

VOX is your voice. What are your thoughts on issues such as:

- RCM and TABBS
- Post-Pandemic Shift?
- Workload?
- University Rankings Project?
- Copyright and teaching resources?
- Gender issues?
- Roles of sessionals?
- USFA negotiations?
- Salary structures?
- Interdisciplinary research and teaching?
- Teaching evaluations?

We invite you to put together a short article on these issues or on anything else you believe is of relevance to U of S faculty. Although we suggest something around 300 words in length, we would definitely entertain something longer. You'll find information at the end of this publication on where to direct submissions.

...To be continued with the next issue and your opinions and thoughts, we hope.

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What's wrong with doing less with less?

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The University has been sending out numerous emails outlining resources to support our Wellness. We applaud and support those initiatives. They can be lifesavers to people in crisis. But let's be real, they are just a band-aid as no one is talking about why we need them. It is true that all the routines and infrastructure we've relied on to manage our academic careers and personal life have been upended, but to think that the pandemic is the route of our problem is akin to blaming the faulty smoke detector, and not the unattended candle, when the house burns down.

We have a University administration that has unabashedly adopted a feast and famine approach to funding the teaching and research mission of this university. Former Vice-President of Research Karen Chad's parting report is an unapologetic celebration of that approach. A large proportion of the University is being starved to fund the Signature Areas, the College of Medicine, and other special projects of the central administration.

Perhaps you agree with this approach. The point of this article is not to debate the administration's choice. Instead, we want to address the fact that while this funding model is well known, few faculty have changed how they approach their work in response. We have dealt with chronic underfunding and the accompanying erosion of supports for our work by internalizing them as personal failure and have sacrificed our personal lives, our health, and the meaningful work we want to do.

As members of the USFA grievance team, we regularly hear from faculty at their breaking point. They feel overwhelmed by the spoken and unspoken demands of teaching, service and research, but they feel unable to say no. They compare themselves to others who "appear" to be coping better than they are with these demands and beat themselves up for either not having their "shit" together or by questioning whether they even belong in academia. They also feel pressure to be a "team player" or feel guilty because if they don't do the extra work, they know that colleague who was in their office crying last week will just end up taking it on because the Dean relies on the fact that she REALLY doesn't know how to say no.

ENOUGH! The University can't have its cake and eat it too. Let's start having honest conversations in our units about what work we can no longer do because we do not have sufficient resources to do that work. And, let's encourage one another to say "No" when asked to do more with less. What's wrong with doing less with less?

Why do we have to prepare a peer teaching evaluation for a colleague who met the standard for teaching when she got tenure and promotion if there have been no complaints about her teaching?

Why do we have to respond to work emails in the evenings and on weekends especially when we are required to hold two hours of office hours each week that students rarely attend?

Why will we be held to the same, if not higher standard, for research productivity if we no longer have administrative support to submit receipts for reimbursement for lab equipment and have to spend 3 days fighting with connection point to have the expense paid?

Why do we have to sacrifice our entire summer holiday or December break to get ready for teaching online while getting out of office replies from Senior Administration to questions that arise in the midst of those preparations?

We do it because we truly are committed to our students and to being 'the University the World Needs'. But for most of us, it is coming at too great a cost.

Finally, the Administration has just launched an initiative to improve our rankings and is inviting faculty to attend meetings so we can learn how to 'do our part'. We will not be attending. We are already doing our part by doing the work that gets the University those rankings. Nonetheless, we'd like to suggest that step one for making this ranking endeavour a success be protecting our time for doing faculty work and providing adequate numbers of faculty to carry the load.

About VOX

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Submissions of general interest less than 300 words will be accepted for publication, subject to the following general principles:

1. All material submitted for publication should be written in a clear and concise style. The use of technical jargon should be avoided, and the vocabulary used should be familiar to most of the intended audience.
2. The Editorial Board will have the discretionary power to edit submissions in order to ensure correctness of grammar.
3. The Editorial Board will have the right to reject any article of a racist, sexist or obscene nature.
4. The Editorial Board will have the right to reject any article which, in the opinion of the Association's solicitor, could result in legal action being taken against the Association or the Editorial Board.

Publication of short articles may be delayed not more than six months – it is possible that the Editorial Board may wish to save an article for a special issue on its subject matter. It is also possible that shortage of space may require delays in publication.

Articles more than 300 words, cartoons or other graphics, and submissions from non-members, such as university administrators, other university employees, alumni, or students may be published at the discretion of the Editorial Board.

Submissions to be considered for publication in **VOX** may be sent by email to: usfa@usaskfaculty.ca.

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