

Instructor shortage on the way

Study suggests that as baby boomers begin to retire, universities need to advertise PhD programs and build the job appeal of academia to fill the void

RYAN PRICE
The *Charlatan* (Carleton University)

OTTAWA (CUP)—The looming departure of baby boomers from the workforce could pose problems when it comes to replacing thousands of retiring professors.

A study released by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) last November estimates that nearly 21 000 Canadian faculty members will retire or leave the profession in the next decade.

However, faculty represent only a portion of nearly 36 000 jobs that will open in the postsecondary education sector by 2016 due to projected growth in student populations, competition from more institutions, and retirement.

Feridun Hamdullahpur, Carleton University's interim provost and Vice-President (Academic), said that even if the study's figures are only partially true, it will still be a challenge for Canada's universities and colleges to fill the vacant positions.

"We have to start really attracting students [and] encouraging them to go into PhD programs," he said. Otherwise there simply won't be enough new professors.

"We have to make our universities here more attractive [and] academically stronger in order to attract people from other countries wanting to come here and work."

Though mandatory retirement was abolished in Ontario in December 2006, it's still unclear whether baby boomers will retire at age 65 or whether the love of the job will keep them in the classroom. The AUCC's

study warns that the elimination of mandatory retirement won't lessen the need for hiring new faculty in the long run.

Mark Langer, director of external relations for the Carleton University Academic Staff Association and Vice-President of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, said that universities need more teachers to address the inequities of the student-to-faculty ratio.

"I'm guessing there are people who would love to do a PhD, but unless they get assistance from the university, it just isn't possible financially."

ANNE DESTECHER
ART HISTORY PHD CANDIDATE

Langer also said that bidding wars for new teachers can push up salaries, making it hard for some universities to compete.

"It's very important that Carleton keeps up its research profile, and we can't do that if people are spending more time in the classroom compared to faculty at comparative universities," he explained.

According to Langer, the Ontario government is now directly targeting graduate studies with funds—as opposed to subsidies through regular postsecondary funds. The government is also mandating increased

enrolment targets for graduate studies. But not everyone thinks this is a great solution.

"This puts downward pressure on the quality of the graduate students that [universities] are admitting," Langer explained. "If you have to admit more, there's a great temptation to lower your standard of admission."

Carleton's Dean of Graduate Studies, John Shepherd, has been resisting such change, and is instead addressing the problem by putting more effort into recruitment—but that might be only half the solution.

Anne DeStecher, a second-year Art History PhD student, said those who pursue graduate studies should already have some idea of their desired career path.

"It's such demanding work that you'd have to already be really focused that this is what you want to do," she said.

Financial problems are also a large deterrent.

"I'm guessing there are people who would love to do a PhD, but unless they get assistance from the university, it just isn't possible financially," she said.

Elena Aminkova, a PhD student in computer science, stressed that while financial packages would help a lot, she stressed that it can still be difficult to find a teaching position after graduating with a PhD.

"A lot of my colleagues [have] found many troubles in getting the chance to teach at either college or university [here in Canada]," Aminkova said. "Most of them are international and many of them have their own position in their home country."

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: RYAN HEISE

PRE-DRINKING IN CYBERSPACE Bar-goers in Ontario can now check the capacity of clubs online before heading out.

Students create online solution to bar lines

GILLIAN FARBER
The *Cord Weekly*
(Wilfrid Laurier University)

WATERLOO (CUP)—Savvy night-clubbers in several Ontario university towns have a new online tool to help beat the long—and often cold—lineup.

With just the click of a mouse and 21 clicks of the keyboard, people can access www.BeatTheBarLine.com to get a first-hand look at the lineups outside the bar and even the crowded (or not-so-crowded) dance floor—all from the comfort of their own homes.

The website displays featured venues, their hours of operation, and a live webcam view of the lines inside and outside the club. The site also provides phone numbers for taxis in each area.

Andrew Dick, the creator of the website, said that he and a friend from the University of Western Ontario, Peter Whitby, came up with the idea and are now starting to reap some profits from the venture. Even bar owners are starting to offer positive feedback on the service.

"The cameras are very beneficial for us because having an extra set of eyes

on the bar can deter criminal behaviour and dishonesty with police," said Brent Campbell, owner of Vault Lounge in Waterloo.

Dick now hopes to expand the site to cover more of Ontario, as well as to encourage participation with other owners, including those in the restaurant industry.

After surveying random students on the Wilfrid Laurier University campus about the website, the majority of responses were positive. Some students have even begun using the site as a ritual before they hit the clubs.

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