

**Beyond the faculty contract: Exploring value-added and discretionary work
in Ontario's community colleges**

Doctor of Philosophy, 2005

Beverlie Ann Dietze

**Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto**

ABSTRACT

Observations of two different colleges – one in which faculty appeared collaborative and creative, and another wherein faculty appeared to provide only their contractual requirement – led the researcher to the idea of investigating discretionary work by faculty. While she initially thought of this as value-added work, this proved a somewhat unwieldy concept for examining the nuances of what faculty did over and above their contractual obligation, what kinds of environment encouraged these voluntary contributions, how these extra efforts contributed to student success and what college policies enhanced these efforts. Nevertheless, when these faculty contributions are viewed as discretionary work vital to college renewal, data critical to labor relations emerged.

The sample for the study consisted of 40 faculty and 15 administrators drawn from 7 Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. All responded to an interview protocol exploring their ideas of value-added work, their examples of this, and the conditions and policies facilitating it. The results were then coded allowing the following observations.

Significant differences emerged on several fronts between the faculty and administration respondents. Faculty, as one might expect, had specific anecdotes to tell of going the extra mile, for example, in the area of student relationships and student success, either through the use of new technologies or through their personal investments of time and effort. Administrators seemed to recognize little of this kind of contribution and spoke in more generic terms about faculty roles in teaching and learning. Administrators also failed to acknowledge faculty's extra efforts in developing community links and partnerships. This disconnect continued as faculty and administrators discussed the workplace conditions that promoted value-added work by faculty. While both groups appeared to see faculty motivation as important, faculty themselves again addressed the underlying contributors with more precision. These included organizational climate, leadership, communications and the availability of the May-June period for preparation of curriculum development and program review contributions. Both faculty and administrator respondents acknowledge the importance of faculty value-added contributions to student-success outcomes, although faculty were inclusive, considering alumni connections as well as current students.

Perhaps the area where the greatest differences emerged involved college policies relating to the funding of professional development. Faculty emphasized self-directed opportunities such as more holistic sabbaticals as opposed to the practice in some institutions of restricting how these periods must be spent. Faculty also stressed the need for institutions to fund memberships in professional organizations as a way for faculty to maintain industry/business contacts and currency in their professional field of practice. However, the greatest division was over the need for faculty evaluations, with faculty

viewing the process as necessary for ongoing support and improvement and administrators worrying about damaging existing relationships.

Overall this study is important for what it shows about the differences between faculty and administrators on a broad range of topics. Some of these differences may be the cause root for faculty grievances or unrest in the workplace. Others inhibit faculty from achieving their full potential and committing to their college's improvement with enthusiasm and generosity. While this dissertation has exposed a large number of areas in which misunderstandings or contentions occur, further research is needed to document the extent of these difficulties and propose possible remedies. The study concludes with a list of such suggestions.