Perceptions of institutional teaching culture by tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty

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Perceptions of Institutional Teaching Culture by Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Sessional Faculty

Abstract
The Institutional Teaching Culture Perception Survey (ITCPS) was used to investigate beliefs of tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty members (N=576) about the teaching culture within three large research-intensive universities in Canada. As predicted, we found significant differences between these three groups of faculty members’ perceptions of their institutions’ teaching cultures. Sessional faculty perceived that their universities rewarded effective teaching less than their tenured or tenure-track colleagues. Tenured faculty were less likely than the tenure-track and sessional faculty to believe it was important to encourage, recognize, or assess effective teaching. These results have important implications for the quality of teaching and, ultimately, student learning, as sessional faculty are teaching an increasing number of students and tenured faculty are the primary decision-makers in setting the priorities for their institutions.

Keywords: quality teaching, faculty appointments, post-secondary education, institutional teaching culture

Introduction
Sessional faculty members are increasingly being hired to teach undergraduate and graduate courses at post-secondary institutions across Canada and the United States (Brownlee, 2015; MacDonald, 2013; Webber & Rogers, 2018). These faculty members often have very different conditions of employment than their tenured or tenure-track peers including less job security, lower pay, and fewer job benefits (Webb, Wong, & Hubball, 2013). We believe that these often precariously employed faculty at research-intensive universities likely have a different perception of institutional teaching culture than their tenured or tenure-track colleagues and this is the focus of our study. As institutional teaching culture has been found to be related to student outcomes such as persistence, learning, and engagement (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Berger & Milem, 2000; Grayson & Grayson, 2003),
and as sessional faculty are teaching increasing numbers of students, differences across faculty appointments in perceptions of institutional teaching culture could ultimately have meaningful consequences for our students.

**Institutional Teaching Culture**

Research since the 1990’s has suggested that creating a teaching culture within universities that values quality teaching is important both to motivate faculty members to enhance their teaching excellence (Feldman & Paulsen, 1999) and to create an environment that leads to student success (Cox, McIntosh, Reason, & Terenzini, 2011). Quality teaching which involves the use of pedagogical strategies that facilitate the achievement of student learning outcomes depends on supports at many levels, from policies at the institutional level that focus on pedagogical excellence to programs or initiatives that serve to enhance student learning at the instructor level (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). An institution’s teaching culture then is the embedded patterns, behaviours, shared values, beliefs, and ideologies that indicate that the importance of teaching is recognized and valued at an institution. An effective institutional teaching culture recognizes the importance of teaching, constructively assesses teaching, engages various stakeholders and resources, and supports teacher development (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012; Paulsen & Feldman, 1995).

Furthermore, an institution’s teaching culture can be observed through examining common indicators of teaching quality. This includes institutional processes, resources, and materials dedicated to enhancing the quality of teaching (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). For example, indicators related to an institution’s strategic commitment to quality teaching include the presence of institutional strategic documents and initiatives that prioritize effective teaching. Indicators that an institution recognizes and rewards teaching would include the use of multiple measures to assess teaching (Dennin et al., 2017; Kustra et al., 2014).

Quality teaching is critical today given the need for graduates who are technologically savvy and workforce ready, with strong soft skills such as the ability to work well on teams (Bortz, 2018; Hess, 2019). As the role of post-secondary education changes to meet these demands so does the role of faculty members, such that both the senior administration and individual faculty members must be nimble in developing and implementing relevant and innovative curriculum (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). Cox et al. (2011) theorized that when university administrators try to cultivate a high-quality teaching culture they encourage learning centered pedagogical practices such as active and collaborative learning, which have been found to have a positive impact on student learning (Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015). Furthermore, quality teaching cultures place a greater emphasis on both the assessment of effective teaching and teaching excellence (Feldman & Paulsen, 1999). For instance, Cox et al.’s research found that a high-quality teaching culture led to increased student-faculty interaction outside the classroom, which is also a practice associated with greater student success (Kim & Sax, 2014; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011).

There is a strong positive relationship between the quality of teaching and the institutional teaching culture (Stein, 1997). This is a complex relationship, but it is likely that an institution’s teaching culture impacts professors’ behaviours in the classroom. Therefore, improving the culture of teaching can affect the quality of education that students receive (Cox, et al., 2011; Feldman & Paulsen, 1999).

Since the mid-sixties, organizational cultures in universities in Canada and the United States have shifted so that research, rather than teaching, is the primary institutional focus (Bak & Kim, 2015; Clark, Moran, Skolnick, & Track, 2009). This shift in focus has had a negative impact on the collective institutional teaching culture, as teaching is not valued as much as research. Bak and Kim (2015) found that faculty members are more likely to be motivated to enhance teaching excellence and support student learning in an environment that has an institutional culture that prioritizes quality teaching. As Goff (2015) concludes:

> The development of a campus culture that values the institution’s function in student learning and quality teaching would benefit from Enhancing Quality approaches to quality assurance. This would require holistic consideration of the beliefs held by members of the institution, a clear articulation of the institution’s conceptions of quality, and a critical analysis of how these conceptions align with institutional practices and policies. (pp. ii–iii)

**Sessional Faculty**

Quite clearly, faculty members are essential for creating quality teaching and for fostering the institutional teach-
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workplaces than their tenured or tenure-track colleagues. Academicians who feel less valued within the institution may be less satisfied than tenured or tenure-track colleagues with their work environments (Ryan, Groen, McNeil, Nadolny, & Bhattacharyya, 2011). If teaching culture reflects the members’ beliefs and ideologies about their educational institution (Kezar & Eckel, 2002), it is likely that sessional faculty members are satisfied with their work, research suggests they are far less satisfied than tenured or tenure-track colleagues with their work environments (Ryan, Groen, McNeil, Nadolny, & Bhattacharyya, 2011). If teaching culture reflects the members’ beliefs and ideologies about their educational institution (Kezar & Eckel, 2002), it is likely that sessional faculty who feel less valued within the institution may have a different view of the teaching culture within their workplaces than their tenured or tenure-track colleagues.

Changing Expectations

Hénard and Roseveare (2012) regarded quality teaching as essential for ensuring student learning outcomes and considered both students and potential employers as key stakeholders in defining what those learning outcomes should be. They suggested that for quality teaching to be successfully implemented, buy-in is required at the individual, program, and institutional level. Buy-in at these levels would be made visible by having a teaching and learning centre, teaching awards, supports for innovation in teaching, and funding for innovative pedagogies. Also, Hénard and Roseveare stated that institutional policies and practices that support high-quality teaching and learning have become increasingly important due to a variety of factors, including a more diverse student body with the emphasis on internationalization on most campuses, rapid change in technological innovations in society and the classroom, and increased pressure to be responsive to employer needs. These same pressures are evident in Canada with the increasing number of non-traditional students (Glauser, 2018), increased emphasis on internationalization (Knight-Grofe & Rauh, 2016; Universities Canada, 2014), and a focus on integrating technological innovations in the classroom (Johnson, Becker, Cummins, Estrada, Freeman, & Hall, 2016). As the outcomes expected by stakeholders from higher education change, so have faculty roles. These changes may have even greater implications for sessional faculty than for their tenured and tenure-track colleagues as sessional faculty are not as likely to be integrated into their institutions, and therefore may be less aware of changing expectations for their teaching at their institutions (MacDonald, 2013). MacDonald (2013) suggested that this may be because they are often hired just prior to the start of courses, may teach at multiple institutions, are less likely to be allowed to serve on departmental committees, and often have fewer rewards for outstanding teaching. This leaves sessional faculty feeling less valued as members of the academic community.

The Current Study

Based on an Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) guide that examined higher education policies and procedures that support quality teaching (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012), we developed the Institutional Teaching Culture Perception Survey (ITCPS-F) to examine faculty members’ perceptions of their institution’s teaching culture (Kustra et al., 2014). While cultures can vary within areas, such as within departments (Mårtensson & Roxå, 2018a), there is also an overall culture, and the current survey focused on the larger teaching culture at the institutional level. This survey represented a significant step forward from previous research such as Cox et al. (2011) who attempted to measure faculty perceptions of a multidimensional construct, teaching culture, using short unidimensional measures. Cox et al. (2011) also did not examine possible variability between tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty members’ perceptions of the teaching culture. Finally, although Canadian universities are seldom exclusively undergraduate
institutions (Universities Canada, 2018), undergraduate institutions were the primary focus of their investigation, and most of the policy measures they examined related to the first-year experience, such as providing first-year students with experiential learning opportunities or examining their persistence into second year.

Using this newly developed survey, we investigated the value that tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty members perceived their institutions place on teaching (i.e., their institutional teaching culture). Given the research on the differences in work conditions between sessional faculty and their tenured and tenure-track colleagues (e.g., MacDonald, 2013; Tarr, 2010), we hypothesized that sessional faculty members would be less likely to think that their institutions placed value on teaching, and that they would assign more importance to valuing indicators of quality teaching than their tenured and tenure-track colleagues. We also predicted that tenured-faculty members would assign less importance to their institution valuing teaching than their tenure-track and sessional colleagues because of the emphasis placed on research in promotion decisions, whereas, for tenure-track faculty both teaching and research are weighted into tenure decisions, so teaching is still of importance at this career stage. Through this research, we intend to gain deeper insight into the differential perceptions of teaching culture that faculty members have and, as a result, develop strategies for improving the teaching culture for all who teach at universities.

**Method**

**Participants**

Five-hundred and seventy-six tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty members from three large research-intensive universities in Southwestern Ontario participated in the research. Tenured faculty members at these institutions have traditional workloads of 40% research, 40% teaching, and 20% service. Overall, 729 faculty members participated in the research, representing a 15.4% participation rate. Of these, only 576 self-identified as tenured, tenure-track, or sessional faculty members and, thus, were included in the analyses.

The majority of respondents self-reported as male (55%); from the Faculties of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science; Science; or Health Sciences (75%); being tenured (51%); and having 10 or more years of teaching experience (72%). They were roughly equally distributed from across the three participating institutions (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Distribution of Participants’ Self-Reported Gender, Faculty, Primary Role, Appointment, Teaching Experience, and Institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>n(^1)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities, &amp; Social Science</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Measures

Demographics
Participants completed six demographic items assessing their gender, faculty, primary role at the university, appointment type, years of teaching experience, and institution.

Institutional Teaching Culture Perception Survey
The faculty version of the Institutional Teaching Culture Perception Survey-(ITCPS-F; Kustra et al., 2014) is a 39-item questionnaire consisting of five categories of items (i.e., levers) designed to assess the extent to which participants agreed that certain indicators of a quality teaching culture were evident at their institutions and the importance that they placed on these indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional Instructor</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Professor</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 4 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14 years</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19 years</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24 years</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29 years</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+ years</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 Number of participants vary due to missing data.
Participants rated each item twice, once for agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and once for importance (1 = not at all important to 5 = very important).

To determine the structure of the ITCPS-F, we performed principal components analyses on the agreement and importance ratings separately. For the agreement ratings, four components were extracted. We calculated Cronbach’s alphas for the components to determine their internal consistency; all four components evidenced good to excellent consistency. Based on an examination of the item loadings, we labelled the components Encouraging Effective Teaching, Broad Involvement around Teaching, Recognizing Effective Teaching, and Assessing Teaching (see Tables 2 and 3).

For the importance ratings, three components were extracted. The three components evidenced excellent Cronbach’s alphas. Based on an examination of the item loadings, we labelled the components Encouraging Effective Teaching, Recognizing Effective Teaching, and Assessing Teaching (see Tables 2 and 3). Note that even though similar names are used for the agreement and importance components, the items that constitute the components are not identical.

### Procedure

We recruited survey participants via standardized email invitations sent by administrative offices at the institutions.

### Table 2. Number of Participants, Number of Items, Cronbach’s Alphas, Means, and Standard Deviations for the ITCPS-F Agreement and Importance Scales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Scales</th>
<th>n</th>
<th># of items</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Effective Teaching</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Involvement around Teaching</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Effective Teaching</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Teaching</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Scales</th>
<th>n</th>
<th># of items</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Effective Teaching</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Effective Teaching</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Teaching</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 Number of participants varied due to missing data. 2 Two items which loaded on a fifth agreement scale were dropped from the analyses because they had a low Cronbach's alpha (i.e., .33). Participants rated their agreement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). 3 A substantially greater number of participants selected the "I prefer not to answer/I don't know" response for items on the Broad Involvement Around Teaching scale than items on the other agreement scales. This response was treated as missing data for all scales. 4 Participants rated importance from 1 (Not at all Important) to 5 (Very Important).

### Table 3. Definitions for the ITCPS-F Agreement and Importance Subscales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Subscales</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Effective Teaching</td>
<td>The institution creates an environment that is supportive of instructors engaging in high-quality pedagogical practices (e.g., reflective practice, scholarly teaching).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Involvement around Teaching</td>
<td>Members of the institution and larger community are involved in initiatives that foster instructors' development as teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Effective Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching excellence is acknowledged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching effectiveness is evaluated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(e.g., Human Resources) to all faculty members who were teaching a course in the winter 2014 term. Interested participants were entered into a draw for one of 36 $500 gift cards (12 for each of the three institutions). Participants’ email addresses and survey responses were stored in discrete databases to maintain confidentiality.

The research was submitted to and reviewed by each participating institution’s Human Research Ethics Board.

Data Analysis

To examine appointment differences (i.e., differences between tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty) in the four agreement and three importance subscales of the ITCPS-F, we performed a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAIs). To control for the possible influence of years of teaching experience, we conducted a series of hierarchical multiple regressions with years of teaching experience entered on the first step and appointment type on the second. The results of the regressions are consistent with the reported results of the ANOVAS.

Because of the large number of participants who completed the survey, it was possible that even a very small difference could be statistically significant. To address this issue, we calculated effect sizes to determine if the statistically significant differences are substantive in size. For the ANOVAs, the effect size we report is eta-squared. For eta-squared, Cohen (1988) indicates that an effect size of .20 is small, .50 is medium, and .80 is large.

Results

Agreement Ratings

There was a significant difference for only one of the four agreement scales. Participants differed significantly in their ratings of the Recognizing Effective Teaching scale of the ITCPS-F \(F(2, 463) = 13.3, p < .001, \text{eta-squared } = .05\). Specifically, sessional faculty members were less likely to agree that their institution recognized effective teaching than their tenured \((t(410) = 4.43, p < .001, d = .49)\) and tenure-track \((t(172) = 4.38, p < .001, d = .71)\) colleagues. Tenured and tenure-track faculty were not significantly different \((t(344) = -1.72, ns., d = -.25)\).

There were no significant differences based on appointment type for the other three agreement scales. For Broad Involvement around Teaching, the three groups of faculty members did not differ significantly \([F(2, 250) = 0.464, ns.\, \text{eta-squared } = .004]\). For Encouraging Effective Teaching, and Assessing Teaching, there were
violations of the assumption of homogeneity of variance [for Levene’s test for equality of variances, F(2, 340) = 4.15, p = .017 and F(2, 412) = 8.25, p < .001, respectively]. To address this issue, we performed a series of independent t-tests to examine appointment differences. None of these contrasts were significant. Tenured faculty members were no different in their ratings of Recognizing Effective Teaching and Assessing Teaching than their tenure-track [t(256) = -2.00, ns., d = -.25; t(58) = -1.86, ns., d = -.49] and sessional [t(129) = -0.37, ns., d = -.07; t(155) = -1.47, ns., d = -.24] colleagues. Tenure-track and sessional groups did not differ on these ratings either [t(122) = 1.27, ns., d = .23; t(151) = .78, ns., d = .13; see Table 4].

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the ITCPS-F Agreement Scales for Tenured, Tenure-track, and Sessional Faculty Members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Subscales</th>
<th>n1</th>
<th>Mean2</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Effective Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured faculty</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-track</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured faculty</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Involvement around Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-track</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured faculty</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Effective Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-track</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured faculty</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-track</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:1 Number of participants varied due to missing data. 2 Participants rated their agreement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Importance Ratings

There were significant differences based on appointment type for all three importance scales, with tenured faculty rating all three scales as less important than tenure-track and sessional instructors, who did not differ significantly from one another. Specifically, there was a significant difference for the importance rating of Encouraging Effective Teaching [F(2, 380) = 17.95, p < .001; eta-squared = .09]. Tenured faculty members rated Encouraging Effective Teaching of lesser importance than their tenure-track [t(274) = -2.00, p = .013, d = -.42] and sessional [t(335) = -5.80, p < .001, d = -.70] counterparts. Tenure-track and sessional faculty were not significantly different [t(151) = -1.66, ns., d = -.30] (see Table 5).

For Recognizing Effective Teaching and Assessing Teaching, there were violations of the assumption of homogeneity of variance [for Levene’s test for equality of variances, F(2, 408) = 7.37, p = .001 and F(2, 411) = 8.02, p < .001, respectively]. The t-tests we performed demonstrated that tenured faculty members rated Recognizing Effective Teaching and Assessing Teaching of lesser importance than their tenure-track [t(100) = -3.01, p = .003,
As predicted, we found there were significant differences between tenured, tenure-track, and sessional faculty members in how they perceived the teaching cultures at their institutions. Specifically, the tenured and tenure-track faculty were more likely to agree that their institutions rewarded effective teaching than their sessional colleagues. This is not surprising given that sessional faculty are typically paid less, have fewer employment benefits, and may not even have a separate office (Field et al., 2014). Also, many institutions in Canada have separate awards for sessional faculty and may exclude them from applying for some teaching awards. Further, as many sessional faculty members teach at multiple institutions, they may be less aware of the ways that their institutions recognize and support good teaching (e.g., appointment of teaching fellows).

Contrary to our predictions, no differences were evident between the three faculty groups in assessing teaching, encouraging effective teaching, and broad involvement in teaching (i.e. the other three agreement subscales). The agreement ratings subscales of the ITCS-F measure the extent to which faculty agreed that specific indicators of quality teaching were present at their institutions. We believe that one reason for the similarity between these three groups may be that, unlike rewarding effective teaching, as educators all three groups observe similar institutional indicators in these areas. For instance, there is a common institutional strategic plan and teaching effectiveness is assessed in a similar manner, regardless of appointment type. It may be that for assessing teaching, encouraging effective teaching, and broader involvement in teaching, universities have done a better job of leveling the playing field for the three groups of faculty members than they have for rewarding effective teaching.

More disconcerting for us is that based on the mean scores on these three subscales, all faculty were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing that these indicators were evident at their institutions. For quality teaching to occur, Hénard and Roseveare (2012) believe that it is important these indicators of quality teaching are prioritized. We would have hoped to see a stronger agreement that these indicators of quality teaching are present at every level of the professoriate.

Our hypotheses were partially supported in terms of appointment differences in importance of the teaching culture indicators. Supporting our prediction, tenured faculty consistently gave lower importance ratings than
their sessional and tenure-track colleagues. Contrary to
our prediction, there were no differences between ten-
ure-track and sessional faculty in importance ratings.
That is, tenured faculty were less likely than their col-
leagues to believe it is important for their universities
to place a high value on encouraging, recognizing, and
assessing effective teaching. This may reflect the impor-
tance placed on research output as opposed to teaching
at most research-intensive universities, particularly
after tenure has occurred (Bak & Kim, 2015). At least at
the promotion and tenure stage most universities place
some value on effective teaching, yet promotion is often
primarily focussed on the quality of research in the disci-
pline (Dennin et al., 2017). Dennin et al. (2017) also stat-
est that institutions with strong quality teaching cultures
department chairs who value and reward effective
teaching and emphasize the role of teacher as integral to
the role of faculty as scholars. Without such incentives,
tenured faculty are less likely to be motivated to enhance
their own teaching excellence and are more likely to fo-
cus their resources on research (Bak & Kim, 2015).

There are micro-cultures within and between depart-
ments and faculties and disseminating messages from
senior leadership to individual departments can help fa-
cilitate more conversations around—and emphasis on—
teaching and educational development (Major & Palmer,
2006; Mårtensson & Roxå 2016b). Often these discus-
sions are critical from a social learning perspective for in-
dividual faculty members to develop the social networks
where discussions about teaching and learning can oc-
cur (Kenbow & Lee, 2019; Wright, 2005). Kenbow and
Lee (2019) stress these discussions are critical as they
lead to improved professional practice of teaching and
therefore influence student learning outcomes. If faculty
are not in a supportive environment where discussions
around learning are likely to take place, there may be
a negative effect on implementing changes to enhance
institutional teaching culture. Lack of support by tenured
faculty for teaching related discussions will do little to en-
hance these crucial conversations.

In addition, as it is the tenured faculty who are the
primary institutional decision makers within their univer-
sities (Jones, 2013), including hiring, tenure, and promo-
tion decisions, the value they perceive their institution
places on teaching is likely to influence how they allocate
resources. This can impact any changes that might be
made to enhance teaching quality such as investing in in-
novative pedagogies. Individuals who do not believe their
teaching is valued by their institutions are not likely to be
concerned with enhancing their teaching effectiveness
or making significant teaching related contributions to
their universities (Bak & Kim, 2015). Dennin et al. (2017)
provide ideas for how we can shift the culture towards
one that values both high quality teaching and research
such as providing clear signals that teaching is important
including providing start up professional funds for teach-
ing related activities and clear metrics on how teaching
will be evaluated for new hires. The results of the current
study would suggest taking such steps is essential if we
wish to have quality teaching be more highly valued.

Tenured faculty have a large influence on the over-
all institutional culture and therefore, despite their large
number, sessional faculty are in the wake of their tenured
colleagues. Although both sessional and tenure-track
faculty in our study had significantly higher importance
ratings for encouraging, recognizing, and assessing
effective teaching than that of tenured faculty, the chal-
lenge of involving sessional faculty in teaching devel-

opment is ongoing. Field and Jones (2016) surveyed
sessional faculty in 12 Ontario universities and found
that when asked how the learning environment could be
improved the sessional faculty requested more avenues
to advance their pedagogical and technical skills through
opportunities to access their teaching and learning cen-
tres. As many sessional faculty members teach online,
off-campus, or at night, as well as often being employed
outside of the university (Tarr, 2010), providing such op-
portunities will require additional resources. However, as
sessional faculty they have little input into the budget al-
llocations within their institutions and if a quality teaching
culture is not highly valued it is unlikely those funding
needs will be a priority.

Implications of Findings
The results of this study demonstrate that the beliefs
about institutional teaching culture vary by appointment
type within the university. As Cox et al. (2011) noted, in-
stitutional teaching culture is driven by the members of
the culture having shared values. The results indicate
that the tenured faculty have a somewhat different set of
values than the tenure-track and sessional instructors. It
is worth considering whether this is the result of the po-

position level itself and the security of tenure or of the time
period that the cohort was hired and the expectations as
they entered higher education. If it is a difference due to
their role, targeted effort with tenured faculty may be one area of focus when working on an institution’s teaching culture (Dennin et al., 2017).

The results also indicate that for all three groups of educators there is a need to strengthen many of the institutional indicators that focus on teaching quality. One way that senior administrators can signal the importance of teaching is through the development of strategic plans that emphasize quality teaching and outline specific actions with mandatory deliverables to enhance teaching. One example of such a plan in Canada is the University of Calgary’s Integrated Framework for Teaching and Learning (n.d.). The goal of the framework is to enhance student success by supporting a plan that leads to student engagement and deep learning through the development of teaching expertise. It is this type of plan that could have positive influence on shifting institutional teaching culture at many other institutions (University of Calgary, n.d.).

Future Research

Although the current research investigated tenure-track, tenured, and sessional faculty, these are not necessarily homogenous groups. For example, tenured and tenure-track faculty who are hired into traditional faculty workloads may perceive their institutions’ teaching cultures differently than those hired into teaching stream positions. Similarly, sessional faculty can differ in their reasons for engaging in part-time work; some are part-time for voluntary reasons, such as specialists who have a full-time career somewhere else, whereas others may be part-time faculty but would prefer full-time positions (Maynard & Joseph, 2008; Tarr, 2010). Maynard and Joseph (2008) found that involuntary sessional academics had lower work satisfaction than their voluntary peers. These differences may impact their perceptions of the teaching culture. Similarly, future research could move beyond faculty roles to examine how demographic variables such as gender, racial, and/or discipline differences may exist in faculty’s perception of their institution’s teaching culture.

Finally, it will be important to determine differences in teaching culture based on the type of institution. The teaching culture is undoubtedly different in predominantly teaching institutions than in research-intensive universities like those in the present study, both of which may differ from the teaching culture at colleges and CEGEPs. To have a fuller understanding of faculty members’ perceptions of teaching culture it will be important to examine differences within appointment types, demographics, and institution types.

Conclusion

The results of our study extend previous research by examining how faculty with different appointments perceive their university’s teaching culture using a comprehensive measure of institutional teaching culture. We found that tenure-track and tenured faculty were more likely to believe that their university recognized and rewarded effective teaching than sessional faculty, and tenured faculty were likely to perceive recognizing, assessing, or encouraging effective teaching as less important compared to their tenure-track and sessional colleagues. As tenured faculty are the principal decision-makers within universities, it seems unlikely that significant resources will be allocated to improving the teaching culture within their universities without their support. In addition, sessional faculty are not as likely to feel a sense of belonging at their universities if their contributions to the institution are not valued or rewarded. Given the increasing number of sessional faculty within our higher education institutions, it is important to ensure that substantial effort is spent developing and sustaining the teaching culture. Finally, as teaching culture is critically related to student learning, it is essential that we continue to investigate teaching culture within higher education and how changes in practices can lead to a teaching climate that is valued by all faculty.

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