

Department Survey Results 1995-96

A new thirty-eight-question department survey was sent by Bill Waiser (Head, Saskatchewan) to fifty-one universities in the late winter of 1996; thirty-five replies were received (68% return rate). The responses were used by Dave De Brou and Jean Horosko of Saskatchewan to generate twenty-two tables. The following is a summary of some of the findings for the period 1993-94 to 1995-96.

There was an insignificant decline (less than 1%) in the total undergraduate enrolment (regular session), while the number of students enrolled in intersession and summer session courses increased slightly.

The number of students entering M.A. programs fell by 12% (22.5% decline in men; 12.2% increase in women). On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of graduating M.A. students (18.7% for men; 26.8% for women). At the Ph.D. level, there was a small decrease in the number of admissions (down 3.9%). The number of women registered in Ph.D. programs increased 28.5%; total enrolment increased by almost 16%. The most dramatic change was in the number of graduating doctoral students. Between 1993-94 and 1995-96, the number of women who earned their Ph.D.s increased 300%, while the number of men increased by 84%. None of the departments who responded to the survey plan to suspend their Ph.D. program.

The number of full-time tenured faculty increased 3.2% over the reporting period. While the number of male faculty declined by 0.1%, the number of tenured women increased by almost 22%. There were 42 retirements in 1995-96 (22 regular and 20 early). For the same period, there were only 17 new tenure-track appointments.

The average number of classroom contact hours per week for 1995-96 was 8.5; the high was 18 hours, the low 3. Faculty teach an average of 76% of the courses, while graduate students handle an estimated 8% and sessional lecturers 16%. Only one department reported that faculty provided all instruction. The number of sessional instructors increased and then declined during the reporting period in response to budget reductions.

Almost half the respondents reported that they had developed home pages on the WWW.

All department heads received a copy of the questionnaire results.

Annual Department Heads Meeting *Brock University May 30, 1996*

Seventeen heads or department representatives attended the annual department heads meeting (chaired by Bill Waiser of Saskatchewan) at Brock University on May 30, 1996. Local arrangements, including lunch, were kindly handled by John Sainsbury of the Brock History Department.

The participants briefly reviewed the responses to the departmental questionnaire (22 tables) and suggested additional questions for next year's survey. This was followed by a lengthy, wide-ranging discussion of the impact of downsizing and rationalization on departments. It was noted, for example, that class limits at both the introductory and senior level are not only increasing, but that there is growing pressure to offer courses that attract a large number of students. Some departments also reported that retirements (without replacement) have left large gaps in their course offerings and that reduced budgets, and not recent developments in the discipline, are the greatest incentive to curricular revision.

Several departments reported on new initiatives with internet courses and CD-Rom teaching resources. Dr. Waiser will pursue the idea of developing an internet discussion group for department heads.

The meeting also decided to establish stronger links between the department chairs and the CHA Council. It was also agreed that the term of the committee chair should be set at two years and that Dr. Waiser will continue to serve in this capacity for a second year.

