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# The Academic Profession in Canada: Perceptions of Canadian University Faculty about Research and Teaching

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Previous scholarly attention to the experiences of faculty members has emphasized the contexts of US institutions, with minimal attention to the experiences of the Canadian component of an international survey that was administered







in British Columbia led to the creation of new, teaching-intensive universities, while two former Alberta colleges have evolved into universities with a strong emphasis on teaching for the current situation (Clark et al., 2011), while some rectors in Québec have pushed for the creation of two types of universities (Gingras, 2013). This debate is partially informed by disagreements over the added value that research fosters amongst teaching faculty but mostly is guided by the argument that the current model of university education is no longer sustainable and that teaching and research should increasingly be considered as separate streams for university faculty.

Finally, the trend of increased pressure to conduct research in areas targeted by the federal government of Canada has impacted the work of Canadian university faculty members. This process has been particularly salient in areas perceived as having high levels of commercial viability and is a response to historically low levels of industry–academia collaboration. Canadian universities have long been considered woefully inadequate at fostering innovation

enced by the First International Survey of the Academic Profession, which was conducted in 1992 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Altbach, 1996). Canada was not included in the 1992 survey and so it is impossible to analyze change over time, but the Canadian administration of the CAP survey remains one of the largest, most comprehensive studies of the Canadian professoriate conducted to date.

In the Canadian context, the CAP project provides unique quantitative data on the work, experiences, and backgrounds of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members at Canadian universities. The Canadian component of the study was designed to gather responses from a representative sample of full-time faculty members at Canadian universities. A two-stage cluster sample was created at two distinct levels: the institution and the individual. The popular taxonomy for institutional type amongst Canadian universities uses the following three categories: Medical/Doctoral, Comprehensive, and Primarily Undergraduate. A random sample was generated with this institutional taxonomy and con-

Undergraduate. At least one university in each of Canada's 10 provinces was represented in this study, and for each university, only full-time faculty members were surveyed.<sup>1</sup> CH YF academic individuals with titles of Instructor, Lecturer, Research Associate, and Clinical Faculty were not included in the Canadian CAP survey. Also, faculty members with administrative titles, such as Dean and Vice President, were excluded from the survey.

5h YbXcZC VcVf &SS+z\* z' - ' dchU dUfVdUhgk YfYgYhU b j b j H U h c b j j U Y a U with a hyperlink to a web-based survey, which was then closed in mid-December, 2007. An- ch Yf U h A d h c g W f Y f Y g d c b X b h g k U g j b j H U h X j b ' 5 d f j ' & S S , z U b X h Y g f j Y r k U g U b U m W g Y X j b ' A U n & S S , z \ U j b j [ ' c M U j b Y X % % & j U X f Y h f b g Z c f ' U f Y g d c b g Y f U Y c Z % " & % " 8 Y tails on the survey sampling framework and response rates are provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

University Type	Gross Sample*				Net Sample				Returned Sample			
	Institutions		Faculty		Institutions		Faculty		Institutions		Faculty	
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Medical Doctoral	15	31.9	59.7	4	22.2	2245	33.5	4	22.2	442	' , "	
Comprehensive	11	23.4	24.7	6	33.3	3109	46.5	6	33.3	501	43.5	
Undergraduate	21	44.7	15.6	,	44.4	1339	20.0	,	44.4	209	% '%	
	47	100.0	31,554	100.0	%	100.0	6,693	100.0	%	100.0	1,152	100.0

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In terms of the professional dynamics involved in the publication of the above research, a number of CAP questions investigated the form, structure, and processes associated with faculty responses. The collaborative dimension of academic research was examined in a survey of Canadian academic researchers (Lebel & Lemelin, 2009) the survey being conducted (2007) with other researchers in one or more of their research areas in Canada, and 63% reported having collaborated with international colleagues. In terms of co-authorships stemming from collaborative research activities, 40.3% of respondents indicated that they had co-authored with colleagues in Canadian institutions, while only 12.7% reported that they had co-authored with colleagues in foreign countries. Despite the low level of co-authorship with foreign scholars, however, 31% of Canadian respondents indicated that they had published in a foreign publication during the previous year.

When the data were compared to bibliometric studies for the year 2007, there appeared to be a high level of variance in the reported levels of collaboration with international colleagues. In 2007, nearly 45% of all Canadian academic publications were the result of international collaborations (Lebel & Lemelin, 2009). This of course varies according to disciplines, the humanities being the less collaborative (as measured by co-authored papers) and the sciences reporting as the most collaborative, with the social sciences falling in between. Interprovincial collaborations are usually less frequent than international co-authorships. Small provinces collaborate more with other provinces, and larger ones, such as Ontario and Quebec, collaborate more with other provinces (Larivière, Gingras, & Archambault, 2006; Lebel & Lemelin, 2009).

Questions relating to the second theme that emerged from the CAP survey are grouped under the heading *Research and the Academic Profession*. They focus on how individual academics relate to the purported goals and expectations of research vis-à-vis the dissemination and public spending on research, the measurement and evaluation of research outputs—as well as the role of the academic professional, with tangible implications for debates around academic freedom. In light of this dynamic, faculty perceptions regarding desirable or preferable research practices are examined in this section. The following section will take up these issues by examining pertinent CAP survey questions in order to portray a broad aggregate of full-time academics' perceptions at Canadian universities, acknowledging that nuances exist at sub-aggregate levels that will be well served by further analysis in subsequent studies.

Faculty have expressed concerns regarding their research, including broader considerations of the purpose of research within the university. Faculty members conceptualize research and knowledge production as fundamental to the university's mission, and 88% of respondents reported that they had published in a foreign publication during the previous year.

that “scholarship includes the application of academic knowledge in real-life settings,” and 59% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “faculty in my discipline have a professional obligation to apply their knowledge to problems in society.” The manner in which this knowledge is transmitted, however, presents more uncertain results. Seventy-glj dYFWbhcZfYgcbXyblg gfcbl`mU fYYXcf`U fYYXh UhÍgWc`Ufg`jd`lgVYghXYÜbYXUg`h`YdfYdUFUjcb`UbXdfYgYbHjcb`cZÜbXjbl`gcb`cf[[`]bU fYgYUFWâ`\*%`gfcbl`nU fYYXcf` agreed that “high expectations of useful results and application are a threat to the quality of research,” and a correlate question regarding the quantity of research indicated similar concerns, as 72% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “high expectations to increase research productivity are a threat to the quality of research.” These responses seem to indicate that there is trepidation amongst Canadian academics regarding the in-Üi`YbW`h`Uhg`VMU`]ggj`Ygg`ci`X`U`Y`cb`XIMfa`]b]b[`h`YbUi`fYzgWdYzUbXUdd`]Wjcb` of research in Canadian universities. While a majority of respondents acknowledged that ÍfYU!`]Z`g`Mh]b[`g`Wb`VYbYÜhZ`ca`UWX`Ya`]WYgYUFWzh`Yg`fj`YmfYg`hgXjXbchj`ddcfh` the expectation of application as being the driving force of research.

The second grouping of questions relating to the conceptualization of research builds cb`h`Y`Uhf`WbW`gcb`UbXeI`Yg]cbg`h`Y`]bÜi`YbW`h`UhY`hfbU`UbX`bcb!`UWX`Ya`]WUW` tors have on the construction, funding, and evaluation of research activities and practices within Canadian universities, particularly in relation to the quality, quantity, and scope of research. In general, the CAP responses indicate that the academic profession in Ca-





of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are encouraged to improve their teaching (71% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are encouraged to improve their teaching), and 81% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their institutions provide adequate training courses for teaching improvement. While the CAP survey questions regarding teaching evaluations were intended to describe the extent of administrative oversight and support for the improvement of the quality of teaching, faculty do not necessarily perceive the university's role as that of a neutral player, given the high stakes of performance evaluation for the purposes of tenure and promotion, in the case of tenure-track faculty. Despite the absence or presence of institutional supports for the improvement of the quality of teaching, faculty may be resistant to perceived interferences by university administration in the faculty–student relationship and peer-to-peer collegiality, as reported in Canadian studies conducted by Iqbal (2013, 2014).

This focus on teaching permeates interactions with students. Most faculty members spend time interacting with undergraduate students outside of the classroom, through email (96% of respondents interact with students outside of the classroom and 96% engage in email communication with students). Interestingly, there was a strong sense from faculty members that students were not equipped with basic skills prior to enrolling in a course/institution, which results in faculty members believing that they have to spend more time on basic skills (77% of individuals strongly agreed or agreed that they inform students about issues of plagiarism or agreed that they spend more time than they would like on basic skills, while 77% of individuals strongly agreed or agreed that they inform students about issues of plagiarism). In a 2015 survey, the strong sense of obligation by faculty members in Canada to inform students about issues related to plagiarism and cheating in their courses suggests that particular expectations and norms related to study skills, evaluations, and academic writing operate at these institutions (and in academe more broadly), of which some students may not be aware. The CAP results also support Canadian studies on academic integrity that suggest a shifting locus of responsibility between students, faculty, and institutions when it comes to academic integrity (Iqbal, 2014).

The CAP survey also found that the primary theme, was that of teaching and graduate education. From an organizational perspective, faculty members experience institutional targets related to the number of hours in the classroom and to the number of students per class for undergraduate student populations. For example, 81% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their institutions have positive load targets for hours in the classroom and number of students in the class, respectively. This sort of institutional transparency works to stabilize undergraduate education where faculty members are aware of explicit norms and expectations from their respective institutions. However, 71% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they do not experience similar direction through institutional targets related to the number of students in the classroom and number of students in the class, respectively. In addition, 71% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their institutions had load targets or regulatory mechanisms for the supervision of graduate students.

Finally, 71% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they spend more of their time teaching in master's programs than in doctoral programs, and the number of students in master's classes is much larger than in doctoral

programs. For instance, the amount of total instruction time in master's courses is larger than in doctoral courses, at 21.1%, and the class size for master's courses nearly double that for doctoral courses. These findings are important nuances to their teaching experiences in the contexts of undergraduate and graduate levels of education, as well as through teasing out the master's and doctoral programs related to graduate education. These nuances are related to institutional priorities of transparency with respect to each sub-set of education as well as broader institutional, regional, and national interests of undergraduate and graduate education.

An important entry point into assessing the intersections of the components of academic work emerges from responses to the question "Please indicate your views on the following: (answer scale 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). . . . Your research activities reinforce your teaching" and "Your service activities reinforce your teaching." 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that research reinforces teaching, while only 43% agreed or strongly agreed that service reinforces teaching. Up to this point, our discussion has focused on the separation of research and teaching: an examination into how each operates distinctly and separately from the other as components of academic work. A further question in the CAP survey in 2011 (the ethics component) -1nt









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