Taking teaching seriously

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ABSTRACT

Most universities claim their role as educators is taken seriously. But what observable activities occur in these institutions to substantiate the value of teaching? This reflective piece is based on our combined 75 years of experience at McMaster University, the University of Windsor, and the Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University). We consider approaches employed in the past to take teaching seriously and propose strategies all universities can use to increase the degree to which teaching is valued: (1) preparing potential university teachers; (2) investigating teaching abilities during hiring; (3) providing teaching resources; (4) ensuring the best teachers are known, celebrated, and rewarded; and (5) encouraging teachers to talk about the relationship between teaching and student learning. This chapter contributes to the anthology's goal of grappling with the ongoing challenges and opportunities universities have in valuing teaching and learning, situated within the past 50 years of McMaster's own journey.

KEYWORDS

valuing teaching, institutional change, hiring, professional development, recognition

Most Canadian universities claim they value their role as teachers of students. But what does this mean? What sorts of things happen in these institutions that make us say these claims are credible, or, conversely, that make them seem perhaps a bit of a stretch? The authors reflect on over 75 years of combined direct experience promoting teaching and learning, beginning together at McMaster University's Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL). Collectively, we have served in many leadership positions and witnessed a period of tremendous growth in the field of educational development in Canada locally, provincially, and nationally between 1979 and 2022 (a history of educational development at McMaster is outlined in chapter 5 by de Bie et al., 2022). Our academic backgrounds include philosophy, psychology, and education. Working closely together for 10 years as colleagues, at no point did we run out of questions to ask ourselves and others.

We reflect here on our experiences and recollections, aided by having worked at multiple institutions now. In what follows, we will try to make clear what valuing teaching might mean in the Canadian university context. This exercise can provide us with a concrete list of programs and actions that communicate what it is to value teaching. To value something is to prize it and consider it of worth and of importance and as something intrinsically valuable (Barber, 2001).

Our efforts are not without precedent. After working as a social and environmental psychologist, Chris Knapper, a Queen's University professor, focused on research and writing about strategies for enhancing teaching and learning in higher education settings and on ways of leading change in university teaching. Known as the father of educational development in Canada, he edited a book in 1977 titled *If Teaching Is Important . . .*: *The Evaluation of Instruction in Higher Education* wherein various authors explored the implications of evaluating teaching and, in particular, the need to do so. Functions that are perceived to be of value in universities are typically evaluated. To ensure learning has taken place, students are evaluated. To determine if funding should be granted, research is evaluated. Thus in 1977, to evaluate teaching was to begin to recognize its worth, importance, and value.

Additionally, the 3M Teaching Fellows of 1991, a group of instructors awarded national recognition for their teaching excellence, published an open letter to Canadian university presidents identifying activities and programs universities could implement to demonstrate the importance of their teaching function (Ahmad et al., 1991). The fellows' suggestions were specific, based on activities already occurring in at least one university, and many Canadian universities created new programs prompted by those suggestions (McMaster's own President's Teaching Awards were a direct consequence of that initiative). The suggestions were, after all, examples of things that already took place in at least one university—they were, in a word, feasible.

More recently, a team of researchers from nine Canadian universities identified six indicators that a university values teaching. Namely, that institutional strategic initiatives and practices prioritize effective teaching, that assessment of teaching is constructive and flexible, that effective teaching is implemented, that infrastructure exists to support teaching, that broad engagement occurs around teaching, and that effective teaching is recognized and rewarded (Centre for Teaching and Learning, 2019; Shaw et al., 2019).

The effort put into exploring how teaching is valued can pay off in at least two ways. It can provide a quick check on the degree to which we can say our universities value teaching, and it can provide examples of specific programs and activities all universities can use to increase the degree to which teaching is valued.

Suppose we say a particular university values teaching, or again, takes teaching seriously. Based on our experience, what sorts of things would we expect to find? This list was generated through many years of discussion and reflection with colleagues and summarizes experience informed through practice and research. A university that values teaching:

1. prepares potential university teachers (graduate students), contract instructors, and new faculty members by providing an opportunity to learn about and practice teaching

in a supported environment
2. investigates the teaching abilities of candidates applying for teaching jobs at the university and requires demonstration of skills as a job requirement
3. provides teaching resources including space, equipment, technical support, and funds to support and further develop teaching skills
4. ensures the best teachers are well known, celebrated, and rewarded
5. encourages individual teachers to talk about the relationship between what they do as teachers and student learning

This list is far from complete, and no one item is definitive or sufficient on its own, but it is a starting point. And we would be skeptical of any institution claiming to take teaching seriously yet demonstrating none of the items listed here.

ELABORATION OF THE LIST: UNIVERSITIES THAT TAKE TEACHING SERIOUSLY:

1. Prepare potential university teachers (graduate students), contract instructors, and new faculty members by providing an opportunity to learn about and practice teaching in a supported environment

Future faculty are prepared

During the 5 to 9 years professors spend in graduate school before taking their position, most take from six to 12 graduate courses in their discipline. How many courses help them prepare to teach? Usually none. Yet, engaging in professional development in graduate school prior to an academic career does not harm research productivity and can enhance research success for graduate students (Shortlidge & Eddy, 2019). Additionally, faculty who had training before their first professorial position are more likely to be successful overall (Sutherland, 2018). Removing the challenge of learning to teach while simultaneously establishing a research/scholarship program in a new role helps support faculty, reduce stress, and enhance productivity. Thus, it is important for universities to consider teaching responsibilities of worth, importance, and value by adequately preparing the next generation of faculty for teaching.

A place to start is by providing graduate students with the opportunity to take at least one graduate course in teaching at the university level. Many Canadian universities offer credit and/or non-credit courses in teaching (Verkoeyen & Allard, 2020). Graduate students are free to take such courses, which typically include both theory (including courses, for example, that explore such question as “what is learning?”) and practice of basic teaching skills (e.g., managing discussions, designing a course, etc.). Unfortunately, these courses are generally not required, are not typically taught within departments or in ways which would enable a focus on discipline specific teaching skills, nor are they typically advertised or included in the list of elective courses that can be taken for credit towards a particular graduate degree. Students taking these courses are, in essence, taking them as additional, optional courses requiring going above the typical workload. What does this communicate about the value of these courses within any given department?

When we take teaching seriously, we give the next generation of faculty an opportunity

to practice teaching with support and feedback. The range of possibilities is broad, including courses, campus-wide workshops, an opportunity to present guest lectures in an undergraduate course (with feedback from the instructor), an opportunity to be mentored by a faculty member charged with developing a new course in the department, and the offer of a teaching assistantship, which requires the graduate student to lead a discussion group or laboratory for a term or to grade undergraduate student work for a term.

This last item (teaching assistantships) needs further elaboration, since it is a common practice at Canadian universities and is generally a squandered opportunity. Graduate students are frequently offered teaching assistantships as a source of income to support students financially. Teaching assistants are rarely given clear instructions as to goals and strategies for teaching, provided an opportunity to practice prior to the start of term, or provided with feedback. There is no explicit plan for skill development in the role, so whatever happens in the first term of the role tends to become the foundation for all subsequent attitudes and teaching behaviour (according to most instructors we have worked with). The opportunity to develop as a guided apprentice is lost.

The best campuses have examples of taking this apprenticeship model seriously. One department, English at McMaster, offered a program in professional development which included development for teaching and a mentoring process on the teaching role. In the latter, individual graduate students were paired with a mentor who shaped a progressively challenging series of teaching activities, which culminated in an undergraduate course designed and taught by the candidate in their final year. The culture of the department was such that if the opportunity was offered, it was quickly taken up. And, of course, the student's progress was monitored, coached, and acknowledged in a detailed letter of reference upon graduation. Based on our work with PhD graduates of the program over the years, they highly valued their teaching role and continued to be successful teachers years later.

Contract staff are provided with guidance

At many institutions, contract staff teach a large proportion of students. Yet people teaching on short contracts are often working in difficult contexts, frequently without the resources of tenured or permanent instructors (Sabourin, 2021). When joining an institution that takes teaching seriously you see very practical actions to support contract instructors. Expectations are clearly communicated. Continuity is possible because information about how a course has been taught previously is available, including what preparation should be expected from prerequisites and how the course fits into the overall curriculum. A list of the intended course learning outcomes is provided, as well as the areas in which students experience challenges. Coaching and support are also available.

The development of new faculty is valued

In a university that takes teaching seriously, new faculty members are coached and supported within their department. The department is interested in ensuring new faculty members succeed in all ways, including in teaching. A program is in place to help new faculty members build the skills required to successfully bring about learning and monitor their own progress. All new faculty participate in the program, and it is phased to account for entry-level

skills and other responsibilities such as scholarship and service. Faculty are not expected to be entertainers but are expected to demonstrate an ability to structure learning experiences to produce learning.

2. Investigate the teaching abilities of candidates applying for all teaching jobs at the university and require demonstration of teaching skills as a job requirement

Most Canadian universities ask applicants to submit a written application for an advertised job. For example, application packages for tenure-track positions are fairly standard: cover letter, extended curriculum vitae (CV), research/scholarship plans, and reference contacts. Research experience and accomplishments are therefore always requested (as they appear in a CV), while detailed teaching experience and accomplishments (as identified in a teaching dossier) are not. Applicants might include parts of this information in their CV, but for our purposes, failure to specifically request it communicates it is a low priority in the hiring process.

Those universities/departments that take teaching seriously require candidates to submit a current teaching dossier as part of their application (Wong et al., 2020). A good dossier will be written authentically, capturing the accurate representation of the individual, and will include a teaching philosophy statement from the candidate, a list of courses they have taught, and unique courses designed, together with feedback from students. Additional topics related to ways of integrating equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), reconciliation, and/or accessibility in teaching can be included as genuine representations of the individual. Further evidence, such as letters from colleagues who have reviewed the applicant's teaching, as well as independent evidence of development in the teaching role and any teaching awards received, can be included. In short, by requesting submission of a teaching dossier, the hiring department makes it clear that teaching well is an important part of the advertised job and that teaching qualifications will have a significant impact on the hiring process. Sadly, this part of the hiring process has rarely been present, even though teaching dossiers (sometimes called teaching portfolios) have been around and in use in Canada for at least the last 30 years (Shore et al., 1986).

Once a candidate is offered an interview, the hiring process is communicated. The candidate is notified as to the purpose and schedule of activities for the visit. A research/ scholarship talk is common. Departments that value the teaching role may add an opportunity to teach, such as a seminar for undergraduates open to interested department members as observers. Candidates are interviewed and asked questions about their current research/ scholarship interests but are also asked for their ideas of how students learn best and how their teaching experience has informed these beliefs. Students are, of course, well represented on the hiring committee. Successful applicants demonstrate interest and a comfort level in discussing teaching strategies with colleagues, as well as their current research and scholarship. They seem interested in helping a range of students learn, not just the best and the brightest.

During the interview visit, the department invites candidates to engage directly with students—both undergraduate and graduate. One or two students accompany the prospective faculty member to venues, meetings with key people, and informal meals. Soliciting the

opinions of participating students is important in determining the student perspective. Collegiality is another important element. This involves determining the degree to which the candidate is willing and able to engage with prospective colleagues about learning strategies, tools, and potential collaborative work in areas of shared interest. Collegiality in this way enables public and regular conversations (identified in strategy 5). Through these engagements, candidates need to be asked questions about teaching and the best of them will produce thoughtful, personal, and passionate responses. Any candidate will leave such a department with a clear idea that teaching is valued by the department and that teaching will be an important part of their work.

3. Provide teaching resources including space, equipment, technical support, and funds to support and further develop teaching skills

It is difficult to teach well without the necessary tools. The first requirement for effective teaching and learning is a suitable space for students to learn, and that space influences the student perception of whether teaching is valued. Many elements contribute to a suitable learning space, but the most essential is a range of options—from small seminar rooms with moveable furniture to large theatre rooms with good sightlines and acoustics, all of which are fully accessible for both the students and instructors. Years ago, the chair of McMaster's University Committee on Teaching and Learning, Dr. Hitchcock, asked colleagues what they needed in their teaching space (Emberley, 1980; Hitchcock, 1980). He then composed a checklist and worked with colleagues and committee members to review all of McMaster's classrooms. This resulted in a list of over a hundred necessary changes, the preparation of a budget, and the delegation of responsibility for addressing these needed changes over 3 years. Over a hundred improvements were accomplished, from raising a floor to changes to lighting and even the wholesale replacement of furniture. You might be surprised to find what's needed: inquiry courses[1] that are question driven work best when there is no obvious front to the classroom; quick access to the outdoors for an Indigenous studies course; hallways packed with chalkboards near mathematics classrooms, and so on. A tour of campus learning spaces quickly reveals the degree to which the campus takes teaching and learning seriously.

Teaching well might require very special equipment and technical support. Most classrooms require the ability to display information and control lighting, but some instructors teach in ways that require more specialized equipment—laboratories and art studios are obvious examples, but instructors and students are in the best position to say what is needed. Moveable furniture provides the most flexible option for small classes: moveable tables and chairs can be arranged in a square, a circle, or a U shape and can be front-facing and even folded up and removed to provide open space for a group simulation. Larger classes might require more digital support such as media displays, theatre-quality sound, microphones, and student response software to regularly solicit fast, visible student feedback (a digital way of accurately replacing raised hands). Fast internet connections may be needed to facilitate digital contact with participants in other locations and the easy ability to share material. Equipment requires ongoing maintenance and renewal, and faculty need an opportunity to learn what is

available and how to use it to enhance learning. Most important, instructors need to be able to match their needs to available classroom space, which requires a descriptive inventory of available space and coordination with the registrar's office so that it is possible to request the appropriate space with transparent processes to address competing demands.

Facilitating student learning in multiple geographic and virtual locations illustrates how important it is to anticipate technology changes that require providing faculty assistance in developing flexible course designs and assistance for students in various locations, whether due to online engagement or additional physical campuses. Regular and prompt feedback to students becomes even more important when students have reduced access to colleagues and instructors as they may have in an online environment or when dispersed to satellite campuses. Evolving needs for space and equipment are endless, but most universities have a very able cadre of professionals who provide support for the technology.

So far, we have not spoken of providing financial support for teaching and learning, and yet, historically, support through grants is a very common practice at Canadian universities, and faculty have indicated to us that grants are one of the most appreciated programs any university can offer (such as reported in Wright et al., 2014). Fifty years ago, the Ontario Universities' Program for Instructional Development (OUPID) offered a province-wide program to stimulate new initiatives in teaching and learning. The program invited universities to request funding for projects. Several Ontario universities proposed programs and small offices to support their teaching and learning initiatives. (McMaster University's own teaching and learning centre received a founding grant at that time—see the chapter by de Bie et al., 2022, on the history of the centre in this publication; also see Elrick, 1990; Main et al., 1975.) These grants were not limited to campus-wide initiatives. Don Woods, a chemical engineering professor at McMaster, received a grant to study the complete undergraduate program in his department, which involved personally taking all program courses. He was shocked to discover problem-solving was not actually taught as part of the curriculum, though it was an expectation of all graduates. The result was a lifelong commitment to fully understand how students learn to solve problems and a career teaching problem-solving skills to undergraduates. He shared everything he learned with colleagues, both at McMaster, and worldwide (see Woods, 2011). One grant to one instructor had over 30 years of impact on one program and influenced engineering programs around the world, as captured by Richard Felder (2016).

A university that cares about teaching and learning will offer grants to instructors and students to support their efforts to enhance teaching and learning. The grants can be small to offer quick support for a one-off field trip or attendance at a conference on teaching. Larger amounts can be offered in an annual competition and provide enough funds to substantially alter the learning in a course, or better still, a program of study, or to conduct serious research to identify changes needed to enhance learning. A small pot of money offered consistently over time can result in significant changes to courses and programs, all initiated by individual faculty in consultation with their students. For example, Wright et al. (2014) studied small teaching and learning grants as examples of embedded educational leadership opportunities. The group found the grants had a demonstrated impact on students, courses, and programs, as well as the faculty themselves. Examples such as the one studied and the work done by recipients clearly

communicate that teaching is important and that the institution supports efforts to do it well. These successful grant programs are very common in Canadian universities.

Universities that are very serious about teaching go one step further. Every university mounts a fundraising campaign every few years. Universities serious about teaching ensure the campaign includes several high-priority teaching and learning initiatives. Individual donors with an interest in creative teaching initiatives are deliberately sought and projects matching their interests are presented to them. The results can have a significant impact even if only two or three (of a value of one to three million dollars each) are funded. This is not a hard sell—since teaching and learning are just what donors think the university is all about. The key is a creative transformational project that is more than business as usual, then getting the attention of the current campaign team. At McMaster, examples of projects funded through this process include the integration of inquiry based learning into Year-1 courses (funded by the J.W. McConnell Foundation in 1999) (Cuneo et al., 2012); the 1999 opening of the Learning Technologies Resource Centre that offered support to faculty trying to use technology to enhance student learning (funded by the Royal Bank of Canada); and an early 2000s (~2002–2006) departmental grant program (up to $100,000 per grant) supporting individual academic departments to revise their curriculum in terms of how students learn (funded by Imperial Oil) (see further details in de Bie et al., 2022, in this volume). In each of these projects, the amount raised was substantial and spread out over several years, and none of it was possible without the support of a major fundraising campaign.

How do we know if a university takes teaching seriously? They put serious money and other support at the disposal of faculty who want to enhance learning on their campus. These include, but are not limited to, space, equipment, technical support, and grants.

4. Ensure the best teachers are well known, celebrated, and rewarded

An institution that values teaching will know who the good teachers are, how and why they are good teachers, and they will celebrate and reward those teachers. One way to do this is to publicly identify and celebrate the great teachers on campus through an awards program.[2] These institutions will cast the net of award criteria broadly to include different aspects of exceptional teaching, such as in-class work with students, course design, mentoring fellow teachers, curriculum review and revision, educational leadership working with colleagues on teaching projects, and successful scholarship in teaching, among other aspects (see Roy, 1998). In some cases, the teaching aspects in the mentoring role faculty have with undergraduate or graduate students engaged in research is also included in the award criteria, connecting research and teaching elements of faculty roles

When we value these activities by identifying them, we also say something quite specific about the complexity of teaching and what it means to do it well. As faculty prepare their teaching dossiers and receive feedback from experienced educational developers and peers, the intricacies of what might have been initially described in a teaching dossier or CV as “I created a new course” becomes much more visible and detailed:

I utilized the university’s ability to grab global television signals to develop a student-

> directed course aimed at the question: What constitutes news in a range of countries from around the world? Entry to the course required fluency in a language other than English and a willingness to meet regularly in the summer to refine this research question. The expectation was that the resulting research would be published. (Quote from an award-winning Teaching Dossier)

Or again, "I did a little curriculum work" becomes,

> I surveyed every Canadian university nursing program using a detailed questionnaire (which I developed and tested), to determine the scope of an undergraduate degree in nursing, published the results, championed changes to the department's programs, and evaluated the resulting changes over a period of 3 years. (Quote from an award-winning Teaching Dossier)

When we acknowledge specific teaching activities publicly and in some detail, we benefit not just award candidates but the community at large as everyone gains new models, sees different approaches, and understands ways to advance through existing complex situations. Celebrations can include a publicly presented prize, an open grant in support of teaching, and a chance to present one's pedagogical work on campus, orally or in writing. Several universities, including McMaster, Western University, and the University of Guelph, among many others, have created a wall of honour to publicly recognize their most accomplished teachers. The Teaching Wall of Honour at McMaster University (located in Gilmour Hall) usually includes a description of the teaching award, the most recent recipient's photo, and a list of all past recipients.

Another mechanism for rewarding great teaching is through the existing structures that reward faculty, such as promotion and tenure, salary, and other forms of recognition. In too many institutions, there is really only one path to promotion and tenure, through evaluation of research productivity. This needs to change if teaching is to be truly valued at Canadian universities. Some universities like McMaster have attempted to solve this issue by creating a new category of faculty position called teaching professors. Though this provides an alternative path to promotion and tenure with an emphasis on one's teaching rather than research accomplishments, it leaves open the possibility that such professors are perceived to be of lesser value.[3] An alternative would be to revise the evaluation criteria for all faculty, such that these rewards of promotion and tenure can be gained by meeting a well-defined standard of teaching *and* research. What sorts of things do exceptional researchers do? And similarly, what sorts of things do exceptional teachers do? Strong performance in both sets of activities could result in tenure; however, promotion to full professor could be reserved for exceptional performance in either domain. In the last 50 years, we have learned a lot about exceptional performance in teaching, from Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles of effective teaching to Kuh et al.'s (2017) high-impact practices (HIPs) and Wieman's (2019) studies on effective teaching. It is time to use that knowledge to reward exceptional performance through the existing reward structure.

Salaries should also reflect contributions in both teaching and research. Many universities have a structure for adjusting salaries based on performance, merit, or a similar adjustment of salary based on an annual review. Our experience suggests department chairs make a reasonable effort to reward good teaching through this mechanism, balancing contributions to teaching and to research equally. Historically, chairs simply combine the two scores together and divide by two; however, simply averaging scores has historically favoured researchers. This occurs because of a mathematical complexity that happens when you try and combine scores with different ranges. Research scores often have a larger range compared to teaching scores, and therefore research is unwittingly favoured (and consistently so as long as the range of research scores remains larger). To avoid this difficulty, chairs need to normalize the data prior to combining the scores.

Balancing the efforts of researchers and teachers must be based on clear contributions, as evidenced in a research curriculum vitae and a teaching dossier/portfolio. Taking teaching seriously partly means regularly asking how you are valuing and rewarding the teaching activities on campus.

5. Have individual teachers talking about the relationship between what they do as teachers and student learning

Imagine bumping into a colleague in the hallway. Do you talk about teaching? about learning? If you do, is it typically positive or negative? In an institution that values teaching, two important elements are usually present: there are lots of conversations about teaching and learning, and, perhaps more important, the discussants see a connection between teaching and learning with a focus on how teaching brings about the learning. It is not only important to consider the frequency of conversations but also the content. In 1995, Barr and Tagg articulated the paradigm shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. This does not mean instructors should stop thinking about their own teaching, but it does mean the thinking does not stop there. Teaching is important to the extent it can bring about learning. Could learning occur without grades (such as at Alberto College; see Allen, 2016). In both formal and informal conversations and exchanges, is the focus only on delivery or is it also on learning?

What is learning in a university environment? This is a powerful question since, after all, learning is what universities are paid to bring about. Is an accurate recall of what instructors have stated in class sufficient? Or are we looking for insight and reflection, prioritizing deep over surface learning (Biggs & Tang, 2007)? At the very least, learning is a change in an individual that is relatively permanent and not the consequence of some inevitable natural process (like cellular growth, for example). This would seem to require both a pre-test and a post-test, and yet we continue to rely on post-tests alone to verify that learning has taken place, and we very rarely measure the permanence of learning. Conversations among individuals and conversations at the institutional level need to be grounded in data collected on these topics. These activities are important for an institution that values both teaching and learning.

At an individual level, conversations about teaching and learning bring the often private act of teaching into a more public arena. This enables the sharing of good strategies, mentoring,

and problem-solving and can help instructors realize they are not alone in facing challenges. Speaking about the value of teaching in public declares it worthy of effort and time. There are other ways of talking about teaching and learning that are more formal than a hallway conversation. Courses can be team-taught, where individual instructors come together to consider how the course will be taught. If done well, latent assumptions about learning are laid bare, and the team can consider the objective of their efforts and strategies for helping students get there (e.g., Maurer, 2007). These conversations work best if team discussions are amicable, constructive, provocative, and do not require conforming behaviour on the part of the team members, since no specific teaching strategy works for everyone.

At a departmental level, when teaching is valued, it becomes a regular item on the department agenda. Seminars, guest lecturers, and workshops on teaching and learning in the discipline are offered in the department. A glance at the list of seminars offered in the department will confirm this happens. The same can be said for faculty-wide or campus-wide events. Do speakers provoke conversations about learning and about creative ways of bringing it about? How common are these events and do they attract a broad range of instructors and/or students? Do instructors have regular opportunities to learn new strategies for teaching that promise more or better learning by students? At the institutional level, are deep teaching conversations held at meetings like senate or hosted by the university president?

Finally, these conversations are not restricted to campus. Conversations can include industry, professionals, and Indigenous, diverse, and local communities. Broad engagement and conversations help to clarify different perspectives on teaching and learning, identifying gaps and places for growth.

WHERE NEXT?

Our list is clearly not exhaustive. (We started with a much longer list.) We have not touched on all the possible, important ways of valuing teaching. It is too easy to just tick boxes, tally publications, and not pursue the fundamental purpose of an educational institution—to bring about learning and to know how this happens. There is evidence, some of which we've referred to here, that McMaster has been engaged in a number of these ways of valuing teaching in the past 50 years. As the MacPherson Institute commemorates 50 years and embarks on the next 50, we encourage attention on a larger cultural change in the university's valuing of teaching and learning—more effort is needed. The next steps include being intentional and scholarly at institutional levels and, beyond that, at national levels—focusing not just on metrics and targets but effectiveness at our core mission of facilitating learning. We need to examine what we are doing, gather feedback about the impact, reflect on the findings as a community, and then apply our findings as part of a constant refinement and enhancement process. We can start by imagining what a university that values teaching would look like 50 years from now and then working hard to create it.

NOTES

1. Inquiry courses are question driven. They teach students the skills to identify an important

researchable question, identify and use resources to learn from, communicate clearly about their findings, and to self-evaluate their process.
2. See, for example, the 2022 nomination guidelines for the 3M National Teaching Fellowship (Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 2022).
3. The issue of teaching professors, especially given their history and increasing prominence at McMaster, warrants a more substantial discussion that is outside the scope of this chapter.

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