Staffing Criteria for BUFA Professorial Positions at Brandon University

PREAMBLE

The University is limited – not only by budget constraints – in its ability to respond to staffing needs. In making difficult decisions, which have historically included not being able to meet all requests, the University must compare requests from Departments whose needs, priorities, pedagogies, and measures of success and efficiency are often highly different. A primary consideration in developing these criteria is the importance of creating reasonable and equitable working conditions for BUFA Professorial Members. The overall aim of this document is to contribute to real transparency in the Provost's decision-making with regards to all BUFA staffing requests in the professorial ranks.

With current and anticipated funding and enrolment patterns and projections (including flat or declining Provincial Grants, shifts in government approaches to funding, regional demographic trends, and enrolment patterns), the University is not expecting to be able to grow the BUFA ranks during the life of the current collective agreement, beyond the two positions agreed to in the current CA. Gain of positions in other areas will, therefore, most often be through a reallocation of positions that become available through attrition (retirement, relocation, etc.). These decisions, following the criteria articulated in this document, will respect requirements contained in the Collective Agreement (e.g., the 'three-person Department rule') as well as the University's determination to put those positions where they can do the greatest good for students and other stakeholders, and in furtherance of the mission of the University.

What all of this means, in a time of fiscal restraint and negligible growth in tuition revenues, is that many worthy requests for additional professorial positions will go unfilled. With this information in mind, and prior to exerting significant effort and energy in developing staffing requests, it is recommended that Departments first look to: ways in which current departmental work can be modified to realize acceptable efficiencies; ways in which their Department's situation compares to that of other units across campus; and critically evaluate how an additional professorial position would sustainably improve the experiences of students and faculty.

STAFFING CRITERIA

All eight of the following criteria are to apply in all annual staffing planning decisions.

- A. Departmental requests for additional positions must include documentation demonstrating departmental efforts to deliver academically or professionally sound programs in an efficient manner

- B. EDID considerations

- C. Proportion of teaching staffed by CAS instructors or temporary arrangements

- D. Program integrity and student experience

- E. Balance of workload within a program

- F. Direction from institutional Academic Plan, and from any of the following that are relevant: the institutional Strategic Plan, Research Plan, Cyclical Program Reviews, and/or Faculty/Department/Unit Strategic Plans

- G. Disciplinary responsiveness, collaborations, and renewal

- H. Fulsome Participation in Departmental Work and Collegial Governance

APPENDIX

A. Demonstration of Departmental efforts to deliver academically sound programs in an efficient manner

As part of its request, can the department demonstrate:

- That effective ways to optimize workload while enhancing program outcomes and/or quality of the student experience have been sought and/or achieved prior to this request?

- That the department is working with an up-to-date conception of disciplinary best-practices as outlined in program reviews, literature or trends?

- That there is no academically feasible way to lower faculty teaching or student support workloads other than by adding staff to the unit?

- That the addition of a Member would in fact improve student experience (shown by workload assignments of current Members over the past five years and a sample position description to illustrate how existing load would be redistributed to improve student access to services or provide Members with equitable workloads)?

B. EDID Considerations

Article 15 of the Collective Agreement requires that Faculties/Units establish reasonable goals for hiring Members from the five designated groups, in order to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Faculty/Unit; each Faculty/Unit is responsible for setting its own criteria for establishing EDID goals, and for preparing a plan for achieving its EDID employment goals. Every five years, each Faculty/Unit must assess its progress in achieving those goals, "and review and revise its plan/goals in consideration of evolving demographics with respect to the criteria used to establish the goals."

In making staffing requests, Departments shall address specifically how those requests reflect/address the plan/goals developed by the Faculty/Department/Unit. Likewise, Departments shall address their readiness to welcome Members from the five designated groups, particularly the percentage of current Faculty/Department/Unit Members who have completed the equity training jointly developed by the Employer and BUFA.

C. Proportion of teaching and professional service staffed by CAS instructors or temporary arrangements

Both Parties acknowledge that there are major substantive advantages to having courses offered by regular full- and part-time faculty, though there is always room for CAS instruction in most programs for a variety of good reasons. This criterion refers to the proportion of workload within a Department or Program that is delivered by someone other than the regular Members of the unit (e.g., teaching by term or CAS appointees). With the exception of administrative leaves or leave replacements, term and CAS appointments should not normally exceed a reasonable portion of the overall teaching workload of a Department/Program. Concerns regarding scope creep must be kept front of mind and may be addressed under this criterion when making staffing requests, as may situations where the proper functioning of the Department relies upon continuing faculty Members regularly taking on overload teaching.

D. Program integrity and student experience

All programs – whether teaching or support – have unique needs for staff as a result of their unique disciplines and professions, and these needs may differ even across otherwise similar departments. The members of each Department are best placed to advise on the parameters of their own requirements given the context of

delivery at Brandon University; at the same time, Departments/Programs are encouraged to make arguments based on national disciplinary norms in cognate institutions. The integrity of any program can be threatened by inadequate staffing, and can be enhanced by optimal staffing. This includes the achievement of student success broadly conceived but also applies to the diversity and range of offerings or services required to satisfy student needs and interests. Is there data to support student need for the parameters of the program currently on offer? Are our students missing out on options we cannot now provide, or being driven away by programming that does not reward their efforts? Is potential growth being hampered by a lack of faculty? Are there minimum staffing requirements as per an accreditation body? These considerations are relevant to staff planning. In any case, the requirements of accreditation bodies shall take precedence over the rankings produced by these staffing criteria.

E. Balance of workload within a program

Member responsibilities include teaching or professional duties, research and service though the proportions vary with the kind of appointment. Members may seek to balance these commitments in proportions that differ from others, and the option to seek amended teaching or research appointments exists to facilitate this. Both de facto and aspirational commitments to workload distribution may factor into staffing decisions. Inadequate staffing levels can compel Members to sacrifice research or service to meet teaching demands. Where this is currently happening, equity requires a reconsideration of workload balance.

Many factors may impact the balance of workload within a department:

- Significance of the research in the unit (as defined in Articles 14, 17, and 18, and conceived in a manner broad enough to encompass the wide variety of research outputs produced at Brandon University)
- Members' development of new courses or redevelopment of existing courses
- The number of Members within a Department/Program related to the service expectations / needs of that Department/Program
- Exceptional service to the wider academic community or for the public good (for example, organizing a large national conference, or leadership of a project of national social / cultural significance)
- Is the Department / Program currently involved in an external review? Such reviews may require the disproportionate participation of certain Members
- Number of new early-career researchers in unit receiving reduced teaching
- Members from EDID groups often face additional service burdens which have not traditionally been credited in academic institutions, including supporting students from the designated groups in an unofficial capacity, which has an impact on the Members' research and teaching potential

F. Direction from the institutional Academic Plan, and from any of the following that are relevant: the institutional Strategic Plan, Research Plan, Cyclical Program Reviews, and/or Faculty/Department/Unit Strategic Plans

In line with the Strategic Plan for the University, the institutional Academic Plan will emphasize high-priority areas for further development, or low-priority areas to be reduced or phased out. Staffing is a key means by which the University can shift its strategic direction. Since staffing decisions can have very long-term consequences, these initiatives should come out of carefully considered strategic planning exercises involving the whole Brandon University community, and must address the Academic Plan specifically.

G. Disciplinary responsiveness, collaborations, and renewal

New trends emerge in post-secondary education, but Faculties/Units/Departments and their programming do not always respond in a timely way. Not just curriculum content but pedagogy, teaching technology, the structure of disciplines, cultural innovations and world events can all impact programming and the ways faculty deliver it. Professorial Members are responsible for anticipating the ways in which their programming can be adjusted and made new when that can help the program to thrive. Of course, not all environmental changes are helpful and some can be detrimental; Departments and Faculties/Units therefore also need inventiveness to counteract or compensate for the negative change. Programs that are responsive and reflect teaching and research excellence are more attractive to students and new faculty.

In particular, has the unit considered how a new hire might contribute to teaching, research and / or service needs beyond their own unit? Can collaborative planning of teaching, research or service contribute to the success of multiple units? For instance, an additional full-time faculty position in one department might allow another department to add technical expertise otherwise lacking, to secure the cycling of required courses or important electives, introduce a new sub-discipline, or enter joint programming with peer or partner institutions.

Such programming renewal or collaboration could benefit units in a variety of ways, including:

- Enhanced content delivery that improves the student experience and better prepares them for post-graduation outcomes;

- Greater curricular flexibility and choice for students, leading to higher retention and quicker graduation rates;

- A wider range of new students at BU interested in pursuing previously unavailable opportunities;

- Teaching workloads more aligned with research interests;

- Access to technical expertise that benefits current and future Faculty / Department / Unit agendas.

H. Fulsome Participation in Departmental Work and Collegial Governance

The Collective Agreement, in Article 12, lays out the responsibilities of Members in undertaking their work including, among others, the responsibility: to act ethically and honestly; to "undertake work related to all aspects of their workload"; to "maintain scholarly and/or professional competence in their discipline"; to "participate in the governance of the University through active participation in Department meetings and Faculty Councils"; and to "actively participate in the required equity, diversity, and inclusion training mandated by this Collective Agreement."

Fulfilling these responsibilities ensure that work across Faculties/Departments/Units can be shared in an equitable way among all Members of those Faculties/Departments/Units. If someone does not participate in the mandated EDID training, for example, they are unable to undertake certain service responsibilities, which may then fall disproportionately on other members of the Faculty/Department/Unit. In addressing staffing needs, the Department must consider and address the fulsome participation of its Members as a whole in the work of the University. Can the perceived need be met by better overall participation by all of its Members, or does the need exist despite such fulsome participation?

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