

Lecturer Affairs Committee Report 2013-2014

The Lecturer Affairs Committee, ad hoc under Faculty Affairs, met frequently during the 2013-14 academic year to help advise on implementing new policies and practices for hiring, retaining, and promoting full-time lecturers; transitioning existing non-competitively hired (NCH) full-time lecturer lines to competitive lines; and to work on issues surrounding the hiring, retention and promotion of part-time lecturers.¹

Autumn term the committee attempted to disperse clarification on the myriad issues and policy/practice recommendations made by Vice Chancellor Harrington and Provost Ana Marie Cauce in the 2012-13 and early 2013-14 academic years regarding lecturer affairs. We found that there was still wide-spread confusion and misinterpretations by departments, faculty and administration regarding these new policies/practices. We worked with Vice Chancellor Harrington to issue clarifications but we felt that the UWT campus as well as the UW system, as a whole, remained confused about the issues and policy/practice statements. Thus, after Autumn term we decided to yield active work on these issues to the Provost/Senate Tri-campus Lecturer Affairs Committee which convened in Winter 2014. We expect that the UW Senate and Provost Cauce will weigh in on the Tri-campus committee recommendations which will set policy for the UW system. We believe, that while our committee work has been crucial to changes at UWT and in the UW system, these issues are best handled, now, by the UW Senate, UWT Executive Council, administration and AHR. We urge the Executive Council to monitor practices moving forward.

UWT Lecturer Affairs chair (and NCH lecturer) Libi Sundermann and former chair of UWT Faculty Assembly, Katie Baird, were appointed by Faculty Assembly chair Jill Purdy to this committee. To date, while that committee has performed a substantial amount of work, their report on NCH lecturers has not been released. We anticipate this report will be available soon and that the Tri-campus committee will continue discussions regarding part-time lecturers.

The UWT Lecturer Affairs Committee, led by Roseann Martinez, successfully negotiated improvements to the new part-time lecturer space in the Keystone building which we encouraged development of in 2012-13. We worked to advise faculty and administration on the UWT campuses regarding the changes in NCH lines to competitive lecturer lines that did take place in the 2013-14 year. Most existing NCH lecturers who went through a job search this year met with success, and were hired into competitive lines, which the committee regards as a testament to the dedication of our committee to these issues over the past two years, and the positive response to our work by administration and faculty system-wide. Our committee does have recommendations for best practices moving forward in moving NCH lecturer lines to competitive lines at UWT in the next few years:

¹ Issues surrounding NCH part-time lecturers are critical but have not yet been fully addressed by any faculty governance group. We urge faculty and administration to pay close attention to these issues in the next academic year.

1. There has been concern from existing NCH lecturers without a terminal degree (in other words, NCH lecturers with an MA but no PhD) that they will not be seen as competitive for open searches and competitive hiring. We argue that existing lecturers, regardless of their degree status, should be given consideration for open searches and competitive hires based solely on their record of teaching excellence and service at UWT. We also advise that departments offer all of their existing lecturers (whether MA or PhD recipients) a final interview for any competitive position as a sign of respect for their service to UWT unless there are clearly defined reasons linked to their teaching and service performance that suggest they not be considered in the interview process.
2. Faculty and administration must pay careful attention to the forthcoming Tri-campus report, and consider making changes in hiring procedures to move NCH lines to competitive lines based on the recommendations from that report.
3. The UWT Lecturer Affairs committee recommends that this committee dissolve at the end of 2013-14 academic year (with an option to be reconvened as necessary with new membership as necessary). The current co-chairs, Libi Sundermann and Tarna Derby-McCurtain, will step down regardless, and the majority of the committee members are ready to step down as well. We feel that our work has initiated significant changes and progress in the policy/practice and culture of lecturer affairs at UWT and system-wide, but that the scope of the issues is now beyond our level of influence and would be better handled at the Faculty Assembly, Senate, and administrative levels.

That said, we reiterate our request that faculty and administration carefully review the forthcoming Tri-campus report and continue discussions surrounding part-time lecturer concerns. We further recommend that Faculty Assembly ensure, by whatever means reasonable, lecturer representation in Faculty Assembly and faculty governance committees and that the Lecturer Affairs committee be reconvened if necessary, particularly if new policies and practices surrounding lecturer hiring, retention, promotion, and salaries are not implemented or policies surrounding lecturer hiring slide back into the state of dysfunction and bad practice in which we found them in 2012.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth 'Libi' Sundermann, Co-Chair, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
Tarna Derby-McCurtain, Co-Chair, Social work
Donald Chinn, Institute of Technology
Joanne Clarke Dillman, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
Linda Ishem, Urban Studies
Michael Honey, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
Roseann Martinez, Social Work
Tom Diehm, Social Work
William Kaghan, Milgard School of Business