

COU Academic Colleagues Report  
For Lakehead University Senate Meeting on February 15, 2013

COU Academic Colleagues met in Toronto on January 31 and February 1, 2013.

At the working dinner on January 31, Colleagues were briefed on current COU and MTCU activities by Peter Gooch, a COU staff member. He warned of anticipated funding cuts of 1% in 2013-14 and another 1% the following year to be built into the funding formula.

For the remainder of the evening Colleagues discussed the perception that the faculty role is changing in response to increased expectations for productivity. Colleagues agreed that faculty are expected to adapt to constant change, and that this is true for any profession. There was not agreement on whether or not the overall workload has increased in recent years although that perception is common among junior faculty. Julia Christensen Hughes has begun work on an Academic Colleagues discussion paper on *The Changing Faculty Role* to be presented to Council in the fall. There will be further discussion of this paper before then.

At the meeting on Friday morning, Colleagues discussed the employability of university graduates and the current media focus on unemployed and under-employed university graduates. This led to discussion of the purpose of university education, and the harm done when the “million dollar promise” is not realized. It was pointed out that educational institutes are typically blamed for unemployment during recessions. Colleagues will continue the discussion about employment of university graduates at a working dinner in May, and plan to make this the topic of a future discussion paper.

The COU Teaching and Learning Task Force is trying to identify examples of exemplary digital learning resources and faculty members who can clearly explain the advantage of using digital learning resources. The Task Force is protesting the plan to charge students ancillary fees for digital learning resources. Proponents of the ancillary fee compare digital learning resources to textbooks and expect students to pay for them.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2013 in Guelph.

Respectfully submitted,

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COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University