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Research based questions:

(4) STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

UWinnipeg acknowledges that particular attention must be paid to supporting faculty early in their careers. Additionally, UWinnipeg has committed to developing new supports and identifying, sharing, and reinforcing best practices that enable faculty to achieve success in teaching and research. Throughout this process, we must be mindful that teaching excellence and research are not dichotomous. Research, scholarly, and creative activities strengthen our capacity to provide high quality teaching to our students.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THIS?

What kinds of support do new faculty members at UWinnipeg require early in their teaching careers?

What kinds of support do new faculty members at UWinnipeg require early in their research careers?

What is required to implement these supports? Who should implement them?

1. Teaching and balance of teaching and research:

Comment: Mentorship of new faculty is informal, which means it is highly variable depending on the individual. I think many new faculty don't know where to turn to get suggestions for practical questions (hence we rely heavily on our admin assistant). And it is great to get advice of bigger issues, e.g. related to balancing research and teaching.

Suggestion: It could be helpful to new faculty to formalize mentorship, so that the person has someone to turn to with questions. This can be done within departments.

2. Research:

(1) New faculty would benefit enormously from a larger course release during their first year if they can have time to apply for grants at that time. Can't we make an effort to give them one term they can devote to setting up their research and to grant applications? This would need to be coordinated at the faculty level.

(2) Try to obtain more funding opportunities for early researchers, and to present those in a way to make them viable. (See points below about "growing our research capacity").

(3) One simple device that would be a big help to new faculty (and even to faculty who are 'less new'):

Can we please have a template so that all new faculty can easily create a web page? A website makes a large difference in attracting graduate students. Most graduate students are not going to contact researchers who do not have websites, for it reflects poorly on the researcher. It is not fair to assume that all new faculty are in a position to create their own website for their lab or

research. It would be simple for IT to create a template that people can adopt. I had no familiarity with web site packages.

After 4 years with no personal website - during which we had virtually no departmental website, I bit the bullet and created a lab website (also became part of the department's website committee to finally finish that one!). Having a lab website made an immediate difference in reaching students who were highly qualified for graduate study. This would be especially useful to faculty when they first arrive at UW.

Specific recommendations related to above points:

1. **Course release:** Give new faculty a larger course release during their first year to provide time and support to apply for grants.
2. **Mentorship:** Formalize mentorship within departments to ensure such assistance is available to new faculty.
3. **Funding opportunities:** Try to obtain more funding opportunities at UWinnipeg for early researchers (e.g., CFI) and present those with sufficient lead-up time to make these viable.
4. **Website template:** Develop a website template for new faculty to develop a small personal website for their research.

(5) STRATEGIC COMMITMENT: UWinnipeg recognizes the value of growing our research capacity and continuing to improve our degree of teaching excellence.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THIS?

How can the institution better support faculty in pursuing research funding, including tri-council grants?

Re: funding

Comment: The lack of some funding at our institution such as CFI really hurts. I realize we are a small institution with limited allocations, but any progress in this area would be fantastic. Many faculty members never had the opportunity (at least a viable opportunity) to apply for this. If a person does not receive a grant that is designated for an "early-researcher", they do not have the opportunity to apply for subsequent CFI grants.

Suggestion: Faculty need long or reasonable lead up times to prepare a grant application. When I arrived at UW (2008), no CFI funds were available for new researchers. The first call was in spring (late March 2012) for which they included 5 cohorts of "new researchers". We had 3 weeks to submit the internal proposal. Note that this was at the end of term, when teaching demands are at their peak. Decisions were going to be made on May 1, with the draft and final proposals due at CFI by June 12!

Knowing that my UM colleagues had one full year to prepare their applications, I could not take this "opportunity" seriously. And I did not happen to have a grant application on-hand that might be quickly modified for the internal competition. This was not the only case of receiving short-notice, but it was one that hit close to home. I feel as though I (and others hired in my cohort) never had an opportunity to apply to CFI.

I think notification of research grants has been more timely since then. It is important!

Research, grants and teaching course release:

Comment: I agree that if a person is doing less research, they should do more teaching. But it is unfortunate that the teaching release hinges on current grants, especially tri-council. Two reasons that is a problem. (1) This situation leads to a catch 22, where someone who does not hold a research grant has more teaching time, and less opportunity to do research or apply for additional grants. (2) Some individual faculty who do not have external grants remain highly active in research, also supervising several undergraduate and graduate students conducting research.

Suggestion: Can we develop a practice to gauge research activity so that the course release depends on the demonstration that one is active in research - and not dependent on their current grants?

Develop a means of assessing research activity as affects teaching load that depends on research activity and supervision of research students, rather than having the assessment depend on external grants. It is difficult to supervise 6 research students in a lab while teaching a regular load. If they were PhD students, the students would be more independent and supervision would take less time. But supervisors need to devote considerable time when supervising undergraduates engaged in research.

I realize this suggestion is “easier said than done” and appreciate your other goal of identifying measurable ways to assess success in research and teaching.

Strategic commitment (8) highlights the role of the library in supporting research and teaching. I do not see a strategic commitment highlighting the role of Information Technology in supporting research and teaching. I view this as the weakest link at UWinnipeg. I am comparing IT support at UWinnipeg compared with several other institutions - small as well as large - where I studied as a graduate student or worked as an instructor. Not sure where to place this topic, so here it is:

A. Suggestions re: Information Technology:

1. Can't information technology be more accessible? They are hidden away in buildings somewhere (I don't really know where). We drop off exams for marking at the “Dean's office”. Why don't we know the people who work in this department? That would probably offer a more supportive environment for those employees as well as give others the feeling that IT exists.
2. Why does IT still not support Macintosh computers? This is baffling. I use my own printer and usually have no access to files that are shared across the university. This is unbelievable in this day and age.
3. Above, I mentioned the idea of IT offering a template to researchers within the university.
4. UWinnipeg is rather antiquated when it comes to other aspects of being ‘on-line’, e.g. we get

periodic print outs of our research accounts. Why isn't this automated so we can look up our accounts when we need specific information? I appreciate the heroic efforts of one person in financial services who oversees our research funds, but wouldn't an on-line system ease her load?

B. Suggestions re: Teaching support: My impression is that the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) focuses on technological supports for on-line or video teaching. That is great. I think faculty would benefit tremendously from a program that focuses on basics (not technology) by showcasing effective teaching strategies in the classroom itself.

I briefly participated in such a program offered at UAlberta years ago. I still refer to that when reflecting on teaching techniques. They were able to identify faculty from within the institution who led sessions on effective lectures, discussions, and other topics. This would be a great platform for individuals to discuss different strategies they use to encourage project or experiential learning.

Specific Recommendation: Organize teaching development activities for new and continuing instructors. Sessions could include "how to prepare and deliver a great lecture", leading in-class discussion (with large as well as small classes); experiential based learning. Certainly we have enough faculty with strengths in the classroom to develop such a program.

(6) STRATEGIC COMMITMENT: UWinnipeg takes pride in its diverse campus environment where people from all walks of life (e.g., international students, mature students, indigenous students, new Canadians, students with disabilities, etc.) feel welcome on campus and are supported to achieve their full potential.

(7) "Intersectoral" research or partnerships

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THIS?

Comment: One thing I miss since moving to Richardson Building is that we don't have the same day to day interaction with people from different departments, plus are less likely to walk over to the UW Club where such interactions occur.

Perhaps some inter-department activities can be encouraged and hosted to encourage cross-fertilization between people from different departments. Within the Richardson building, the 3rd floor hosts Indigenous studies. At the least we could run some activities or gatherings including members from science (2nd floor) and indigenous studies or other people on the 3rd floor. This could be interesting for students too.

In my classes, I try to identify courses from across campus that may interest and be useful to my students, who are typically in their 2nd and 3rd year. This includes courses in IS that focus on Traditional Ecology Knowledge. Similarly, I'd identify courses in Anthropology, History (History of Science), and geography (GIS) that are relevant. This is a great way to make students

more aware of offerings in other departments. As a result, my students tend to take these courses, some of which have made a big difference in their training or even their career direction.

Specific recommendations:

1. More cross-department activities for faculty and for students
2. Faculty can share recommendations for courses from across campus to students. Not sure who will develop those suggestions other than individuals.
3. I agree that we need to make the sciences more attractive to students who are under-represented in these courses, e.g. indigenous students. Is it possible to highlight some specific guidelines for faculty to help them better improve the reach of material included in their classes? This could vary from making sure to include material that is included in the course to the participation of guest instructors. However, we need to attract students into these courses in the first place. I'm not addressing this objective well here, but I do support it! (Unfortunately, many faculty still seem to resist this idea.)

11) STRATEGIC COMMITMENT: UWinnipeg remains committed to providing high quality undergraduate and graduate education with a focus on the liberal arts. In pursuit of this aim, UWinnipeg needs a vocabulary and a means to name and evaluate student outcomes, impact, and success.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THIS?

What are some specific ways to measure “successful graduates” that reflect our belief in the value of a liberal arts education and the specific mission of our institution?

Comment: Even though our classes are relatively small, there are often too many students to make it practical for instructors to include many writing assignments in a class. Students often have such little training in writing that they do not benefit from the feedback. The ability to write may be the most important skill students can develop at university and as part of a Liberal Arts Program. The ability to write well and the ability to think critically usually go hand in hand.

Recommendation:

1. **Writing:** Students need opportunities to develop their writing. That is a skill that is critical to their success as a professional. At either the departmental or faculty level, I think we need to implement writing requirements that exceed whatever requirements are currently in place.

Specific Recommendation: Develop writing requirements within departments. In science, this might be incorporated as a portion of 2nd year labs for science students.