

Discussion of “Teaching-Track Economists - A Canadian Perspective”

Jonathan Graves

Vancouver School of Economics
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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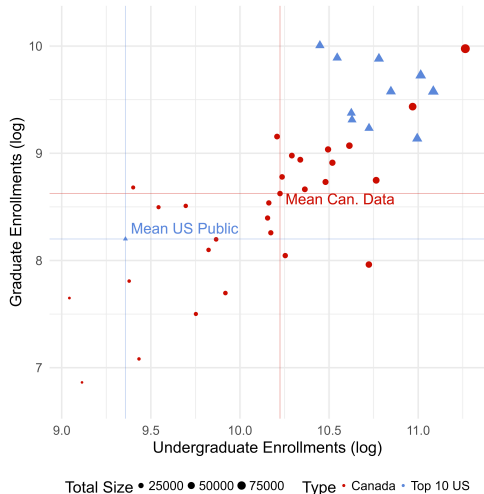


Motivation

“We hope our findings raise the question of why [a uniquely Canadian] model has emerged.” (Murdock and Cohen (2024))

- I am going to highlight some of the key facts from this paper that point to why Canada has a unique teaching-track (TT) model.

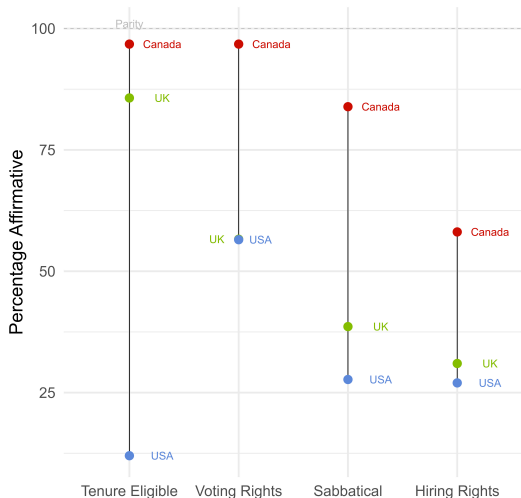
Fact 1: Canadian Institutions are Large



- Canadian universities in this data are huge.
- They are more similar to the largest US schools than a typical US school.

Figure 1: Comparison of total enrollments in Canadian data and largest US schools.¹

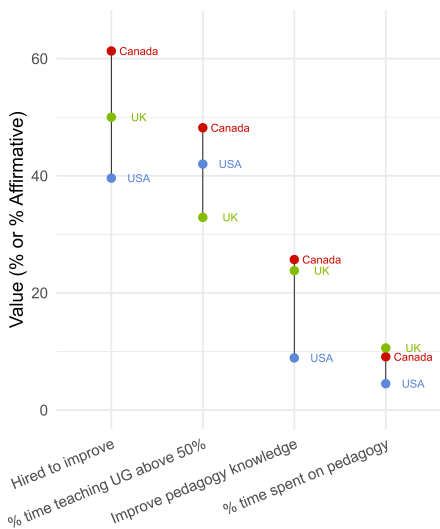
Fact 2: Canadian Teaching-Track \cong Research Track



- Canadian TT faculty are much **more similar to RT** faculty than in the US or UK.
- Is this reflected in higher salaries? \rightarrow public data?

Figure 2: Comparison of TT rights with RT rights.²

Fact 3: Canadian TT Face Different Demands



- Canadians teach mostly **undergraduates** and lots of them.
- Hired (and spend time) on **improvement**.
 - Quality of teaching.
 - Pedagogy and pedagogical skills.

Figure 3: Comparison of TT job characteristics.³

Comparative Advantage

*“An important theme to emerge from the interviews is a sense of potential **gains from specialization**, which could motivate hiring.” (Arico et al. (2024))*

- This paper points out that the Canadian model is more a story of **comparative advantage**.
- For economists, this is second nature but it's not obvious!
- It contributes a re-examination of the literature⁴ which sees this as a conflict between finances, learning, and equity.

Next Steps

For this paper, including **more contextual and institutional facts** would be help provide a richer framework, especially in the future.

- Other countries.
- Contextual information (e.g., salaries).
- Models.

Notes

¹Data as of 2022, from Universities Canada (2023), IPED Education Statistics (2023), school websites.

²Data from Murdock and Cohen (2024)

³Data from Murdock and Cohen (2024) and Arico et al. (2024)

⁴Rawn and Fox (2018), Baldwin and Chronister (2001)

References

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