



PLAR in Universities?

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Not?



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Not?
Or not yet...



PLAR in Universities: State of the Field

- Little headway in having PLAR widely accepted in universities in Canada (Kennedy, 2003)
- Same situation in other parts of the world
 - UK
 - Australia
 - South Africa

What do we know about why PLAR not accepted?

- Reports talk about concern re: quality control, time, money
- Mostly based on opinions of administrators
- Little information from professors themselves





Professors as Learners?

- Haven't yet learned about PLAR?
- Slow learners? Resistant learners?
- What would an adult educator do?
- Try to understand the learners' perspective!

Who is the average Canadian University Professor?

- Average age was 49 in 2000 (AUCC, 2000)
- Started careers in 1970s
- Many now thinking about retirement, rather than innovations like PLAR
- Most have only experiential learning about teaching
 - Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education started in 1981; constitution adopted in 1998
 - UBC's teaching centre started in 1987
 - Queen's in 1992
 - Carleton U teaching centre in 2002





The life of a university professor?

- Many have little work experience outside of the university
- “What was your career path to your present position?”
 - I got a Ph.D. in my field and went directly to a job at a university.”

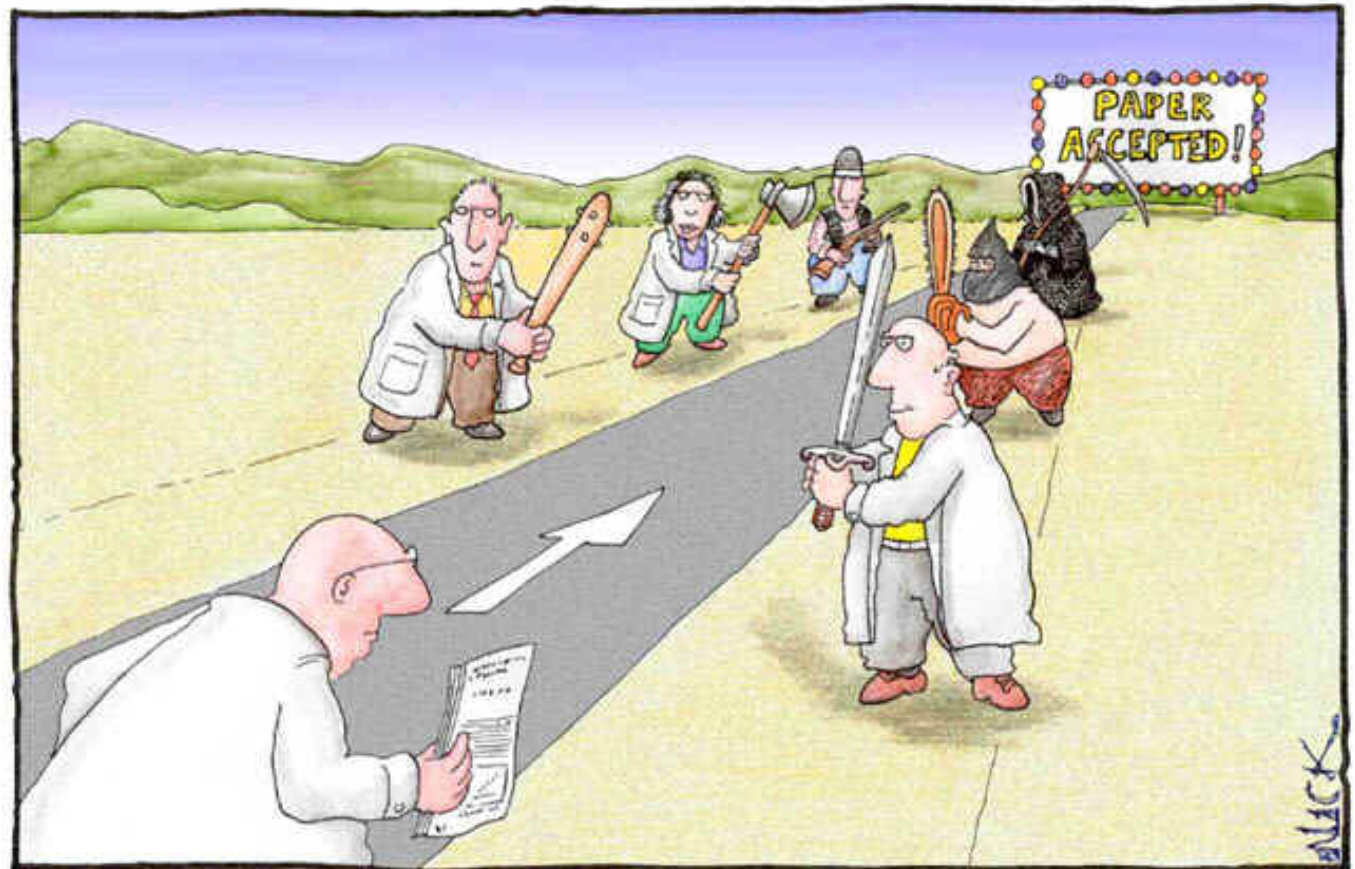
(<http://www.jobprofiles.org/eduunimath.htm>)

The life of a university professor?

- Research is the focus!
- Basis for tenure, promotion



<http://www.aip.org/pt/vol-56/iss-2/p54.html>



Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'

Life of a University Professor?

- "What's it really like to have your job?" Instead of responding with: "Do you like teaching?" they all asked: "Do you like to write?" That's what...a professor is expected to do, and teaching is simply "a bonus." <http://www.collegejournal.com/careerpaths/findcareerpath/20031128-mehler.html>
- "For most faculty members...discussions about teaching and learning tend to be fugitive affairs." (Huber, 2002. p. 25)



Learning & Assessment of Learning

- Profs are subject matter experts, not learning and assessment experts
- PLAR premises not meaningful if don't understand learning and assessment





Cause for optimism?

- 11,000 new faculty in next few years (about 1/3 of full-time professors) (Queen's Alumni Review, Fall, 2005)
- University teaching centres' courses for grad students, new faculty
- Recruitment ads feature requests for "teaching portfolio"
- Opportunity to inform new professoriate?



Next Steps?

- PLAR outreach to University teaching centres
- Need more academic publications on PLAR
- Articles on PLAR in university publications
 - University Affairs
 - Alumni magazines (stimulate demand for post-grad PLAR)



PLAR in Universities?

- Not yet...
- But maybe soon!