Extent and Consequences of Faculty Members' Workload Creep in Three Canadian Faculties of Education

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Abstract

The literature suggests that the emergence of market metrics in the administration of major research universities has led to an increase in workload, here called workload creep, among faculty members in academia. Addressing the research question "What is the evidence and impact of workload creep on faculty members in faculties of education in Canada?" this article begins to address the lack of empirical evidence addressing the scope and consequences of Canadian faculty members' workload. To date, most research on the workload of Canadian higher education faculty is conceptual in nature, limited methodologically, or conflates data from multiple disciplinary areas. This research is different, focusing on faculties of education in three demographically similar U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities. Through analysis of qualitative in-depth interviews and comparison with research in different contexts, this article reports on the perceived personal and professional consequences of workload creep in terms of faculty members'

mental health, physical health, and productivity. Workload creep undermines traditional notions of valued academic identities.

Keywords: workload, higher education, faculty, academic identity

Résumé

La littérature soulève l'importance croissante des paramètres mercantiles dans l'administration des principales universités spécialisées dans la recherche; cette situation a entraîné une augmentation de la charge de travail des membres du corps professoral. Répondant à la question de recherche «Quelles sont les preuves et l'impact de la charge de travail sur les membres du corps professoral des facultés d'éducation au Canada?», cet article, ainsi que le projet de recherche qui en découle, tend à relever le manque de preuves tangibles pouvant étayer ce postulat. En effet, il faut savoir que la plupart des recherches sur la charge de travail du corps professoral de l'enseignement supérieur canadien sont de nature conceptuelle: non seulement, elle sont limitées sur le plan méthodologique, mais elles assimilent en outre des données provenant de plusieurs domaines disciplinaires. Cette recherche est néanmoins différente car elle se concentre sur les facultés de sciences éducatives de trois universités démographiquement comparables. À travers l'analyse d'entrevues qualitatives approfondies, cet article décrit les sources d'anxiété et de stress, ainsi que leur manifestation au moment de la retraite. L'augmentation de la charge de travail affecte les membres du corps professoral en termes de santé mentale, physique et de productivité. Elle met aussi en péril l'intégrité de la démarche académique et universitaire.

Mots-clés : charge de travail, enseignement supérieur, faculté, identité académique

Background

Evidence suggests that the workload of university faculty members has intensified owing to student contact demands, technology, and neoliberal practices of managerial-ism, accountability, and surveillance (Houston, Meyer, & Paewai, 2006; Kenny, 2018; Shahjahan, 2015). Workload increases have led to significant increases in faculty stress (Kenny, 2018; Smyth, 2017). Informally, I have witnessed faculty members express concerns about increases in international student enrolment without appropriate supports; additional administrative tasks in response to new tracking systems; more frequently assigned teaching in the summer sessions when academic year courses are cancelled for lower-than-optimal enrolment; greater expectations from students for virtual, digital, and in-person contact; larger classes; teaching courses for reduced or zero credit hour alloca-tion; inequities in graduate student loads and pressure to increase graduate enrolment of higher-tuition international students; course and program development processes; lack of support for "trailing spouses" (Careless & Mizzi, 2015); pressure to internationalize and partner with outside organizations; pastoral care; and new initiatives related to changing contexts. In the UK, similar characteristics of academic work have been cited for creating a stressful climate in academia (Kinman, 2014). Similar stressors are also identified in recent data from Australia (Kenny, 2018), Europe (Berg, Huijbens, & Lauren, 2016), and Canada (Catano et al., 2010), and have been linked to physical as well as mental health issues (Minter, 2009; Smyth, 2017; Stevenson & Harper, 2006).

Collectively, in this article, I refer to perceived increased pressures in terms of assigned workload (meaning teaching, supervision, service, and administrative/account-ability tasks) as "workload creep." To better understand workload creep, the research reported here addresses the question, "What is the evidence and impact of workload creep on faculty members in faculties of education in Canada?" In this article, I focus on the production and manifestation of anxiety and stress (Catano et al., 2010; Berg et al., 2016; Kinman, 2014; Smyth, 2017) that are frequently linked to both lowered productivity and to innate or professional demographic variables (Catano et al., 2010), and often cited as a major concern for academic faculty.

Context

Universities are ranked both nationally and internationally on the basis of performance in their core missions, namely research (knowledge production and transfer), teaching, and, in the case of the Times Higher Education rankings, international outlook. Administrative concerns about university standings in external rankings can result in institutional efforts to increase capacity through enhancing the output, contributions, and accomplishments of faculty members, despite the fact that external rankings are, at best, based on "weak expertise" (Lim, 2017). Although service is considered to be part of the work of an academic, representing about 20% of an academic's assigned workload in performance reviews, it is not normally considered in external rankings (see, for example, Center for World University Rankings, 2015). However, certain members of the academic community shoulder a disproportionate amount of service or advocacy workload because of their commitments to building capacity in and strengthening liaisons with Indigenous communities, minority groups, or international partners, because they represent gender diversities (not restricted to binary gender), or because they are foreign-language-speaking faculty (Mancing, 1994). That is, workload creep and its attendant stresses impact members of equity-seeking groups disproportionally, with the result that "some individuals will inevitably have more power and influence than others" (Kenny, 2018, p. 367).

In every faculty, full-time instructor and tenure-line salaries reflect a significant proportion of operating budgets, meaning that one of the primary investments for a faculty is the potential measurable output of its faculty members. Added to this are public concerns over the productivity of faculty as public servants (Giroux, 2002), and the problematizing factor that much of the productivity of university faculty cannot be measured using marketplace indicators. Moreover, there is a general belief that some faculties (comparing faculties both within institutions and also comparing specific faculties across institutions) can achieve greater scholarly output than others and that output correlates with teaching and service workload. Consequently, there is evidence from some Canadian universities that the teaching workload is distributed according to research output, with those who are not actively researching being given more teaching responsibilities than those who are actively researching (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario [HEQ-CO], 2012). Some universities have introduced teaching-stream faculty appointments with limited research responsibility in order to deal with expanding enrolment, shrinking

resources, and increased demands for accountability (Vajoczki, Fenton, Menard, & Pollon, 2011). Teaching-stream appointments may involve different qualifications, promotion guidelines, and pay scales from tenure-stream positions. Job listings in each issue of *University Affairs* seem to reflect this as a national trend.

There is some evidence that teaching-focused appointments are on the increase. Research in Europe (Berg et al., 2016) and Australia (Kenny, 2018) illustrates that imposition of performance metrics and specified publishing venues have resulted in quotas that, if not met, can lead to loss of research-intensive tenure-track positions, redundant positions, and other punitive measures, often meaning increased teaching assignments for some faculty members. According to Berg and colleagues (2016), faculty members have been put in deleterious competition with one another with the result that "the wider higher education sector as a whole is filled with workers feeling ever more anxious for their jobs because of a general sense of worker precariousness that can be found *everywhere* at *all times* [emphasis in original] under neoliberalizing regimes" (p. 177).

Unsustainable Demands

To date, much of the data on faculty workload in Canada is from Ontario universities. A 2012 productivity report prepared by the Higher Education Council of Ontario (HEQCO) indicated that the average full-time teaching load was 3.4 semester-long courses per year; average course loads for research-active faculty were 3.0 courses while the average for non-research-active faculty was 3.8 courses. This contrasts with other reports (e.g., Clark, Moran, Skolnik, & Trick, 2009) that state the most commonly reported teaching load is four one-term courses per year before load reductions for research, graduate supervision, or administrative responsibilities. However, there are indications (e.g., Saunders, 2011) that teaching loads in the sciences are often lighter than teaching loads in the humanities or social sciences.

Looking at time rather than assigned courses, Crespo and Bertrand's (2013) case study of one Canadian research-intensive university determined that the average workweek for faculty members was 56.97 hours, (142% of a "normal" 40 hour workweek) with 44.1% of that dedicated to teaching (25 hours over 2.8 one-semester courses per year), 35.2% to research (19.8 hours), 5.8% to administrative tasks (3.3 hours), and 14.8% (8.43 hours) to service. They also concluded that more than 27% of faculty

members' research time was devoted to "at risk" activities such as the development of funding proposals rather than to the production of new knowledge. Data generation activities required 6.5 times more time than knowledge transfer, while a US report found that 42% of research time was spent on meeting grant accounting requirements (Schneider, Ness, Rockwell, Shaver, & Brutkiewiz, 2014), suggesting that much research time is ultimately invisible in terms of the gold standard of evidence, peer-reviewed publications. It is important to note, however, that Crespo and Bertrand (2013) focused on *tenured* faculty—those faculty who are no longer driven by their precarious positions.

Flaherty (2014) reported that faculty working at a university in Boise, Idaho, averaged a 60-hour workweek, 17% of which was spent in meetings and 13% on email, meaning 30% of faculty time was spent on "activities not traditionally thought of as part of the life of an academic" (p. 1). Faculty members were able to devote just 17% of their workweek time and 27% of their weekends to research (of a 60-hour workweek), showing "a willingness to exploit free time for work" (p. 1).

Looking at such tension between workload and time in the academy, Shahjahan (2015) argued that "time is a key coercive force in the neoliberal academy" in which "the multiplying and endless tasks…propagate an ever-present 'scarcity of time' affectively and cognitively" (p. 491). Shahjahan suggested that faculty internalize feelings of guilt and inferiority when they are unable to outwit the scarcity of time; moreover, they are affected differently based on race, gender (Aláman, 2014), class, language, and ability.

Faculty, students, and administrators are all constrained by time and productivity, and by notions of valuable activities versus those that are a waste of time, ultimately disconnecting academic work from depth, from equity, and from the quality of teaching and learning experiences. The results can be quite extensive:

> Grantsmanship and the attendant survivalist ethic affects hiring and promotion, institutional finances and status, and social relations—a cancer to collegiality. Academic capitalism may be circumventing faculty autonomy and undermining collective bargaining. External agencies, protocols, norms, and agents increasingly adjudicate academic quality, while administrators act as liaisons. Instrumentalism and factionalism may sabotage substantive, critical ideas by reinforcing the influence of academic dilettantes or charlatans. Academic integrity is endangered. (Allen, 2011, p. 106)

However, given that another line of multidisciplinary inquiry suggests that creative management of human energy makes it possible to get more done, in less time, perhaps even more sustainably (e.g., Schwartz, 2013; Jabr, 2013), it is imperative to understand how time relates to productivity, to the "colonization" of faculty bodies (Anderson, 2008; Shahjahan, 2015), and to the core missions of the university (Scott, 2006).

Looking beyond studies of specific institutional cases to examine the non-sustainability of academic workloads, Stevenson and Harper (2006) linked all of the stresses in academia, including ever-increasing hours at work, to decreased research productivity (e.g., Kenny, 2018). They argued that increased stress leads to poor time management, trouble concentrating, irritability and withdrawal from social groups, substance abuse, absenteeism, and other physical symptoms, all of which hinder faculty members' ability to perform their work. Likewise, Minter (2009) noted that academics live with a punitive 20-year salary scale incommensurate with their education; poor retirement benefits; lenient admissions policies leaving professors to work miracles; ambiguous guidelines for tenure and promotion; fruitless committee work and endless activity traps; increasing bureaucracy; expectations that exceed budget allocations; crippling teaching loads; peer review power traps; a mismatch between professions and institutions for professional faculties; and a scenario in which, increasingly, senior faculty members are simply giving up. That is, Minter (2009) suggests, it is not merely that the workload is increasing but that the type of workload is changing, contributing to burnout and falling productivity, and according to Ryan (2012), raising questions about why new generations of scholars, recognizing the changes, want to enter the professoriate at all.

Rationale

While serving as reporting chair of my faculty workload committee, I noticed significant differences in the approaches to workload in professional units versus discipline-based units as reflected in publicly available documents. Professional faculties have significant responsibilities to their fields (professions) that may be lacking in purely academic disciplines. Faculties of Education are bifurcated in that they also have responsibilities to the academic content of several traditional disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and applied and natural sciences in the academy. Defining the components of academic work in education seems a particularly challenging task, often leading to lengthy descriptions

of multiple forms of evidence constituting research, teaching, and service for the purposes of tenure and promotion. Moreover, my review of the literature reveals that Faculties of Education are not frequently highlighted in studies of workload or the changing climate in academia; research has tended to report on traditional disciplines, most frequently based on quantitative data, or on no data at all.

Methods and Procedures

With these factors in mind, this article reports on funded research, specifically semi-structured open-ended interviews (see Appendix) with 51 full-time faculty members representing fulltime instructors, professors, and administrators. After obtaining research ethics board approval and using each faculty's website contact list, my research assistant and I emailed all members of three demographically comparable U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities' Faculties of Education in Canada, describing the research and asking them to consent to a 90-minute interview about workload extent, source, and consequences. All of those who volunteered were interviewed. No follow-up requests were sent.

Interviews were arranged by telephone, Skype, or in person, depending on the comfort levels of the interviewees. I personally conducted all but three of the interviews, since many faculty members expressed a preference for interviews conducted by me, and using no university technology (personal emails, computers, Skype addresses, or telephone numbers). Interviews ranged from 75 minutes to 160 minutes long, and were recorded on my personal iPhone, emailed to a private email account, and then transcribed verbatim by a research assistant. Transcripts were member-checked for accuracy and to ensure that confidentiality was not compromised, then numbered and stored digitally. A hard-copy guide to interview numbers and institutions was kept separate from digital files; audio-recordings were then destroyed.

In this article, I discuss a primary-level analysis of my interview transcripts, viewing data critically and interpretively, using a form of selective coding, in which "subsequent data collection and coding is…delimited to that which is relevant to the emergent conceptual framework" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, p. 56). In this way, I examine the evidence for and consequences of workload creep in terms of resonances with core findings

from other studies on academic worklife and the impact of neoliberal policies on university faculty. Selective coding was used to determine how and whether concepts, ideas, and categories of analysis from previous studies in non-Canadian contexts were applicable to specific Faculties of Education in the Canadian context. In this regard, I must admit that as someone with a critical perspective, I am particularly interested in how interviews reflected changing power relationships in the academy. That said, from all 51 interviews, only two faculty members reported being satisfied with their workload, and suggested that their previously held expectations of academia were met; both were in early-to-mid career stages, and both served in administrative positions. There was widespread uniformity in the interviews, both within and among institutions.

Findings

In interviews, academics reported concerns about encroachments on their time and bodies stemming from four major, mostly unanticipated, sources of stress: (1) a changing academic climate from collegial academic leadership to governance and control; (2) accountability and audit processes; (3) surveillance and control; and, (4) resulting never-ending tasks.

Changes in Governance Procedures: Bureaucracy

A major source of stress for faculty included the changing nature of academia and the erosion of collegial governance. Most faculty reported having little say in faculty decision making, suggesting that decisions are no longer the result of debate, but are determined in advance and announced during meetings. This lack of collegial governance "feels more managerial than collegial and academic, so that creates tensions, and that creates a workplace that people just no longer want to be in" (Transcript 18: 8). Consequently, many faculty members reported that they had stopped trying to engage in collegial governance, preferring to opt out than to engage in a demoralizing process. An example of this response is:

> All of these factors belittle us, and it's the institutional belittlement, and the
> lack of response…. We are belittled, demoralized, we have created cultures of

triviality…. I will not be heard. I will not be listened to from a dean or vice president. Therefore, I'll move to a different zone, and that's basically "screw you all." (Transcript 14: 23)

This is an idea that I will return to.

Another concern brought forward was the changing nature not merely of administrative processes but also of administrators themselves. Administration is frequently seen as a career path rather than as a service to the university. One mid-career full professor with prior senior administrative experience summed up this change in faculty deanships:

I do see career administrators now going from one university to another, doing something drastic and big somewhere else, and it's not for a reason beneficial to the university, it's to put on their CV, so they can say, "I've made this change; therefore, I'm a good administrator." I think that's damaging, hugely damaging, to the universities. (Transcript 1: 14)

A number of participants expressed displeasure about increasing numbers of early-career professionals serving in administrative positions; they were seen to lack experience with a number of sacred university processes such as tenure, promotion, grantsmanship, publishing, and research.

Moreover, several faculty members critiqued a perceived emerging norm in which faculty-level deans, much like central senior administrators, no longer return to the faculty ranks as teaching professionals and researchers, but instead seek further administrative positions once their deanships are complete. Giving this phenomenon voice, one mid-career full professor explained that an intense workload was not the problem; rather, the problem was an intense workload without supportive administrators:

In my career, I've experienced intense periods of workload that were well supported, recognized, and I was contributing to the larger common good. It's not the high workload I fear or reject. It's increased workload, decreased support, decreased transparency, and decreased respect that contributes predominantly to the feeling of anxiety and stress that I feel at the present time. I have no confidence in the leadership of our faculty or the wider university to look out for the best interests of the professors, and that is a grim situation to be in. (Transcript 26: 15)

Accountability and Audit Culture

Kenny (2018), in a mixed-methods case study, provided evidence that "power is wielded by whoever controls the finances" (p. 377). Similarly, academics of all ranks recognized that they are increasingly being called on to prove that they earn their keep, which they track in a number of ways. One of the best expressions of this was from a mid-to-late career professor with more than 15 years' experience who had spent some time in senior administration:

> I also find that the pressure from the university for us to increase our productivity is unsustainable. I feel like I'm working at my maximum, and I don't want to increase the amount of work that I do…. It's the larger context factors that are irritating me because I work really hard, and I don't need somebody else telling me, like: "We are paying you good money, and you'd better show us that you're worth the money we are paying you." In terms of the workload, that's the biggest irritation. (Transcript 19: 7–8)

Apart from accountability in neoliberal terms, there are other subtle shifts in the nature of the accountability of professors, because universities, like other public institutions, "have to make themselves auditable, on a model imported from business accountancy" (Connell, 2013, p. 101).

One such shift could be described as accountability to students. Many professors and instructors from all ranks noted that student opinions are becoming increasingly important. As one noted:

> What I have noticed on the topic of student evaluation is a real problem with the amount of power the students are given; it's almost the opposite of the perception of what a professor is. If they make a complaint about us, then we are in big, big trouble. That complaint could be totally misinterpreted, so you almost have to say only good things to students, you cannot give any negative feedback; you cannot use your power to stop them from doing something. (Transcript 13: 10)

This dynamic is particularly troubling for academics representing equity-seeking groups, a problem recognized not merely by untenured faculty members (not to mention contract

sessional employees) from those groups but also by long-standing, late-career, domi-nant-culture professors, such as this one:

> Some undergraduate students are not really interested in people of colour teach-ing them. So, they [the people of colour] didn't get tenure mainly because of comments by students. These kinds of comments are very insulting: "When you give us handouts, you don't punch holes in paper, so we can put it in our binder." (Transcript 22: 9)

Similar observations were made about professors who represented the 2SLGBTQ+ com-munity, and about Indigenous professors.

One troubling aspect of the accountability processes is that the constant tracking results in constant comparisons. Constant comparisons fuel faculty anxiety, making them feel that they have to constantly measure up, as expressed by this mid-career teaching professor who had served in several administrative capacities:

> So, it is a competitive situation, it's not just like a person can do what the job re-quires. Knowing that they are competing against others in the same classification, they have to do above and beyond what the job requires in order to keep their positions. (Transcript 13: 2)

The need to do ever more with fewer resources because the intense competition could culminate in job loss was one of the most frequently noted concerns in all of the interviews, even among professors with tenure. Anxiety that they might inadvertently cross a seemingly trivial boundary, and become vulnerable to termination, was a promi-nent fear.

Surveillance and Control

Surveillance and control go hand in hand with the audit culture. While accountability is the end game, surveillance and control processes are the means to the end, a fact not lost on university faculty. Faculty members identified the increasing measures enacted to sur-veil their work, noting in particular the extra time needed to complete forms documenting their work that appear not to be read. A frequently echoed response made by a professor

with nearly two decades of experience and who had seen a number of changes expressed this frustration:

> I think it's a part of the workload creep…is the surveillance, the level of surveillance, and how we are supposed to fill out the forms…it just sucks time!... You fill out these forms, and you know, it's not done right, and you have to do it again. "Well, how am I supposed to do it, would you like to...[help me]?" "No, no, *you* have to do it, you have to figure out how you want to be judged…." (Transcript 6:3)

This same professor attributed the increase in surveillance at the faculty level to an increase in governmental control of universities. According to this professor, the university president has to be on good terms with the provincial government, and the dean of the faculty has to be on good terms with the university president; otherwise, funding could stop.

A second issue was highlighted by a mid-career associate professor with over ten years' experience, who explained that some aspects of surveillance are necessary, but that the recent increases have been unproductive, even counter-productive:

> I feel we are increasingly surveilled, and required to account for every minute and every dime. I'm not suggesting we should not be accountable, for example for public research funds, but the degree to which compliance is emphasized these days is a disturbing trend. I wholeheartedly feel that stress, anxiety, and burnout are direct result of these neoliberal practices. (Transcript 26: 11)

In further discussion, this professor was able to identify eroding support structures for professors over the past few years, and the shift in emphasis from "support" staff to "administrative" staff, as did this late-career professor from a different faculty: "We do have a secretary, but now most of the people we call support [staff], they work with the dean and department heads, but not with the faculty" (Transcript 22: 6). A response from an early-career assistant professor spoke to the dynamic in a different setting: "So, we just changed gears, and got into [a] more neoliberal treadmill way [of doing our own paperwork]. People feel like they need to demonstrate what they are doing; there's pressure" (Transcript 7: 5).

Another mid-career associate professor spoke to the change in assistance as well, noting that professors are hired for their expertise rather than their administrative abilities. More importantly, this professor suggested that they are often surveilled by administrative staff who have little understanding of, or respect for, their expertise.

> Our living conditions have really eroded. I see it also in the invasion of software programs that have taken a lot of our time and expertise away. We were hired and we are paid for the expertise of teaching, research, and service, and yet we are given administrative jobs, like [names a software program]…. We spend hours on this, and other adminis-trivia so our workload, as a result, has increased exponentially. Additionally, increased surveillance is evident, which causes us to feel like we are watched 24/7: more stress, more work to be administered—for surveillance and anxiety. (Transcript 11: 7)

The lack of respect and the feeling that faculty members have little-to-no power or standing in the university community was perhaps best summed up by this professor: "There are some people out there, and they want to put numbers on us. Almost like I think I should wear a striped uniform and wear a number on the back where I put a rank" (Transcript 22: 13). Similar sentiments were expressed by academics of all ranks in all three faculties.

Never-Ending Tasks

There is little doubt that, while the number of students has increased over the last few years, the number of full-time professors and instructors has decreased. Although much of the teaching done in the past by full-time faculty members is now done by sessional instructors, another commonly reported difference was increased class size. One early-career professor noted that changing the class size changes everything:

> They argue that the number of classes you teach hasn't changed, your workload hasn't changed. But your workload does change because when you have more students, that's where it creeps in. Now your classes are not 20, but 26 to 30 students, so you are marking more, you are supervising more, more emails, more exams, committees, all those things expand. (Transcript 28: 10)

A second strategy adopted by administrators to decrease costs (that is, in addition to increasing the numbers of contract instructors) has been to change the nature of some academic work. In the same way that a number of administrative tasks have been off-loaded onto faculty members, a number of research and supervisory administrative jobs have been created. Interviews revealed that new positions have been created inside and outside of faculties—in facilitating research processes; developing (international) partnerships; making curriculum and enrolment decisions; establishing timetabling and evaluative structures; managing teaching technologies; advising or supervising pre-service teachers; evaluating entry requirements; or managing (graduate) student experiences—with the result that academic matters are sometimes being handled by those with less-than-optimal expertise. The creation of these para-academics through a process that Macfarlane (2011) has called "unbundling" (p. 59) has led to such observations as this by a late-career professor with many graduate students and service obligations:

> The number of faculty has shrunk over the years. I would argue that one of the things we are doing wrong in this faculty [is that] we have too many support staff, and not enough faculty members, and [we're] spending too much money on support staff and not enough money on faculty. (Transcript 17: 14)

Commonly, rather than freeing up faculty members' time, para-academics increase the burden for faculty who must jump through additional administrative hoops by filling out forms for the para-academics to process, or by meeting exponentially earlier deadlines so that applications can be processed (viewed by participants as gatekeeping) on additional levels. I spoke with many faculty members who described the endless hours spent learning how to fill in forms or navigate websites that might only be engaged with once per year:

> Lots of time is wasted on triviality, and each act of triviality has an effect on the mind, which is to take away a little piece of your enthusiasm, to eat away a little piece of your core active efficient individual, erode your sense as an academic, being intelligent, capable of independent thought, and leadership, eroding your sense of actually having those things. Suddenly you are powerless in a cosmic game that seems to have no end. So, in this sense, the waste-of-time workload, the unproductive workload, these trivial tasks that go nowhere. (Transcript 14: 20)

In this vein, faculty members noted that commonly when they logged on to a web-based management tool, it had changed. It needed updated personal information, a new password, and adjustments to new, not-very-user-friendly web pages.

Putting this into context, one of the promises of neoliberal theology was that, in private hands, streamlined processes and technological automation would take over mundane tasks, leaving us with free time. However, the academic manifestation of that promised wizardry has instead created more work for academics. Where once faculty members waited in their offices several hours each week for students to visit, they now receive multiple emails from students, at all times of the day or night. The invisible mediator of email has left many professors wondering why their students seem to feel "like no question is too stupid" (Transcript 8: 10) simply because it is dispatched digitally rather than asked face to face. Late-career professors nostalgically remembered a time when they did not have to deal with email:

> Prior to [the early 2000s], professors didn't have to deal with emails. They are incredibly invasive, and there is no taking into account the changed atmosphere in academia as a result of this. Students expect a response like this [*snaps fingers*], and they email late at night or early morning or really at any time of the day, and they want a response within hours. (Transcript 11: 5–6)

Interviewees explained that students—and colleagues—seemingly prefer email to face-to-face contact. Some professors suggested that their colleagues or students would see them in the hallway, avoid eye contact, and then send them an email a few minutes later. As a result of this and other factors, the volume of email has become overwhelming, as this professor noted:

> If I'm off email for whatever reason—I happened to be in transit or fall ill—I come back to dozens and dozens of messages. I feel anxious to keep on top of emails, and that something has fallen through the cracks. Sometimes I come across an email that I should have responded to before, but it's simply fallen off the radar. The overload of emails is so intense that I'm anxious all the time that I'm barely on top of it. (Transcript 26: 9)

Contrarily, several faculty members explained their preference for email rather than face-to-face communication for several reasons: email can be tracked, it can account for their

work, and it can prevent punitive measures for communication breakdowns. At the same time, email can increase anxiety because failure to respond could invoke punitive action.

Turning to another digital innovation, online teaching, several faculty members mentioned the amount of time it takes to plan for, then conduct, courses via web-based platforms, suggesting that it was not ideal. While once they had images of teaching online in comfortable clothing with a cup of coffee in one hand, they soon realized that an online class was never over. Instead, faculty members found themselves logging in many times during the day to monitor discussions or reply to student concerns, often on pedagogical platforms that were not intuitive to use nor particularly effective, as this late-career former senior administrator explained:

> But almost everything that has changed is due to the fact that the Internet is now everywhere, and imposing on us, and the technology at the university is everywhere and imposing on us. Technology is not something we've asked for or had anybody asked us what we would be interested in, but rather "this is what we've got, and this is what you are going to use." (Transcript 29: 14)

Because faculty members have access to course platforms, university databases, libraries, resources, and to colleagues and students at all times, they no longer feel they have any free time. As one mid-career teaching-stream faculty member noted: "It's like if you are in this position, you cannot be a part of your family; you are a lone wolf who should be working non-stop. Nothing should distract you" (Transcript 13: 15).

Impact of Stress

Perhaps the most common comments had to do with the manner in which faculty members manage stress. Many commented that hallways are empty, that faculty members only attend university for classes and meetings. Faculty members increasingly choose not to participate—but their resistance takes the form of individual withdrawal rather than organized action (e.g., Anderson, 2008; Berg & Seeber, 2016). Personal withdrawal can be seen as an attempt to limit the encroachment on one's body and time, to reduce stress by staying away. One late-career faculty member commented that, in contrast to earlier times, "I think that it's not just stress of the workload but also conflict. It is a

disengagement. People don't care. They are not coming to their offices; they are just coming to fulfill their obligations" (Transcript 9: 16).

Moreover, social interactions are increasingly avoided. Many early-career faculty members have no time for socializing because the tenure clock is ticking, while others, such as this mid-career former administrator, commented that social events are now primarily attended by administrative and support staff:

> But also in terms of burnout, I see a lot of people not being here and choosing not to participate…. A social event for example, admin[istrative] staff showed and there is no faculty. It's not supposed to be that way; it should be the community. If people choose not to participate in the community well…yeah, there is a lot of stress here. (Transcript 2: 12)

In her discussion of the withdrawal of faculty members from the social and emotional life of the university, Ryan (2012) describes them as "academic zombies," the living dead, concluding that "zombiedom as a form of resistance to change may be the only but not the optimal option" (p. 3) for dealing with challenging changes in academic culture.

Discussion

While Ryan (2012) stated that she had not given up, most faculty members I interviewed did not see the potential for socializing with their colleagues. What I found engaging in this research was both a rare and valuable form of socialization for me and for many of the faculty members involved, even when scheduled within tight time windows and with frequent interruptions. With the pressure for faculty members to streamline their efforts, to focus only on what can be "counted" or documented according to institutional and disciplinary formats on their CVs or annual reports, faculty members' capacity to engage in reflection, theory formation, and the best interests and education of their students is undermined. The more faculty members are measured and then valued for those measurements, the more they understand that they are in competition, and the less they are willing to share their ideas in the interest of furthering knowledge. On the other hand, there is some indication that by withdrawing from the physical spaces in which they work,

academics can maintain some form of control over their identities, by refusing to identify with the institutional processes and places that encroach on their bodies and their time.

With the introduction of audit cultures, individuals are struggling because of the resulting competition for time, money, and resources. Macfarlane (2011) noted that bygone academic roles and citizenship were based on understanding universities as places where individuals had significant research autonomy, but were united in a commitment to teaching and public service (p. 71). However, the new paradigm is one in which individual achievements take precedence over public service, reducing academic identity to controlled performance of things that can be counted. The conflict arises because faculty members remain committed to assumptions of traditional academe that have eroded. Particularly problematic is the increasing replacement of tenure-stream faculty, not only with teaching-focused faculty but also with short-term or contract faculty who cannot afford to worry about institutional loyalty or service; they embody Foucault's (2008) entrepreneurial selves who must be strategic to become eligible for elusive tenure-track positions.

One advantage of researching faculty members is their ability to identify, theorize, and articulate neoliberal processes that impact them and to give substance to their views. They noted that new responsibilities are being added constantly, but none of those things that have fixed times, such as meetings, committee work, or teaching, is taken away. As a result, preparation for classes, research, reading, writing, and administrative tasks has to be scheduled wherever and whenever they can, often outside of official working time. Students as well frequently ask for assistance outside of "regular" hours. Because classes are frequently scheduled around the workdays of teachers, student meetings take place at night. On the other hand, administrators and staff schedule meetings during their "regular" workdays, with the result that faculty members frequently begin before 9 a.m. and end after 9 p.m.

Faculty members were also able to identify a new paradigm in higher education in which administration is no longer considered service to the institution and to colleagues but is viewed as management. In many cases, administrators no longer work collegially, anticipating cycling back into faculty ranks; rather, administration is now a career track. Burawoy (2016) has characterized this "new executive class" as "spiralists," meaning those "who spiral in from outside, develop signature projects and then hope to spiral upward and onward" (p. 941). In this managerial model, changes are not necessarily

experienced by those who initiated them, allowing for decisions that are not in the best interests of faculty members or students.

Faculty members also feel that this emerging managerial style, removing administrators permanently from faculty ranks, results in administrators who do not understand the demands of academic work. While Mandzuk (2015, p. 64) argued that fewer faculty members were willing to take on administrative positions for personal reasons, many faculty members in my research pointed to certain characteristics (such as compliance) that upper-level administrators look for when choosing deans or associate deans. Consequently, they feel, highly competent faculty members who promote collegial governance are often ignored in favour of more institutionally compliant candidates. Without extensive faculty experience, the new managerial elite do not realize that after 12 to 15 years of academic preparation in the university, and developing skills in teaching, presenting, supervising, and offering pastoral care, faculty members already have excellent time management skills and are working at capacity. Frequently, members feel they must work harder and harder to be viewed as "legitimate," because most activities leading to publication are invisible in accountability processes.

The changing nature of academic professional identities is a source of stress and discomfort. Academics who consented to participate in this research project are fully cognizant of, and resistant to, the deleterious effects of neoliberal practices on their identities and their health; that resistance means withdrawing from the social and intellectual life of the faculties where they work. Specifically, for faculty members in this study, there is a conflict between the traditional notion of an academic career, in which one identified with one's institution because it provided safeguards for research and intellectual freedom, and the current model, in which they feel that they spend too much time on non-academic tasks. Particularly challenging are the added accountability measures that result from unbundling of academic work, the endless reports and approvals instituted to assist para-academics who, though regarded as being in positions of support and assistance, become additional gatekeepers. The experience of some of these jobs for faculty members in my research appears analogous to the "bullshit jobs" described by Graeber (2018) in his recent book *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*, meaning jobs in which it is necessary to make up work for others, and for oneself.

Conclusion

All of the interviews I conducted in one way or another stressed that institutional attempts to characterize professors as non-professionals has led to many of the issues outlined in this article. First, while it is commonly held that workers in the 21st century will have several careers, as their labour becomes expendable or redundant, this is not a reasonable expectation for most professionals who often require 15 years of education prior to entering their professions. On the other hand, expecting faculty members to "efficiently produce monetizable 'deliverables' with public impact" (Luka, Harvey, Hogan, Shepherd, & Zeffiro, 2015, p. 177), thereby supporting universities' desires "to generate income from their core educational, research, and service functions" also known as "academic capitalism" (Rhoades & Slaughter, 2004, p. 37), leads to accountability and control measures that both treat and redefine faculty members as non-professionals. Faculty members charge that the once-autonomous realm of scholarship and academic expression is incommensurate with neoliberal economic "theology" (more seductive than ideology). Faculty members believe in, profess, and pursue the university, as characterized by Friedman (2017), "with their doors open to international students and scholars, their public commitments to multicultural diversity, and their professed desire to help solve humanity's most pressing challenges…universities have commonly been imagined as engines of cosmopolitanism and harbingers of peace" (p. 248).

Our knowledge of our work as academics is to dedicate our minds selflessly to the pursuit of knowledge and to support the learning of our students. Our students in education then go on to help shape young minds, thereby creating the world that we envision. Therefore, we believe that our labour is honourable, even virtuous, and possesses inherent non-economic rewards, a belief that constructs our academic and professional identities, collectively and individually. However, as Brouillette (2013) pointed out, this belief, "makes us ideal employees when the goal of management is to extract our labor's maximum value at minimum cost" (para. 6). She cited scholarship indicating that managers in all businesses would like to learn to emulate universities in being able to extract nearly endless hours of free labour "under the auspices of committed professionalism" (para. 6).

Identifying this, however, is not the same as being able to undo it. From my perspective as an insider in this research project, collective action, or working together toward a common goal, is a solution to address time constraints, fiscal decentralization,

perceived inequity, and changing governance structures; that is, collegial unity can reduce tensions and build working relationships. Therefore, the most frequent reaction to the stresses of increasing workload, withdrawal, is arguably the least effective.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

Most questions have a series of prompts which reflect findings in the extant literature. These prompts may or may not be necessary in each interview context. For this reason, interviews are considered to be "semi-structured" rather than "structured." All questions are open ended.

1. Please describe for me the context in which you work at the University of _____.
   a. Your roles (teaching, research, service, graduate student supervision, rank if it will not jeopardize anonymity), career stage (early, mid or late).
   b. You may speak to anything that comes to mind about the context in which you work, socially, physically, environmentally, demographically, intellectually.
2. How would you describe your workload? What are the components of your workload? How much time do you estimate that you allocate to the different components of your work?
3. Over your years at the university, how has your workload changed?
4. How is workload assigned in your faculty? Can you describe the process? What considerations are taken into account?
   a. Teaching?
      i. Undergraduate courses, changes in programs, courses, student numbers, innovation, evaluation, etc.
      ii. Graduate, changes in programs, courses, student numbers, innovation, evaluation, changes in times, etc.
      iii. Supervision
      iv. Changes to student demographic
      v. Changes in times that courses are offered
      vi. Teaching offload
   b. Research? Changes to application and reporting structures, time to complete administrative tasks associated with research, unfamiliar dissemination patterns, developing partnerships with external organizations.

      c.   Service? Internal and external organizations, numbers of committees, diminishing faculty numbers resulting in increased work, editing of journals, leadership roles in professional organizations, evaluation duties, writing of references, etc.

      d.   Faculty initiatives such as internationalization, projects, coordination, infusion of international or Indigenous content, off-site teaching, etc.

      e.   Administrative procedures related to employment: email, navigating databases, web tools, etc.

5. How is workload measured in your faculty? How is it rewarded [or not rewarded]?

6. How is workload measured and rewarded for the purposes of tenure and promotion in your faculty?

7. Do you feel that your assigned workload is at its optimum in terms of your desired activities? Is it appropriate to the measures and rewards? Why or why not?

8. There is a significant body of work attributing faculty behaviours (like frequent lateness or anger), faculty burnout and faculty stress to increased workload. Would you comment whether or not you agree with this body of literature. Can you describe whether and how you see such things play out in your workplace?

9. A number of medical conditions including high blood pressure, insomnia, diabetes, weight control issues, fatigue, and mental health issues have been attributed to increased workload. Would you comment whether or not you agree with this body of literature. Can you describe whether and how you see such things play out in your workplace?

10. Some literature focuses on the colonization of academic bodies because of the increased workload, and analyses the way in which decreased support systems for faculty members and their families also increase workload. Would you be able to comment on this? What is your opinion?

11. Would you please describe any other impacts that your workload has had on you or your colleagues
    a.   Personally
    b.   professionally

12. How do you envision your workload changing in the next five years?

13. How do you envision your workload changing in the next ten years?

14. Could you describe anything that would allow you to be more satisfied with your academic work?

15. Is there anything that you could think of that would reduce stress for you, or reduce your workload or the workload of your colleagues?
16. Is there anything more you would like to tell me about workload, or any of the topics we have discussed?
17. Are there any questions or concerns that you think I may have missed that you believe should be asked and answered? Would you be able to share them with me?