

June 2019

# **FACULTY COMPLEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION REPORT**

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In October 2018, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic launched an initiative to develop a multi-year Complement Renewal Strategy for the University, with the goals of:

- understanding what high-level principles should guide the University, and what outcomes we should strive for, as we invest in faculty complement renewal over the next 5-10 years;
- informing the annual, Faculty-based complement planning process with an appreciation of longer-term goals for the University; and
- clarifying how to best build the complement needed to achieve academic priorities as expressed in key planning documents including the University Academic Plan and Strategic Research Plan.

Two documents were circulated for information and comment:

- Faculty Complement Renewal at York University: Provostial Discussion Paper
- York University's Faculty Complement: A Comparative Analysis.

The Provost's office sought input from the community on the questions in the discussion paper to determine how to best build York's faculty complement over the next five to 10 years.

This report summarizes feedback received from individuals and groups consulted in person, feedback submitted through the on-line feedback form, and emails received.

## CONSULTATION PROCESS

Groups and individuals who participated in consultations include:

Group	Date
Deans' Meeting	March 5, 2019
University Executive Committee – by email	March 6, 2019
Indigenous Council – by email	March 12, 2019
Diversity and Inclusion Representatives – by email	March 12, 2019
YUFA and OHFA – notification of consultation process and document sharing by email	March 14, 2019
Internal York Community – Y-File	March 14, 2019
All Full-time Faculty – by email	March 15, 2019
Faculty Councils – by email	March 15, 2019
YUFA Joint Long Range Planning (LRP) Sub-Committee meeting	March 19, 2019
ADRs and CRD – by email	March 21, 2019
Student Representative Roundtable	March 26, 2019
Senate	March 28, 2019
Open Consultation – Keele Campus	April 3, 2019
Open Consultation – Glendon Campus	April 15, 2019
All Graduate Students and Postdocs – by newsletter	April 25, 2019
Contract Faculty Consultation	May 7, 2019
On-line Feedback Form	March – May, 2019

## CONSULTATION DATA

The consultation process involved the electronic circulation of the Discussion and Background papers with links to on-line feedback forms, an email contact address, and details about in-person consultation sessions. The discussions and feedback received consisted of:

- 34 written submissions totalling 26,000+ words
- 6 in-person group meetings with ~180 people in total
- Feedback was provided by faculty, contract faculty, academic administrators, graduate students and undergraduate students
- Submissions from members of AMPD, Education, FES, Glendon, Health, LA&PS, Lassonde, Schulich, and Science
- 11 anonymous submissions

## FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### Tenure-stream Faculty Complement

There was consensus that we must continue on our path to increasing the tenure stream faculty complement in order to:

- ensure curricular innovations and renewal
- improve full-time faculty:student ratios
- diversify our faculty cohort
- decrease reliance on contingent faculty positions
- sustain our current strengths and advance in new areas of opportunity
- fulfill the ambitions of the University Academic Plan (UAP), Strategic Research Plan (SRP), and other visionary documents

While there was consensus that we should reduce overall institutional reliance on contract positions, there was no consensus on an appropriate target for the percentage of teaching done by tenure-stream faculty. It was concluded that any university-wide target for the percentage of teaching done by tenure stream faculty should not unduly restrict flexibility at the program level, especially for professional programs where contract faculty bring specific applied knowledge and practical expertise into the curriculum.

Compensation was raised in several submissions as the key to motivating and acknowledging excellence within the collegium. Starting salaries that are competitive in the GTA, PTR, and the need for merit-based exercises were all mentioned.

### Streaming

With some notable exceptions, there was general support for a teaching stream within the full-time faculty complement. These positions are seen as preferable to contingent faculty positions, ensuring capacity for pedagogical innovation and leadership, and allowing for the flexibility required in many programs to include specialized and professional knowledge. It was noted that an effort must be made to ensure the teaching stream is properly recognized (through T&P), well supported, and thoroughly integrated with professorial stream appointments. It was proposed that in future we might consider Teaching Chairs as a way of supporting strengths in pedagogical innovation.

### Cluster Hiring

While there were differing views on the benefits of cluster hiring, there were more responses that suggested a focus on strategic areas of current and future strength is important. It was suggested that one way to go about cluster hiring might be to launch a university-wide call in a particular area.

### **Contract Faculty**

There was consensus that contract faculty perform work that is essential to the university's overall success. Contract faculty are necessary and important in delivering curriculum and supporting student success. There was unanimity around the need to improve working conditions for contract faculty from timely job postings, to professional development and formal recognition, to space and IT availability, to better collegial integration with tenure-stream colleagues.

It was suggested that the Teaching Commons could be leveraged to support contract faculty development and to enhance their competitiveness in open searches for tenure-stream faculty positions. It was proposed that a limited number of Teaching Fellowships for contract faculty would provide the opportunity to enhance pedagogical practice. Additionally, it was noted that training and professional development around teaching would be more accessible if the time required to engage in these activities was compensated.

### **Diversification**

A consistent theme throughout written and in-person responses was the need to continue efforts to enhance employment equity within the faculty complement and that for this purpose a broad definition of diversification is essential and should include race, gender, disability, sexuality, and indigeneity.

There was a call for improved hiring practices informed by strong leadership around Affirmative Action criteria and processes. Some colleagues noted barriers within their units that must be addressed in order to ensure hiring processes seek out a broad range of applicants and evaluate them appropriately.

It was noted that rebalancing the age profile of the faculty complement at York and growing the relatively small cohort of faculty under age 45 is needed to advance diversity goals. Positive incentives should be offered to ensure that late career faculty feel confident that their scholarly activity will be supported in retirement, making room for renewal. It was also noted that further work could be done to understand why York faculty may be retiring later.

It was agreed that diversification and AA should be advanced in both the professorial and teaching streams (i.e., equity hires should not be concentrated in the teaching stream).

Finally, there was a recommendation that hiring at the Associate Professor level be considered to attract top candidates in various Federal Employment Equity groups.

### **International Hiring**

There was considerable confusion around the question of international hiring as well as a call to review our hiring practices around international candidates. There is a feeling that international candidates need not apply to some areas as their files will not be reviewed. Other respondents noted less pronounced concerns and worried that considering and recommending the appointment of an international candidate who doesn't accept the position then precludes the hiring of a qualified Canadian candidate and could mean a failed search. Several respondents were clear that we are only going to meet our institutional goals, particularly in research, if we seriously consider international candidates where appropriate.

### **Mentorship**

Formal mentorship is crucial at all levels and ensures success for new hires, as well as later career scholars. Submissions identified a need to consider formal forms of peer mentorship for mid career scholars to ensure that research productivity and teaching excellence are supported beyond early career

stages. It was suggested that Canada Research Chairs and York Research Chairs could be asked to provide more active mentorship for colleagues.

### **Infrastructure**

It was noted that in order to attract and retain excellent candidates, especially those who require laboratory facilities, growth in complement must be supported by growth in support structures and infrastructure.

### **IMMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS**

- York University must continue with our ambitious hiring plan over the next three years. Renewal in the faculty complement will increase the percentage of courses and students taught by tenure-stream faculty.
- Teaching stream appointments are an important step in elevating pedagogy and curriculum innovation, and in addressing reliance on contingent faculty.
- The accelerated pace of our faculty recruitment initiatives should assist in addressing the demographic imbalances that have developed over time within our current complement.
- Diversification of our faculty complement to address employment equity gaps is required, and our complement renewal strategy must address this essential and pressing topic.

### **NEXT STEPS**

A Complement Renewal Strategy will be developed and shared with the community in the Fall of 2019.