

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Procure

MEMORANDUM

SM 4/12/67

Paper S-82

To..... Senate

From..... D. G. Tuck,

..... Acting Dean of Science.

Subject... Administrative Load on Faculty
Members.

Date..... October 31, 1967.

Every member of the faculty must be aware that while considerable lip service is paid to the importance of teaching and scholarship, the time of faculty members, and especially senior members of the faculty, is completely misused. These people, appointed by virtue of their ability in teaching and research are spending a large proportion of their time as administrators. It may well be that this is due in part to the difficulty of getting administrative positions established in the budget. I suggest, however, that we ought to be setting our sights above this, since the scholastic reputation of the University will depend on the impact it makes on the general university world by good teaching and good research. It follows that the heavy load of administration on faculty members merely delays the time in which academic excellence is likely to be achieved in this University.

While most people came here expecting to be involved in some administration, the signs are that the administrative load upon faculty members is constantly increasing, so that faculty find less and less time for teaching and research. There are a number of actions which could remedy this, and which will no doubt be the subject of future discussions, but the one which I wish to bring to the attention of this Committee is concerned with the situation in the summer semester. Many faculty members take their research semester during the summer, and many, particularly in the Science Faculty, stay on campus in order to make use of the facilities here. Unfortunately, much of the administrative machinery of the University continues to grind on during the summer semester and a member of faculty who sits on a committee for example is then faced with a dilemma: he can either give up his work on the committee (which reduces its efficiency), or he can continue to attend in the hope that the committee will achieve what it set out to do. A faculty member who adopts the latter point of view may (and does) find a considerable fraction of his research time cut out. Members of the University are growing increasingly resentful of a situation in which the summer semester is merely a period in which one does not teach, rather than as at other universities, a period in which research can be carried out in a relatively uninterrupted manner. From a poll of faculty members in Science, I know that this resentment is widespread. Here is a situation in which the real purpose of the University is being seriously

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hindered by administrative duties. I would like to suggest that we could overcome this particular evil to a large extent by cutting out as much as possible of the committee work during the months of June, July and August. I think Senate could set a startling example to the rest of the University by declaring now that it will hold no meetings during those months, except on an emergency basis. No doubt people will protest that important business must be carried out in those months, but I believe that with a little foresight we can prevent such business arising. From discussions with colleagues, I can see little which cannot be put off until the September meeting of Senate. Furthermore, if Senate itself refuses to meet in June, July and August, the many committees which depend upon Senate and which report to it directly or indirectly, will also cease to function automatically. Faculty meetings would also be needed only in emergencies. This would, I believe, do much to restore to members of the faculty that time for research which is their right and responsibility.

I hope that these matters can be discussed in Senate at its next meeting.



D. G. Tuck

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