

A Question of Balance: The Cult of Research Intensity and the Professing of Political Science in Canada

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Presidential addresses, André-J. Bélanger (1990: 644) noted in his own address to the Canadian Political Science Association, “are expected to underline the main preoccupations of the discipline as it evolves through history.” My predecessors have indeed done this, in the process leaving us with a rich legacy of original reflections on politics and political science in this country—reflections that continue to wear well despite the passage of time. I seek to do something a little more derivative: to revisit a presidential address given nearly a decade ago on an important issue that in my view should preoccupy those of us who profess political science in Canada in the early twenty-first century.

In 1998, Tom Pocklington’s address focused on “The Place of Political Science in Canadian Universities.” At issue is Pocklington’s contention that “the main tasks of political scientists are first-rate teaching and reflective enquiry about citizenship; ... in the past few years we have been moving away from this understanding, and remedial action is required. Our

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delinquency stems mainly from our obsession with ‘frontier research,’ the main result of which is the widespread decline of attentive teaching, which we rationalize with a number of implausible myths. We are primarily responsible for the current state of political science, and only we can remedy it” (1998: 645).

Pocklington went on to develop and extend this critique with his colleague Allan Tupper. The result was *No Place to Learn: Why Universities Aren't Working*, published in 2002. *No Place to Learn* focuses its critique on three themes: the devaluation of undergraduate teaching, which they claim has been rationalized by what they call the “myth of mutual reinforcement”—the idea that good research is necessary for good teaching and vice versa; the degree to which frontier research has supplanted reflective enquiry; and the way in which increasingly close relationships forged by Canadian universities with government and business increasingly challenge the importance of teaching. The purpose of this address is to revisit their contentions. But while *No Place to Learn* focuses on the Canadian system as a whole, I want to return the focus to our discipline, which is where Pocklington began.

One should begin by noting that the central problem identified by Pocklington in 1998, and developed in *No Place to Learn*—the privileging of research over teaching at universities—has been an enduring and perennial subject of debate.

Indeed, some scholars start with John Henry Cardinal Newman’s *The Idea of a University*, published in 1852, and Newman’s argument that the university should be

a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*. This implies that its object is ... the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than [its] advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students.

For Newman, the “division of intellectual labour between Academies and Universities” was to be recommended, since “to discover and to teach are two distinct functions; they are also distinct gifts, and not commonly found united in the same person.” Indeed, Newman added: “I think it must be allowed on the whole that ... the natural home for experiment and speculation is retirement” (1852/1907: ix, xiv).¹

As we know, Newman’s views did not prevail, particularly not in North America. On the contrary: by the twentieth century, there was general agreement on what Donald Kennedy, the former president of Stanford University, has called “the joint-product nature of universities” (1997: 94), featuring both teaching *and* research. However, what the balance between these two functions is and should be has been endlessly debated. Mostly the debate has been about the ill effects of what in 1968 Jacques

Abstract. In 1998, Tom Pocklington's presidential address examined what he believed was a progressive displacement of teaching by research in Canadian political science departments. The purpose of this address is to examine Pocklington's contentions eight years on, after dramatic increases in research funds flowing to Canadian universities. As research funds become more important to the financial health of Canadian universities, we have seen the growth in Canada of what I argue is a "cult of research intensity." I argue that the cult has serious implications both for the research that political scientists will do, and for our teaching of undergraduate students. However, I conclude that we need to put the reverential enthusiasm for research intensity in broader perspective, given the perennial concerns that are expressed over the imbalance between teaching and research.

Résumé. En 1998, dans son message annuel, le président Tom Pocklington s'était penché sur ce qui lui apparaissait comme la substitution progressive de la recherche à l'enseignement dans les départements de science politique au Canada. Notre objectif ici est d'analyser les propos de Tom Pocklington quelque huit ans plus tard, à la suite des hausses impressionnantes des fonds de recherche versés aux universités canadiennes. À mesure que les subventions de recherche prennent de plus en plus d'importance pour la santé financière des universités canadiennes, nous voyons dans ce pays l'expansion de ce que j'appellerais le « culte de la prédominance de la recherche ». Je soutiens que ce culte a de sérieuses implications tant pour les recherches que mèneront les politologues que pour l'enseignement que nous dispenserons aux étudiants de premier cycle. Je conclus que nous devons replacer dans un contexte plus vaste cet enthousiasme à tous crins à l'égard de la recherche, étant donné les préoccupations qu'a toujours soulevées le déséquilibre entre l'enseignement et la recherche.

Barzun, a former dean and provost at Columbia University, referred to as the "cult of research" in the academy: an increasing emphasis on research, which detracted from teaching and upset the balance between the "joint products."

And indeed, the fundamental tension between teaching and research has been the subject of a huge and daunting literature. In this literature one can find polemics (e.g., Anderson, 1992/1996; Bercuson et al., 1997); screeds (e.g., Sykes, 1988); reflections by senior university administrators (e.g., Barzun, 1968; Corry, 1970; Bok, 1986; Kennedy, 1997; O'Brien, 1998; Campbell, 2000); surveys of faculty attitudes on the issue (e.g., Boyer, 1990); an extensive scholarly literature (for an excellent meta-analysis of this literature, see Hattie and Marsh, 1996); and any number of commentaries, essays, newspaper and magazine articles, and posts to listservs and blogs.²

The Cult of Research Intensity

However perennial the debate, it can be argued that the phenomenon that so exercised Pocklington in 1998 has accelerated since then. Well might our own federal granting agency, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), trumpet in 2004 that there is now a new "culture of research and research training" in Canada (SSHRC, 2004: 9). I would put it a little differently: not so much a *culture of research* as

merely a contemporary manifestation of Barzun's *cult of research*, but which we might call a *cult of research intensivity*, to better reflect the current terminology in Canada that puts such a stress on the importance of "research-intensive" universities.

I do not use the term "cult" in its usual colloquial, and rather pejorative, sense, but in its transferred sense, which echoes the word's etymological origins—*cultus*, worship. Use of this word is intended to convey the degree to which research intensivity is regarded, both inside and outside Canadian universities, with a kind of reverential enthusiasm for the benefits that embracing research intensity brings.

Indeed, SSHRC was not wrong: there *was* a new culture of research and research training after 1998, when both the federal government and many provincial governments began to dramatically increase transfers to universities for research purposes. The federal government's decision to make university research funding a priority resulted in a plethora of new programmes: the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the Canada Research Chair programme, the Canada Graduate Scholarships programme, and new funding for indirect costs of research. Core funding for the federal granting councils was reviewed and increased. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) had its grants and scholarships budget doubled over ten years, rising from \$452 million in 1995–1996 to \$478 million in 1998–1999, to \$766 million in 2004–2005. The budget of SSHRC nearly tripled in ten years, moving from \$99 million in 1995–1996 to \$292 million in 2005–2006.

The wealthier provinces followed suit. Ontario created a new Ministry of Research and Innovation, committing \$1.7 billion over five years to research, much of which was directed towards universities via programmes like the Early Researcher Award programme. In Québec, investment in research was administered by the Ministère de Développement économique, Innovation et Exportation and three granting agencies. British Columbia created a Knowledge Development Fund and Alberta established the Department of Innovation and Science in 1999 to channel investments into the university sector.

Viewed from the perspective of the system as a whole, being research-intensive has indeed brightened the bottom lines of Canada's universities. One only has to consider the number of research grants and contracts that began flowing to universities from the corporate sector and from all levels of government in the late 1990s to get some sense of the importance of this activity for paying the bills, particularly the salary bill of the professoriate, whose remuneration continued to climb throughout this period.

In 1999, research income at Canadian universities per full-time faculty was \$69,600; by 2002, it had risen to \$113,400 per capita. In

2003–2004, the last year for which data is available, it had climbed to \$154,000. In other words, in 2004 universities received fully \$5.05 billion in research grants and contracts from all sources, approximately 25 per cent of university revenues (CAUT, 2002, 2006: 46, Table 5.5; RESEARCH Infosource, 2003, 2005).

To fully appreciate the importance of these numbers, however, one must put them in the context of a broader crisis in the university system in Canada that began in the 1980s but deepened in the 1990s. As accounts of the history of Canadian universities show (e.g., Buchbinder and Rajagopal, 1995; Bercuson et al., 1997; Pocklington and Tupper, 2002), reductions in government funding for the post-secondary sector occurred at the very time that there was a significant upturn in enrolments.

The raw figures for the system as a whole suggest the scope of the change. In the thirty years after 1976, the university system in Canada grew dramatically: full-time university enrolment almost doubled, rising from 376,500 in 1976–1977 to 717,363 in 2003–2004, with only tiny declines between 1995 and 1998.³ Importantly, despite the massive growth in student numbers, the number of professors in the Canadian system did not change much in thirty years. There were 31,600 full-time professors in 1976–1977; after the cuts of the mid-1990s, that number dipped to a low of 29,609. Since then, the number of full-time faculty climbed slightly to 32,739 in 2003–2004 (CAUT, 2006: 5, Figure 2.1). In short, in the thirty years that enrolments had doubled, the full-time professoriate had increased just 3 per cent.

These overall trends were mirrored in political science. Between 1976 and 2004, undergraduate enrolments in our discipline almost tripled, going from approximately 5000⁴ to 13,890. However, in-between there was a long secular decline in interest in political science in the 1990s: political science enrolments dropped from 12,933, or 2.7 per cent of total undergraduate enrolments, in 1991–1992, to 9476, or 1.8 per cent of all undergraduate enrolments, in 2000–01. However, enrolments rebounded strongly after 11 September 2001: between 2000 and 2004, the last year we have data for, the number of undergraduates in political science increased 46 per cent to 13,890 undergraduate political science students, or 2.1 per cent of all undergraduate enrolments (Statistics Canada, 1978a: 60, Table 2; Statistics Canada, 1997: 65, Table 14; CAUT, 2005: 22, Table 5.2; CAUT, 2006: 31, Table 3.11).

Despite this marked increase in enrolment, the full-time political science professoriate grew only marginally in the same period: from 675 in 1976 to 702 in 2004, after having experienced a dip to a low of 636 in 1998 (Statistics Canada, 1978b: 43, Table 12; CAUT, 2002: 11, Table 4.6; CAUT, 2006: 9, Table 2.7).

But at the same time as the university system as a whole, and our discipline in particular, was experiencing persistent increases in

enrolment, total government funding as a percentage of operating revenues fell from an average of approximately 80 per cent in the mid-1970s to an average of 58.5 per cent today (CAUT, 2006: 3, Figure 1.4; also Statistics Canada, 2004).

However, as Atkinson (2003: 13) has noted, provincial governments refused to give universities the freedom to manage such crucial inputs as enrolments or tuition fees in attempting to deal with the reductions in government funding. On the contrary: every provincial government insisted that universities had to maintain accessibility for the increased demand; they also insisted on tightly regulating tuition fees and refusing to allow universities to raise fees to meet market forces of supply and demand.

To be sure, the small increases in tuition fees that were permitted by some provincial governments allowed universities to fill some of the gap left by the withdrawal of government funding. Thus, for example, between 1974 and 2004, tuition as a percentage of university operating revenues went from an average of approximately 16 per cent to an average of 28.8 per cent (CAUT, 2006: 2, Figure 1.3). But it was not enough to cover the shortfall.

Given this, it is not at all surprising that universities in Canada have welcomed the influx of cash for research. In the process, they have eagerly embraced the “academic capitalism” (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004) that had already made its appearance in a number of other countries in the 1980s and 1990s.⁵ The search for capital to make up budget shortfalls would lead Canadian universities to strengthen even further the bureaucracies devoted to the search for research funding; to encourage their faculty to become more research-intensive; and to reward those who bring in research dollars. Indeed, it can be argued that it is the importance of academic capitalism for the financial health of Canada’s universities that has turned the culture of research into a cult of research intensity.

The Impact on Political Science

What impact has the cult of research intensity had on our discipline? I would suggest that it has affected both research and teaching.

Since the late 1990s, the main source of external research funding available to political scientists in Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, has increasingly privileged a certain kind of research activity, continuing a decade-long shift away from the traditional model of funding individual researchers and relatively small-scale research projects. Partly in response to increasing political and bureaucratic attacks on its budget and its relevance, and partly in response to

suggestions by the president of the University of British Columbia, Martha C. Piper, that SSHRC change its mission to make it more politically relevant (Piper, 2002), the council underwent a “transformation” in 2004–2005. No longer would it simply be a “granting council,” passing federal monies to researchers; instead, it would become a “knowledge council,” responsible for generating what it unreflectively chose to call “knowledge products” (at least in English—in French, they were just *les connaissances*, knowledge). SSHRC announced that these “knowledge products” had to be “mobilized” in the service of Canadian society. To do this, it created a Knowledge Products and Mobilization Division—a nice confirmation of George Ritzer’s contention (2002) that his McDonaldization thesis (1993/2000) can be applied to the university.

Along with this tendency to commodify what we professors do,⁶ SSHRC became more overt in its preference for certain kinds of research. Even before the “transformation” was finalized with the adoption of a strategic plan for 2006–2011 (SSHRC, 2005), SSHRC was making it clear that some models of research were *passé*. “In the academic world of the 1970s,” Marc Renaud, SSHRC’s president, noted in the introduction to a consultation document circulated in January 2004, “the role of a university professor working in the human sciences was to teach and write books.” But no longer: “[I]n the academic world of the 21st century ... the role of researchers is not only to develop knowledge.... They must become far more proficient at moving the knowledge from research to action, and, in the process, at linking up with a broad range of researchers and stakeholder-partners across the country.” In this new environment, researchers had to have “on-going connections across geography, institutions and sectors,” be “integrated across disciplines,” pursuing “synergistic research agendas” and be “fully connected to the world” (SSHRC, 2004: 2–3, 13).

Behind such turgid Ottawa-speak lay an important change. It is not that SSHRC abandoned support for research conducted by individual scholars, working alone on curiosity-driven issues. It is, rather, that over the years SSHRC has increasingly privileged “problem-driven” research—its own term—over what it calls “investigator-framed” research, and has placed an increasingly heavier emphasis on funding certain kinds of research expenditures.

Thus, in 2005–2006 SSHRC allocated \$87.24 million to support 2736 “investigator framed” research projects, including Standard Research Grants (SRGs) and multi-million dollar Major Collaborative Research Initiative (MCRI) projects. However, this was enough to fund only 40 per cent of the applications received. At the same time, however, fully \$69.5 million was made available for research projects deemed important by SSHRC. The diversity of what SSHRC considers to be important research can be seen from its own spending codes. While there are only two codes

for investigator-framed research (410 for SRGs and 412 for MCRIs), there are 38 separate spending codes in the “targeted research and training initiatives” envelope, including strategic research grants, strategic joint initiatives, and the Initiative on the New Economy (SSHRC, 2006a).

This programme “architecture,” as SSHRC calls it, has powerful implications for the kind of research that is conducted by political scientists, just as Pocklington suggested. It puts a premium on a model of research activity that is deeply entrenched in the “hard sciences”—large teams of principal investigators, often at different universities, with large numbers of research assistants, doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows, and even the creation of “laboratories” and “*observatoires*.”⁷ And we can see this premium at work in the small but persistent differences in success rates of grants with sole researchers versus grants that feature research teams.⁸ In short, the net effect of SSHRC’s programme architecture will doubtless be to change the nature of political science research over the long term.

What impact has the cult had on teaching? Kennedy has argued (1997: 94) that there are “warning signs” that indicate when “the relative weight [has] shifted over time to research”: “‘buy-outs’ of teaching time by senior faculty in order in order to concentrate on research [and] overuse of visiting or temporary faculty members.” Over the last decade, we have seen both these warning signs.

The most important impact has been that the push for research intensity has encouraged, accelerated and legitimized the “flight from the classroom” by Canadian political scientists. I really wanted to avoid this phrase, which was used by Barzun (1968: 19), but popularized twenty years later by Charles J. Sykes in his relentlessly cynical screed *ProfScam*,⁹ because it might imply that I agree with Sykes’s view that the “flight” is motivated by laziness, which I do not. But the evident enthusiasm of the professoriate for course reductions of all sorts makes the appropriateness of the term itself hard to deny. Whatever we choose to call it, the fact remains: we have reduced our teaching of undergraduates over the years, mostly justifying this reduction in terms of needing more time to devote to research.

This has been a slow generational change. In most Canadian political science departments in the mid-1970s, a faculty member’s responsibilities were more or less evenly divided between teaching and research, with “university service” as a distinct third—the so-called “40-40-20” model (40 per cent of a faculty member’s time was devoted to research, 40 per cent to teaching, and 20 per cent on service). The teaching load¹⁰ of most professors was either two and a half full-year courses (or five half-courses, colloquially referred to as a “3+2” load¹¹) or three full-year courses (or six halves: 3+3), depending on whether graduate programmes were offered.

Moreover, virtually all members of the department taught that required load. While it was not uncommon for new hires to be given a half-course release in their first year of teaching, this was not as regularized as it would become with the widespread unionization of university faculties in the 1980s and 1990s (Hosios and Siow, 2004: 29–30).¹² Other than this reduction, normally only the chair was given regular teaching release.

Since then, however, we have seen large-scale reduction in undergraduate course teaching in Canadian political science departments.¹³ First, the nominal teaching load in many departments has been reduced, driven by the widespread adoption in the 1970s of a 2+2 load by American political science departments—down from the standard 3+2 load in the 1960s (Barzun, 1968: 56). Today, all but a couple of Canadian political science departments offering the doctorate—and several MA departments—have a 2+2 load.¹⁴ More recently, some departments with a 3+3 load have sought to reduce it to 3+2, a function of the increased importance of research in “primarily undergraduate” universities, as SSHRC has noted (Treasury Board Secretariat, 2005: 12).

Second, we have seen the proliferation of course releases and cash buyouts for administrative or other duties. The same logic that prompted course “relief” for department chairs has been extended to other tasks: anecdotal evidence suggests that colleagues have been given (or have had purchased for them) undergraduate course releases/buyouts in return for taking on an administrative task within the university or the department; for serving on a faculty union bargaining team; for editing a scholarly journal; or for working for a government agency. Indeed, at some universities, members of faculty are permitted to buy themselves out of one or more of their courses with cash for the going course replacement rate, usually between \$5000 and \$10,000—not overly onerous for those earning the average full professor’s salary of \$113,000.

Third, at many Canadian universities a multi-year course reduction for new hires has been institutionalized. Although this teaching reduction is invariably framed as a measure to assist new colleagues in building up *both* their teaching and research, such relief is in fact widely seen as a means of giving junior colleagues what is invariably constructed as “much-needed time” to develop their research and publication agendas in the run-up to tenure.

Fourth, and most importantly, we have seen the proliferation of the practice of taking full-time faculty out of the classroom explicitly in order to give them additional time to pursue their research. One of the first programmes SSHRC put into place after its creation in 1977—in response to strong pressures from the Social Science Federation of Canada, the Canadian Federation for the Humanities, and numerous university administrations (SSHRC, 1981: 18)—was the Release Time Stipend (RTS) programme that transferred money to universities to buy SSHRC grant

holders out of teaching responsibilities. Relunched in the late 1990s as a “shared-cost” programme, the RTS was continued indefinitely in 2002, on the grounds that “release time is key to conducting research in our disciplines” and because the RTS “enjoys widespread support across the academic community” (SSHRC, 2002). Buoyed by the enthusiasm of its stakeholders, SSHRC has made RTS awards not only available on its Standard Research Grants (applicants can ask for \$30,000 over three years), but also all its major grants: up to \$75,000 a year for Social Economy grants, \$50,000 for Crossing Boundaries Research Initiative grants; and \$70,000 for Major Collaborative Research Initiative grants.¹⁵

Likewise, the Canada Research Chair programme provides a permanently institutionalized form of teaching reduction. Originally, the federal government wanted CRCs to teach nothing at all, only relenting when universities demurred. But in the end, these are *research* chairs: as of 2005, there were 1577 CRCs in 73 universities across the system, including 32 political scientists. Of all CRCs, 80 per cent of the senior (Tier I) and 71 per cent of the junior (Tier II) CRCs teach two courses or less; fully 9.5 per cent of Tier Is and 6.5 of Tier IIs teach no courses at all (CAUT, 2005: 8, Table 6; also Malatest and Associates, 2004).

In short, although sometimes it is claimed that today fewer faculty are teaching more students than in the past (e.g., Atkinson 2003: 13), the figures suggest that in fact slightly more faculty are teaching far fewer courses for the many more students who are enrolled in political science today.¹⁶

To what extent does this reduction in our engagement with undergraduates, encouraged and legitimized by the pressures for research intensity, affect the quality of the education that our students receive? I would argue that the flight from the classroom has a number of negative impacts, both large and small.

The most obvious is that our undergraduates are deprived of the intellectual advantages of taking courses from gifted and well-known researchers,¹⁷ many of whom are effective and enthusiastic teachers—*pace* Pocklington and Tupper, whose sweeping generalization that “much teaching [in Canadian universities] ranges from mediocre to abysmal” (2002: 73) simply cannot be sustained by the evidence. Moreover, the flight from the classroom produces ripple effects as students move through their programme. Courses at the senior levels are larger than in the past, and thus more impersonal. And if a faculty member routinely teaches only one undergraduate course, undergraduates will not have the opportunity to develop the kind of longer-term relationships that are possible when faculty members teach multiple courses at the undergraduate level. This has instrumental and pragmatic implications as well as intellectual ones: it is harder for students to get both mentoring and letters of reference from well-known researchers.

A second impact is that the flight adds to the pressure to use part-time instructors to deliver undergraduate programmes. I am not arguing that the cult of research intensity *causes* the high dependence on part-time faculty by pulling full-time faculty out of the classroom. After all, even if every one of the full-time political scientists in Canada were to teach the full 3+2 load that was the norm in the mid-1970s, sessionals would still be needed to service the approximately 14,000 undergraduates currently enrolled in political science. But the flight from the classroom encouraged by research intensity does seriously exacerbate the gap between enrolment and teaching capability faced by the Canadian university system.

Again, the rise in the number of part-time instructors marks a significant departure from practice a generation ago. In the 1970s, virtually all of the teaching was done by permanent tenured or tenure-track faculty. While non-permanent faculty members were not unknown, they were often experts from outside the academy brought in to teach a specialized course, one-year sessionals hired to cover for a colleague on sabbatical, or per-course instructors who taught the summer or evening courses that were then so much in demand.¹⁸

Today, by contrast, the part-time instructor is a deeply embedded part of university systems in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States (Miller, 1995; Buchbinder and Rajagopal, 1995; Rajagopal, 2002). In each of these countries, we have seen the appearance of dual labour markets, or “workforce dualization,” in the academy. Dual markets consist of a small core workforce of permanent employees with high salaries on the one hand, and on the other, a peripheral workforce of temporary and part-time employees, who, as Barrow (1995: 171) put it, “suffers uncertain employment and low pay, with little or no opportunity for advancement and little possibility of entering the core workforce.”

To be sure, up-to-date hard data on part-time instructors in Canada is not easy to come by. Statistics Canada once collected data on non-full-time faculty, but now has discontinued this survey. Moreover, the results of this survey were not routinely published, so that there is only one analysis of these data (Omiecinski, 2003). Nor does the Canadian Association of University Teachers report any data on part-time instructors: all 12 pages of data in the *CAUT Almanac 2006* are devoted to full-time faculty.

What we do know from the key work on contract faculty in Canadian universities—Indhu Rajagopal’s *Hidden Academics*, published in 2002—is that over the course of the 1990s, the number of part-time faculty at Canadian universities rose by 10 per cent to 28,222—at a time that the number of full-time faculty was dropping (Omiecinski, 2003: 11, Table 2, graph 1). We also know that the need for part-time

instructors continues to be so robust that a number of Canadian universities are considering creating, or have created, “teaching professors”—full-time permanent members of faculty whose primary responsibility is limited to teaching. In this scheme, the traditional distribution of 40-40-20 is shifted to 0-80-20, or even 0-100-0, with a teaching load of 4+4 or more.

In political science, part-time instructors have become crucial for coping with the enrolment/teaching capability gap that has opened so widely in the last three decades. The vast majority of departments report that at least some of their courses are taught by part-time instructors, with several reporting that between 40 and 60 per cent of their courses are taught by instructors who are not permanent faculty.

Teaching by part-time instructors *per se* is not necessarily bad for our students. Sessionals as a group might be less experienced than the full-time professoriate, but many have demonstrated that they are effective and enthusiastic teachers, occasionally outperforming full-time faculty members on student evaluations. At the same time, however, contract faculty are often disconnected from the department which employs them—often, as Rajagopal (2002: 190–227) shows, by design—and thus from departmental culture. And when contract faculty are used in upper-year courses, letters of reference loom as a major problem, not only for graduating students, but also for the graduate programmes to which they apply, since these programmes must depend on recommendations from instructors who are not as well-known as full-time faculty.

Rather, just as Kennedy argued, it depends on the *extent* to which contract faculty are used to offer undergraduate programmes. Simply put, we cannot claim that we are providing our undergraduate students with Pocklington’s ideal of “first-class” and “attentive” teaching when a significant portion of our courses are not offered by full-time faculty.

There is one further negative impact of the flight from teaching: its socializing effect on our doctoral students. The messages that we give students we are grooming as professors are definitely mixed. On the one hand, most doctoral programmes now stress the importance of teaching. Many provide students with formal teacher training and encourage the use of teaching dossiers. On the other hand, much of what we do in practice encourages our doctoral students to construct undergraduate teaching in negative terms. Multi-year teaching releases for new hires encourage junior colleagues to see their teaching loads as just that—as burdens to be relieved. And when doctoral students look at senior faculty, they surely must be struck by the fact that the full professors deemed to be “successful” are those who have teaching reductions of all sorts. In short, to what extent are we simply reproducing the “flight from teaching” in a new generation of Canadian political scientists?

Conclusion

My purpose in this address has been to re-examine Pocklington's concerns about the balance of teaching and research. I have argued that the deepening attachment to research has indeed caused the always precarious balance to tip further away from teaching, just as Pocklington suggested. But I have also argued that we should see that resulting imbalance in the broader context of the almost reverential view of the research dollar that we have seen develop over the last decade. In other words, we should acknowledge that the cult leaders come by their reverence honestly, given the growing importance of research funding to the financial health of the university system.

It is at this point that most reflections on the relationship between teaching and research, having shown the deleterious effects of research on the teaching enterprise, offer some remedies (e.g., Bok, 1991; Rhodes, 1993, Kennedy, 1997: 265–88; O'Brien, 1998: 203–228). However, although I have suggested that the cult of research intensity in Canada has had a number of negative effects, I have no remedial conclusion to offer—for two reasons.

First, it is not clear that anyone has any real interest in remedying the present situation. In his review of *No Place to Learn: Why Universities Aren't Working*, Robert Fulford (2002) worried that “the system may be beyond fixing” because the obstacles to reform are so “intimidating.” But Fulford, like Pocklington and Tupper themselves, misses the point: in fact, Canadian universities *are* working very well for everyone in the system—except perhaps for undergraduate students—and so no one actually *wants* the system fixed.

Canadian universities are working well for the professoriate, in whose interests the system is deeply structured; for parents of university-bound students; for employers of those students; for governments, both federal and provincial; and for ordinary taxpayers.

More to the point, no one who would be in a position to alter the financial structure of university education in Canada has any interest in changing the present system in a way that would provide undergraduates with Pocklington's ideal of a “first-class” and “attentive” education—in other words, the expansion of the permanent, full-time, “joint-product” professoriate to correct the enrolment/teaching-capability gap.

Doing some rough math for our own discipline gives one some idea of the scope of the remedial investment that would be needed at this juncture. In 1976, 675 professors were servicing 5000 students. To achieve a comparable 7.4:1 student/professor ratio for the approximately 14,000 political science students today, one would need 1900 full-time “joint-product” professors rather than the 700 now in the system. At the average 2005 salary for all full-time professors at all ranks of \$90,963 (CAUT,

2006), the annual salary bill for 700 political scientists is approximately \$64 million; 1900 political scientists would cost some \$173 million. Applied to the Canadian university system as a whole, however, such a calculation reveals a gap of yawning proportions: to achieve the same overall 12:1 student/faculty ratio that existed in 1976, it would require more than 59,000 full-time professors rather than the 32,000 presently in the system, requiring a salary bill of \$5.37 billion rather than the approximately \$2.91 billion being paid at present.

Given the size of the investment needed, we can hazard an educated guess that it just isn't going to happen. The vast majority of Canadian taxpayers would not favour such massive increases in funding to universities, if only because an investment that size would have a powerful and negative impact on other public services.

Moreover, provincial officials, always sensitive to political realities, would have little interest in such a huge investment. But at the same time, provincial governments across the country have, for the same reasons of political sensitivity and expediency, proven equally unwilling to allow universities to regulate admissions and tuition fees—instead, they insist on wide-open doors and low tuition.

For its part, the federal government has little interest in doing much more than it is doing now: pursuing federal interests in productivity and encouraging research intensity in the hard sciences, pouring money into graduate education that it carefully dresses up as “research training”—but not really caring about what impact its policies are having on undergraduate education.

And parents of university-bound students have demonstrated no interest in insisting to provincial governments that tuition fees be deregulated so that they could pay the kind of tuition fees that would produce a correction in the system. Instead, they either send their kids to expensive liberal arts colleges in the United States, or they are content to have their children receive what Clifford Orwin (2005: A15) calls the kind of university education that you get when you pay Zellers prices—i.e., you get exactly what you pay for.

Even undergraduate students, whose responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement suggest that they know, even if only inchoately, that there is something deeply wrong with the present system (Schmidt, 2005), seem content enough with the status quo. After all, how else to explain why, for over three decades, students have pressed for the same three unchanging demands—increased government funding, frozen or lower tuition fees, and the maintenance of open accessibility—even though pressing governments for increased funding has proven to be a perennial political dead end, and static or lower tuition fees and open admissions merely guarantee the perpetuation of the present system? In the meantime, the professoriate can breathe a sigh of relief

that students continue to give us a pass: we clearly have not done a very good job educating our students to ask the enduring political scientist's question—*cui bono?*—for I have never heard students question whether the interests of the full-time faculty in high salaries and low teaching loads might have a negative impact on the interests of undergraduates.

In short, it is no surprise why the remedies that are usually proposed to correct the imbalance created by the stress on research have so little impact: it simply is in the interests of no one in the system to embrace them. In such circumstances, “remedies” inexorably become little more than exercises in feel-good idealism.¹⁹

In the absence of any interest in change, structural factors end up driving the system. And the structure of interests suggests that the likeliest response of the Canadian university system will be to regularize and institutionalize the workforce dualization that has allowed universities to continue “working.” We are likely to see the evolution of a hybrid of the American and German systems, with the emergence of two distinct classes of professors. One would consist of a very small group of highly paid, highly research-intensive professors who would be expected to secure large research grants, supervise and fund large numbers of doctoral students, and teach one or two undergraduate half-courses. The other would be a very large group of what today we call “teaching professors,” whose salaries would be distinctly lower, who would be responsible for much larger numbers of undergraduate and masters students, and who might have active research agendas, but would not be expected to be research-intensive.

But while “structure” may push in one way, it is not impossible for “agency” to push in another direction. The importance of individuals in this equation is suggested by another address, given by another political scientist, at another time. In October 1968, J.A. Corry, who had just finished a term as principal of Queen's University, gave a convocation address at the University of Windsor. His address was on what he called the crisis in teaching in the Canadian university system. “Teaching,” he told the graduands (and their professors on the stage), “is tending to become the servant of scholarship and research instead of its equal.” Research, he elaborated, had become “an honorific word” in Canadian universities, “glorified” by those who cared little about teaching. While Corry concluded his address by urging remedial action, he was not optimistic: the “restoration of undergraduate teaching to parity ... will not be easy because of the momentum of the opposing trend” (1970: 95–100).

This, of course, is what Stuart Smith (1991: 63) argued in his Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education; it is what Pocklington was to argue in 1998; it is what I have argued in this address. But Corry's plaint begs an important question: If teaching and research were so unbalanced in Canadian universities more than a generation ago, how has the system managed to survive for so long? The durability of the

problem suggests that perhaps we need to rethink our understanding of the balance and how it is working.

Could it be that there has been another balancing act at work, one that perhaps gets overlooked? Is it possible that, despite all the incentives to flee the classroom created and legitimized by the practices and rules of university administrations, faculty associations, collective agreements, funding agencies, and government bureaucracies, not to mention all the incentives created by torrents of federal cash for research, there are those who resist becoming thralls of the cult of research intensivity? Could it be that there are those who might be quite “research-active” (to use the argot preferred by university administrators), but who are a little less reverent about academic capitalism; a little more skeptical about the research enterprise; a little less inclined to embrace the breathless rhetoric that so often describes political science research as “cutting-edge,” “world-class,” and “path-breaking”; a little more hesitant about what can or should be claimed for our research, given the short shelf life of so much of what we write?

In short, is it possible that, for all of the negative consequences of research intensivity, the Canadian university system has survived precisely because there have always been more professors in the system committed to the kind of balance between our teaching and research missions that Donald Kennedy outlined so eloquently in *Academic Duty* than the jeremiads would have us believe?

Indeed, when I consider my own experience in the system that Corry was so worried about—as a student at the University of Toronto in the early 1970s and as a new faculty member at McMaster in the mid-1970s—and when I look at the political science community in Canada since then, I wonder whether we should not be more optimistic. While there will be no end to the cult of research intensivity any time soon, and thus no end to books and articles—and presidential addresses—on how our teaching is being wrecked by our glorification of research, experience suggests that there will always be enough colleagues with a “momentum of the opposing trend” to keep the university in balance.

Notes

- 1 For the reflections on the relationship between teaching and research of one Canadian political scientist in retirement, see Andrew, 2005.
- 2 Googling “teaching vs. research” (and/or “research vs. teaching”) reveals the unreadable vastness of this debate.
- 3 West, 1988: 12, 26, Tables 2, 9; CAUT, 2006, figs. 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 2.1, 3.1. Total enrolments fell from 500,500 in 1994–95 to 497,072 in 1997–98, but returned to 500,951 in 1998–1999.
- 4 Until the 1990s, Statistics Canada only reported the number of degrees by discipline, not the total number of students. In 1976, 1598 BAs in political science were

- awarded (Statistics Canada, 1978a: 60, Table 2), suggesting that there were approximately 5000 political science undergraduate students, or 1.9 per cent of all undergraduate enrolments.
- 5 Slaughter and Leslie (1997: 8) characterize “academic capitalism” as the “institutional and professorial market or market-like efforts to secure external moneys” to make up for reductions in state support for universities. Pocklington and Tupper (2002: 139–53) term efforts to turn universities into major economic actors as the “commercialization of scholarly life”; Whitaker (2002: 3) prefers “marketization.”
 - 6 The language of the commodification of research had been embraced as early as 2000 with the creation of a Knowledge Products Division (SSHRC, 2001: 12).
 - 7 In a related vein, consider the impact of the annual “league table” of university research published each November by a private firm, RESEARCH Infosource. Canada’s top 50 research universities are surveyed, and ranked, with nine of them identified as “Research Universities of the Year.” The methodology used to arrive at these rankings involves three “input” measures—sponsored research income, faculty research intensity, and graduate student research intensity (each worth 16.67 points) and one “output” measure worth 50 points—the publications of university faculty in a select group of journals (ISI Thomson Scientific). While using this one measure is understandable because it permits comparability across the system and over time, it does cause all of the books and chapters in books—the “research intensive” output of so many on the arts side—to disappear; it also legitimizes the idea that only journal research is worth “counting.” However, it is revealing that not a single senior administrative officer at any Canadian university has complained to RESEARCH Infosource about a methodology that “disappears” so many “knowledge products.”
 - 8 In 2002–2003, for example, the overall success rate for Standard Research Grant applications was 41 per cent; for sole researchers it was 40.4, for teams of two it was 37.7, while for teams of three or more it ranged from 46.2 to 50 per cent. In 2006–2007, the latest figures that are available, that gap closed somewhat: the overall success rate was 38.6; for sole researchers it was 37.8 per cent; for teams of two it was 39.1, for three it was 38.8, for 4 it was 38.9, for teams of 5 to 9 it was 44.7, for teams of 10 or more it was 33.3 per cent (SSHRC, 2006b).
 - 9 Sykes (1988: 5–7) claimed that faculty have “abandoned their teaching responsibilities” and, “in pursuit of their own interests ... have left the nation’s students in the care of an ill-trained, ill-paid, and bitter academic underclass” of part-time instructors. Instead, faculty have turned universities into “vast factories of junkthink” in pursuit of research—“belaboring tiny slivers of knowledge, utterly without redeeming social value except as items on their resumes.”
 - 10 It is no coincidence that this term—with its implication that teaching is a burden—first entered the language in the late 1950s, when the teaching vs. research debate was beginning to flower in the American academy.
 - 11 Because of the prevalence of full-year courses in most Canadian political science departments in the 1970s, a 3+2 load was often taught in a two-year cycle: three full courses one year, two the next.
 - 12 Unionization of university faculties began in 1971 at the Montréal, Chicoutimi and Trois Rivières campuses of the Université du Québec, and spread rapidly: by 1980, approximately two-thirds of university faculties were unionized; others, including the University of Toronto and McMaster University, had “special plans”—where the faculty association has the right to bargain collectively but does not have a legal right to strike.
 - 13 The precise extent of the phenomenon is unknown, since teaching loads are one of the least transparent facets of Canadian university operations. Moreover, nominal teaching loads rarely reflect how many courses are actually being taught in any given year by an individual faculty member.

- 14 In some departments, course credit is given for “non-course teaching,” such as thesis supervision or reading courses. Normally points are awarded on the successful completion of such tasks, which are then accumulated and eventually traded in for a course reduction.
- 15 Before SSHRC stopped reporting RTS statistics in 2003, it was making approximately 100 RTS awards to SRG applicants each year, a success rate of 15.1 per cent.
- 16 A minor way in which some universities have moved to reduce our time in the classroom has been the move to a 12-week term from the 13-week term that was the normative length of the academic term across Canada in the 1970s. One week’s worth of classes per term may at first blush appear inconsequential, but students at 12-week universities will, over the course of a four-year 20-credit undergraduate program, receive 120 fewer hours of instruction than students at 13-week universities—the equivalent of three half-courses.
- 17 Although some argue that without the extra time gained from teaching release, faculty would not be so accomplished as researchers, I have seen no evidence that would convince me that this is true. For an interesting defence of the research university, see the contributions to Cole et al., 1993.
- 18 In the 1970s and 1980s, when it was still possible to teach at the primary and secondary school level without a university degree, much of the demand for evening and summer courses was fuelled by teachers seeking to move up their salary scale by securing a bachelor’s degree. Once those teachers had moved through the system, however, demand dropped dramatically. Between 1992–1993 and 2003–2004, while full-time enrolment was rising 26.0 per cent, part-time enrolments fell 20.6 per cent (CAUT, 2006: 20, Table 3.1).
- 19 For example, Pocklington and Tupper, echoing Stuart Smith’s 1991 report, argue that professors should teach more (2002: 191–92). But professors will not voluntarily increase their teaching loads; no one in the system has any interest in forcing them to teach more; and indeed the market would make it difficult for any one university to try to increase teaching loads unilaterally. This “remedy” is thus no remedy at all.

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