

REPORT ON BARGAINING

SIAST Academic Bargaining Unit Issues Paper I Hours of Work

May 2006

Background

“Hours of work” has been a long-standing issue at SIAST. The workload formula currently in operation was developed in 1990. When the instructors at SIAST originally agreed to use the Ontario Hours of Work Model to resolve our hours of work problem, we did so out of a desire to guarantee quality programs for our students. A major concern for us was the need to create a system of workload allocation that would guarantee fairness for all instructors in terms of each individual instructor’s time as well as across departments. We had no idea the process would be as long and protracted as it has been, nor did we imagine the result would be so inequitable.

Hours of work formula

The program categories and the category cap for assigned student contact hours were developed with very little input from instructors. Initially, the caps were set as a **maximum** number of student contact hours. As outlined in Article 9.2.7, the caps were not intended to be a goal for assigned hours but to represent a **guideline** for assigned hours that was **not to be exceeded**. Paid time for preparation, evaluation and for performing other complementary functions was based on a formula directly proportional to the category cap and was not to be used to determine workload.

The *Hours of Work Review* conducted in 2001 demonstrated how inadequate the 1990 Hours of Work model has become and how its misuse by SIAST management has created serious workload problems for many instructors.

Over time, SIAST changed the category caps to reflect the **minimum** number of student contact hours instead of the **maximum** number of hours. This change, coupled with the increased demands for program revisions and incorporation of technological changes, has resulted in the majority of instructors working well over their yearly cap of 1442 hours.

Quality programs and instruction

To maintain high quality, current programs that will attract, challenge and satisfy students, instructors must regularly upgrade program content, delivery style, equipment, labs and training aids. To accomplish required program revisions, many instructors must exceed their maximum yearly complementary hours cap. A failure to update programs and technology can result in poor performance evaluations.

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SIAST management has made a number of decisions that negatively affect quality programming and instruction.

- Management determines assignments without regard for pedagogical principles or the quality of courses and programs.
- Management may assign electronically mediated instruction or require the inclusion of electronic applications in existing courses. Both the development of electronic modules and the delivery of electronically mediated instruction require vastly increased amounts of time, often without a corresponding decrease in already-assigned instructional student contact hours.
- The use of electronic media in program development also requires an expertise that must be learned and mastered in a very short time. Many instructors find they have few resources to assist them and no relief from an already over-burdened workload.

All of these increases in workload over an extended period of time have resulted in a decline in program quality and had a detrimental affect on instructor's health and well being.

Current negotiations

We believe that SIAST has not addressed any of the hours of work concerns we have raised over the past three contracts. Unfortunately, the employer's position did not change during our last round of bargaining. Over the years, they have simply put a few program development dollars in "hot spots" or troubled areas, hoping that will correct any hours of work concerns we have.

At our Proposals Conference, the message was clear:

- provide wording in the Collective Bargaining Agreement to capture the actual work done, including on-line work, and allow adequate preparation time for instructors. Currently many are keeping just a few days ahead of their students.
- create an "hours of work model" that would help make SIAST programs the program of choice in western Canada, allow the most up-to-date programs in the classroom, shop, lab or clinic and provide real help to instructors to enable them to become successful in their field of study.
- provide adequate time for instructors to deliver programs and educational services to each and every student at a level to which the students are entitled.

We must work together to change the current 'antiquated' hours of work model. The time for change is now.

For further information, contact Jim Steele at 1-800-667-9791, ext X or (306) 653-9381 in Saskatoon or check out www.acad.sgeu.org