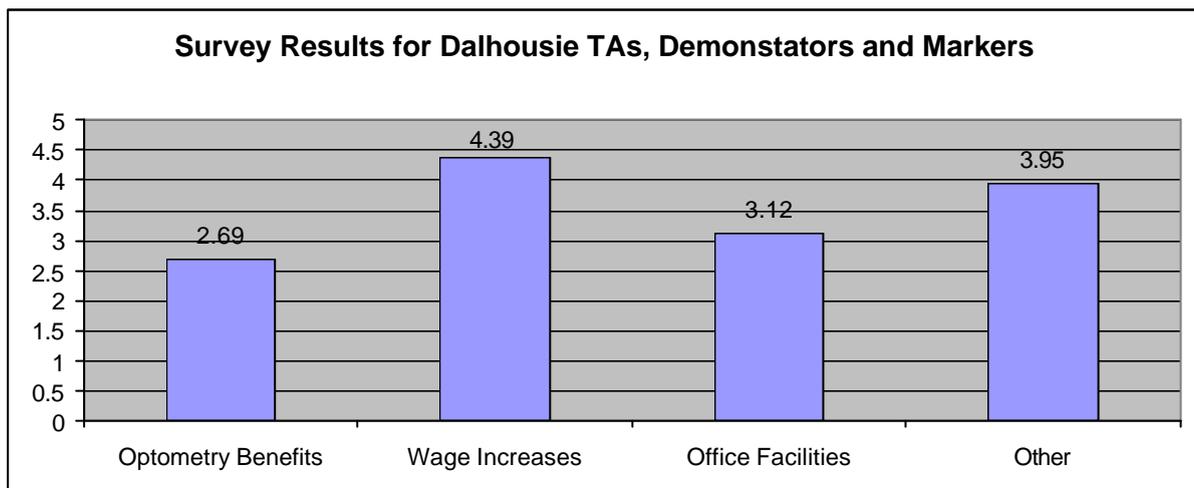
Dalhousie TAs, Demonstrators and Markers Respond to Survey

As with part-time faculty wage increases is the most important issue for TAs, Demonstrators and Markers. "Other" was second, followed by Office Facilities. Some comments in the "Other" were:

✍ Being paid for work actually done.

✍ Paid parking

Wages was also mentioned many times in this category.



CUPE launches task force on making union more inclusive of women

The following communiqué was released by the CUPE National Office, 7 March 2006

Canada's largest union, the 540,000-member Canadian Union of Public Employees, is using International Women's Day – March 8, 2006 – to launch a national task force on making the union more inclusive of women.

Nova Scotia's Barb Moore, the Task Force Co-Chair, says, "On March 8, women and men across Canada and around the world celebrate International Women's Day. This year, March 8 is especially important for CUPE members and staff. Almost two-thirds of CUPE members are women. To gain ground as a union, we must increase the participation and representation of women."

CUPE National Rep. Jacquie Bramwell, who works out of Sydney, says, "Our union is taking on this challenge of exploring ways to make CUPE more inclusive of the full diversity of women at all levels of our union. It will look at how we do our union work, from the bottom up, to better achieve gains for women while breaking down barriers."

Some of the workplace issues the CUPE task force will explore include:

- ?? Economic insecurity caused by public sector restructuring
- ?? Inadequate social supports and income supports (access to child care, pensions, and benefits)
- ?? The shift from good-paying jobs to casual, part-time and temporary employment
- ?? Unsafe, unhealthy workplaces that keep women from being full participants in our union

Says Moore, "CUPE has a long tradition of fighting for equality. We are proud of our union's work on the front lines breaking down barriers for women. These barriers need to be addressed so women, who still bear a heavier burden at home, can become full participants in their workplace, community and our union."

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NEWS FROM SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY

Comparing Apples and Oranges

Joyce Conrad, V-P CUPE 3912, SMU; Sociology, SMU

Recently part-time faculty members at SMU have reported that the pay - increments outlined in Schedule A of our agreement have not happened when they became due. With the meager pay that is awarded for such important work, these small increments become all the more important. When they do not occur as expected it becomes an issue. At issue here seems to be some creative connection between pay-increment milestones and the annually posted Precedence List.

During our last round of negotiations the University proposed that the official Precedence List should be tabulated once every year, at the end of December. This List could then be used to determine precedence among our members for courses that would be taught in the following fall and winter semesters. This "official list" would allow the University to begin posting courses and assigning contracts in late winter with no concern for the possibility of changes in individual precedence during the Summer Sessions.

The benefits of this for our members would include earlier job postings and better long-term planning. It could also reduce the situations wherein part-time faculty find themselves in a classroom without having their contracts processed and receiving no pay for a month. It was also intended to decrease the numbers of courses listed in the fall and winter Course Schedule with the faculty member being listed as TBA.

From the CUPE 3912 perspective, the only connection between the official annual Precedence List and the pay rates listed in Schedule A of our Agreement is that they are both calculated on the number of courses taught. Article 24, Compensations, states that part-time faculty members receive one pay rate while they are still on probation, and another when they have fulfilled the terms of probation and are placed on the Precedence List. Further pay increments are to be added for long-term teaching at SMU, as measured by years of service and numbers of FCEs taught.

These gradations can move individual members from one pay scale to another at different time throughout the year. This achievement should be recognized when it occurs, not six months or even a year after it happens. Recently some of our members who passed a milestone and were expecting an increase in pay did not receive one. On inquiry they were told that their improved status would not be official until the next Precedence List was approved.

There was no agreement by CUPE 3912 that the Precedence List be used to delay the earned pay increments of our members. This list is intended only to determine which of our members, within a

competitive market, has first access to any given course contract. The Executive of CUPE 3912 does not agree with this policy and is currently working to remedy the situation through Labour/Management discussion.

Are Your Precedence Rights being Denied?

Joyce Conrad

The rights of first access to courses which have been posted to CUPE 3912 is one of the important benefits our union was able to achieve for its members.

Article 16.04 (a) reads: "Persons applying for a posted position shall have precedence for appointment based on the number of credit courses previously taught at Saint Mary's University, on a part-time basis, providing they meet the requirements for the position as per the job posting." This statement does not refer simply to an individual member's precedence within our unit. It means that after a course has been posted to our bargaining unit, it "belongs" to our members, unless no qualified member applies for it.

Article 16.04 (a), however is an understanding between the members of CUPE 3912 and SMU Administration. It is not a guarantee. In the past year one CUPE 3912 member with precedence applied for a posted course but was told it was no longer available. The course had been assigned to a new sessional position. This is a contravention of our agreement. It is possible that this is happening throughout the university.

CUPE members are responsible to have a copy of and be familiar with the latest Collective Agreement. Members who think that their rights may have been infringed should contact their executive. We have access to trained staff in the CUPE National office who are ready to help us understand our rights, and in time of conflict, our options. If you believe this problem is happening to you or someone else, contact your executive.

Who's Doing the Teaching? Universities rely increasingly on part-time faculty

Robert Lanning, Sociology and Anthropology, MSVU; Communications Officer for CUPE 3912

It's no news to anyone that there is little assurance of job security in part-time university teaching. Only after teaching for many years are part-time faculty comparatively certain that a course or two will come around next year. Even the most secure among us are still doing a job that is not always a dependable source of income, nor does it offer opportunities for advancement or for more comprehensive contributions to post-secondary education, such as research, and improving one's scholarship.

The Administration at Mount Saint Vincent has told Department Chairs to reduce course offerings to be taught by part-time faculty. The stated reason is a decline in enrolment which is clearly not the case if one reads the President's own Report of February 9, 2006 (available on the Mount's Intranet site). Perhaps this is crying poor in preparation for upcoming bargaining.

Precarious Labour

Like every other sector of the economy, part-time university teaching is a form of what is now called "precarious labour," characterized by various forms of uncertainty. "Employment uncertainty" refers to our work on short-term contracts; "location uncertainty" refers to those of us who teach at two or three universities in Halifax, and/or commute between

universities in Halifax to Acadia in Wolfville, or the Agricultural College in Truro, or elsewhere. Precarious labour produces other kinds of uncertainty such as work scheduling, family and leisure activities.

The Trend in Nova Scotia

According to a study published by Statistics Canada in 2003, the number of part-time faculty in Nova Scotia increased 33% during the 1990-1991 to 1997-1998 period, more than three times the national average. The study further noted that the work of part-time faculty in Nova Scotia in 1997-1998 amounted to more than 500 full-time positions.

The Trend Across Canada

According to this study the numbers of part-time faculty increased nation-wide by 10% between 1990-1991 and 1997-1998, while full-time faculty have declined by 7% since 1992-93. Student populations over that period remained about the same. Across Canada more than forty-two percent of part-time faculty are women, compared to about 26% of full-time faculty. Social Science, Humanities, Education and Fine Arts are top-heavy with part-time faculty, while the Sciences and Engineering are dominated by full-time positions.

The Trend in the U.S.

Think we have it bad here? Using figures from the U.S. Dept. of Education, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) show that the trend in hiring part-time faculty (referred to in the U.S. as contingent labour) has increased considerably. In 1975, 30% of faculty in American universities were part-time. By 1995, the proportion had increased to 41%, by 2003 to 46%. Further, full-time faculty appointments on short-term, non-tenured contracts have increased over the same period from 13% to nearly 19%. Thus, in U.S. universities, about 65% of faculty are in this precarious category of work. The AAUP notes that this trend is a result of changing priorities in post-secondary education; major proportions of university financing once devoted to teaching have now shifted toward technology and infrastructure. Importantly, this shift in the U.S. began in times of prosperity rather than recession.

Part-time faculty are clearly crucial to the functioning of universities. But, is it our knowledge and teaching that is valued, or the low pay, the few benefits, and the absence of job security?

Sources

For Statistics Canada: T. Omiecinski. *Education Quarterly Review* 9(3) 2003.

For AAUP: <http://www.aaup.org/Issues/Contingent/Fac%20Status%20Trend.pdf>