

Observations on Hiring Trends in UBC's Faculty of Education

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DRAFT

In yesterday's Faculty meeting, Dean Tierney indicated that we were recently given a quota from the Provost and VP Academic's Office to admit around 780-850 teacher education students this coming year. Our agreement or "contract" with the Provost's Office would mean, I guess, that we admit this historical quota of students regardless of eroding job markets for teachers and our working conditions in the Faculty. The contract or quota to maintain the same teacher education enrollment numbers year after year strikes me as odd given that on at least three occasions over the past two years the Deputy Provost used the reduction of teacher education enrollments as a prime example of where UBC could begin to bring order to enrollments and scarce resources. The implications of this quota are such that we currently surrender agency in teacher education admission numbers *unless* we are willing to "pay" for a reduction. The operative word is *unless* and I suspect that given current budget and working conditions most FT Faculty would be quite willing to absorb more of a cut to reduce teacher education admissions and reclaim the FT Faculty lines we so desperately need for graduate education and research.

At stake for the Faculty of Education is whether we continue down the road over-committed to teacher education, with fewer and fewer FT Faculty appointments and more and more Sessional and Seconded Faculty appointments, or whether we emphasize graduate education and research. Of course, at this moment in the province, it is questionable that UBC should be over-extended toward over-supplying a shrinking market for teachers (i.e., elementary teachers, social studies teachers, etc.). The Vancouver School Board, for example, reported in early January that the district had 10,000 empty seats and was closing schools: "The total enrollment (elementary and secondary) population has declined 7.5% (4,300 students) since 1997. Using enrollment projections from census Canada, BC Statistics, and school district and city databases, it is expected that city enrollment will continue to decline until 2011 to about 52,500 students from over 57,000. The decline in the city's school-age children means there is, and will continue to be surplus space in many schools" (Vancouver Board of Education, 2008, p. 2). Declines in school enrollments across the province overall are only slightly better.

The best teacher supply-demand data we have for BC suggest that there are about 8,500 part time and registered surplus teachers ("teachers on call" or TOC), and 90% of these are elementary teachers. Elementary teachers often queue up on TOC lists, if they can get listed, for five years waiting for FT jobs (Hawkey, 2006). Many teacher education graduates see the poor prospects and drop out of the education job market altogether, and are not counted as surplus within the BCTF's records. UBC produces about 45% of all new teachers in BC each year. Reducing our supply of teachers at UBC to this market is something that necessarily has to be on the agenda of teacher education and graduate program reform, and debate, within our Faculty. When, at a Faculty meeting in October, Dean Tierney was asked if we could scale back the teacher education program in order to

scale up the graduate program, the response was that we have not modeled that scenario yet. Even if we overlook an over-supply of UBC teacher education graduates to a saturated (or flooded especially for the elementary teachers) market, we should care about how this impinges on FT hiring trends within the Faculty of Education.

In yesterday's meeting, we learned that the percentage of Education's Faculty salary budget committed to Sessional and Seconded Faculty shot up to about 22.4% this year. We are over-extended when it comes to hiring— one can easily model a scenario where we return to Departments at least 16 FT lines subsumed by our PT Faculty commitments to teacher education and diploma programs. The result of current commitments is a decline in new FT Faculty hires (Figure 1), especially severe over the past four years including 2007-08, and declines in FT Faculty overall (Figure 2) over the past fifteen years. With sustained increases in graduate education over the last decade in the Faculty, a decreasing cohort of FT Faculty has picked up the increases in Supervision *and* continued with their teaching commitments (see CUST e.g., Figure 3). The increases in Sessional and Seconded Faculty hires over the past decade have been primarily employed to keep the teacher education and diploma programs afloat (see CUST e.g., Figure 4); PT Faculty do a superb job in these programs and more and more Sessionals are being called upon to keep the graduate program afloat (e.g., 85% of all MET course sections and an increasingly large percentage of off-campus cohort M.Ed. courses are taught by Sessionals). However, PT Faculty do not have membership in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and we are now at the point where we have to seriously consider a reduction in graduate admissions because we do not have the FT Faculty for Supervision. FT Faculty are struggling to cope with business as usual across the Faculty under severe budget crisis conditions— a 7.5% General Purpose Operating Fund budget cut over three years continues to be severe by any measure. Yet we continue with commitments of a sizable amount (\$4,358,762 in 2007-08 and growing) of our salary budget to maintaining an over-extension toward teacher education and diploma enrollments.

More than likely, most of the FT Faculty feels that the legacy of teacher education of over 850+ per year was a good one (874 teacher education students per year averaged across the last 6 years). This is the same legacy of the days of 775+ diploma and certificate students per year. But with severe budget cuts, declining FT appointments, and unsustainable workloads, most of us likely want to balance out commitments by reducing the teacher education and diploma programs and increasing graduate program enrollments. Something like a 50% reduction of the elementary majors and a 25% reduction of the secondary majors and diploma students would roll us back to enrollment figures of the late 1980s and early 1990s and allow us to sustain the teacher education program primarily with FT Faculty and graduate students. If asked, most FT Faculty would likely vote for change and an intensive focus on graduate education and research.

Sources:

Hawkey, C. (2006). *Background to teacher supply & demand in British Columbia*. Vancouver: BCTF.
 Vancouver Board of Education. (2008). *Educational facilities review*. Vancouver: Author. Retrieved from
<http://www.cbc.ca/bc/news/bc-080110-schoolboardreview.pdf> and
<http://www.canada.com/vancouver/pdfs/UBCEFR.pdf>

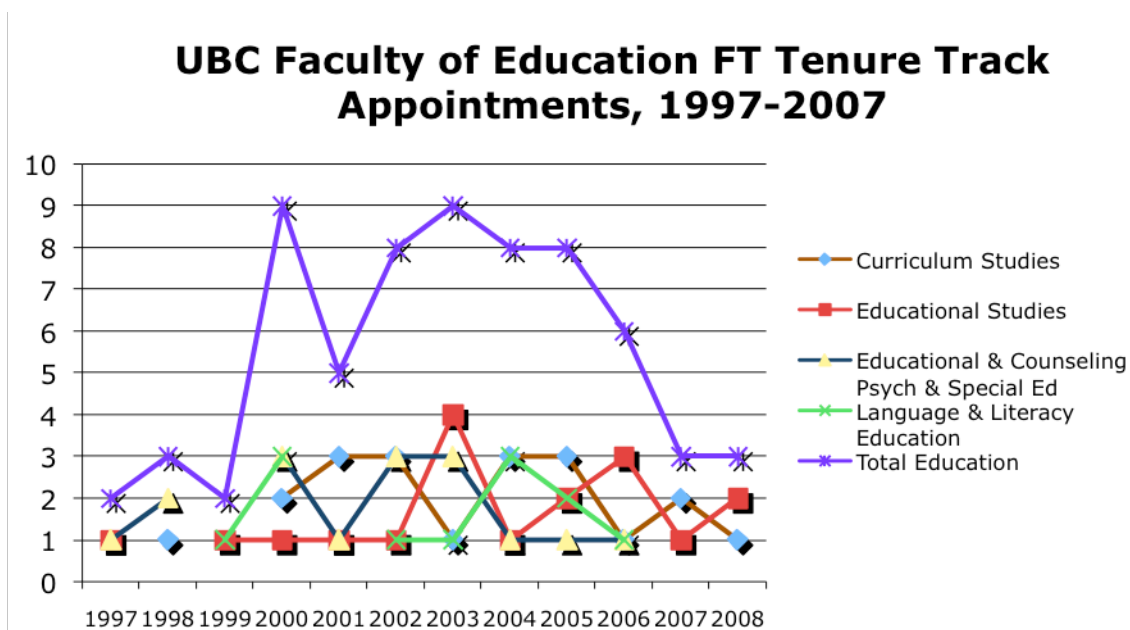


Figure 1. Faculty of Education FT appointments. Note: Data per faculty member are not necessarily actual start dates. 2008 data are projected based on anticipated searches. HKIN was not included, as the School draws from a special budget. Source: UBC Faculty Relations and Faculty Association.

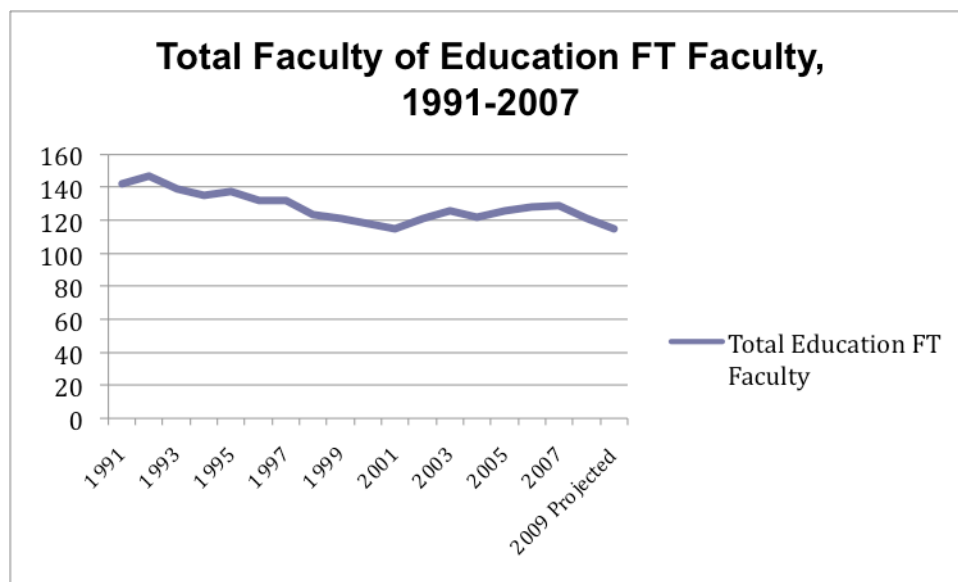


Figure 2. FT Faculty in Education. Note: Due to reporting mechanisms, there is a lag between FT Faculty hires and retirements and *Calendar* data. Declines in FT Faculty hires and retirements for 2006-07 and 2007-08 will be reflected in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 calendars. HKIN was not included, as the School is not included under the Faculty in the *Calendar*.

CUST Graduate Students and Faculty, 1991-2007

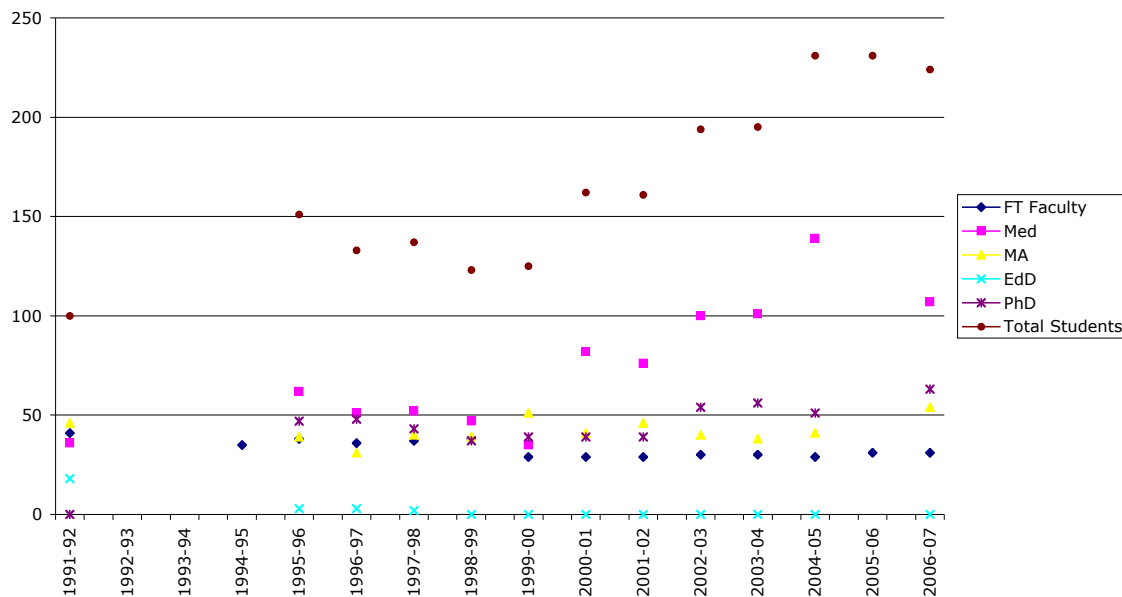


Figure 3. CUST Grad students and faculty. Note: Data from 1991 are from the departments of Mathematics and Science Education (MSED) and Visual and Performing Arts Education (VPAE), which, along with parts of Social and Educational Studies (SEDS) and Physical Education (PHED), were combined to form CUST in 1994.

CUST FT & PT Faculty Trends, 1991-2007

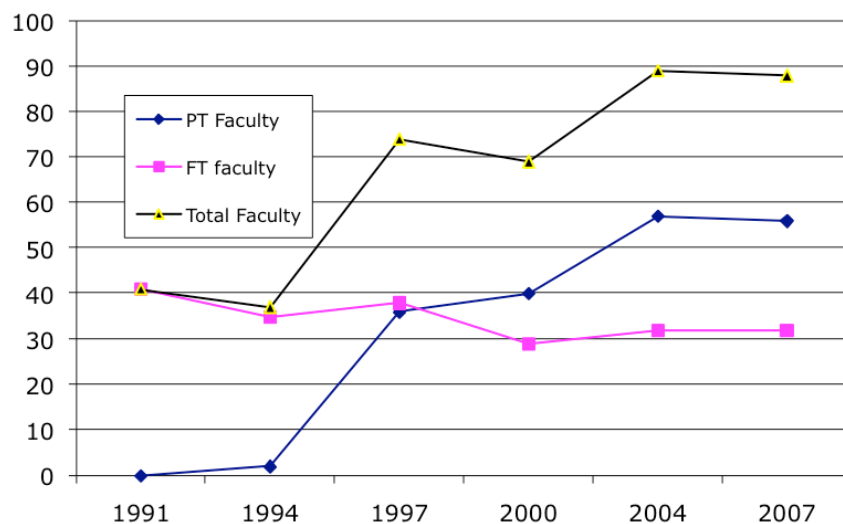


Figure 4. CUST FT & PT faculty trends. Note: Data from 1991 are from the departments of Mathematics and Science Education (MSED) and Visual and Performing Arts Education (VPAE), which, along with parts of Social and Educational Studies (SEDS) and Physical Education (PHED), were combined to form CUST in 1994.