INTRODUCTION, METHODS, AND UBC DATA

BACKGROUND:

In 2013 a study of faculty retirement at UBC was conducted through the office of the Senior Advisor to the Provost on Women Faculty[1]. The purpose of the project was to examine the various contributing factors shaping faculty retirement for men and women in an attempt understand observed gender differences in retirement patterns. Furthermore, the study considered the multiple factors that influence decisions related to retirement of faculty at UBC, both for faculty who choose to retire and for those who choose to continue working.

A preliminary analysis of UBC faculty appointment termination data for those 55 and above suggested that there may be differences in the ages at which male and female faculty retired, in both the period where mandatory retirement was in effect, and in the post-mandatory retirement period after 2007. The significance of both quantifying and understanding differences is heightened, given the findings from a recent report by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), "As mandatory retirement laws have been rescinded in a number of provinces in recent years, the proportion of fulltime university teachers in Canada, employed as teachers beyond the common retirement age of 65, has more than quadrupled between 2001 and 2011, to 5.1%". The report goes on to state that 8.3% of male fulltime university teachers are now 65 or older while only 3.8% of fulltime female university teachers are over 65 (CAUT, 2012-2013[2]).

We also wished to compare the experiences of retired/retiring faculty with non-retired faculty aged 55 or older to determine if there were differences between these groups. Given that the literature shows that no one factor can completely explain trends in faculty retirement, the proposed study examined retirement as multifactorial. As indicated by Dorfman (2000)[3], there are different factors to be considered: personal/individual factors, professional/climate factors, and institutional/policy factors. This informed the research questions on which the interview questions and online survey were based: i) What personal, professional and institutional factors affect the retirement decisions of Faculty at UBC? To what extent is gender a shaping factor; ii) Do the current UBC retirement plan(s)/policy shape retirement decisions; and, iii) How do the results of this study compare with other research on faculty retirement?

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[1] With BREB approval, H12-03435

[2] http://www.caut.ca/docs/almanac/2012-2013-caut-almanac-of-post-secondary-education-in-canada.pdf

[3] Dorfman, L.T. (2000) Still Working After Age 70: Older Professors in Academe. Educational Gerontology, 26:8, 695-713.

The interviews and online survey responses then shaped the four key themes of the report:
1) Personal experience in the process leading to retirement
2) Contributing elements in the decision or approach to retirement
3) Quality of and activities in retirement
4) Views on retirement policies and processes at UBC

Information gleaned from this study has the potential to benefit current and future faculty by providing current data on faculty retirement, by contributing to knowledge about the issues, experiences and needs of UBC's professoriate, and by making recommendations that will support faculty, both those retiring and those continuing to work. Additionally, as the literature review shows, age and rank at retirement confound with gender and this will be important if we are to accurately map the landscape of faculty retirement at UBC.

The lifting of mandatory retirement in 2007 has naturally impacted retirement processes and demographics. Most notably, retirements are no longer tied to the age of 65. Nevertheless, given the historical significance of the age of 65, the use of this age in some retirement guides, and the common age of retirement used in the CAUT study mentioned above, some of the results in this study are reported in that context.

We also note that there are a number of areas of collaboration between UBC and the Association of Professors Emeriti. These are briefly summarized in the Executive Summary, and we do not discuss them further here.

LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY: (for full literature review and bibliography, please see online literature review)
Research on retirement among university faculty is limited and within this literature, the influence of gender on retirement rates and experiences is relatively understudied while other intersections of marginalization are largely absent (i.e. race, class, sexuality, disability). Moreover, in the North American literature, most is written from a US perspective with few studies conducted on Canadian institutions. According to retirement scholars, this lack of research depth is largely due to a lack of suitable data (Worswick, 2005; Tizard and Owen 2001). Research on faculty attitudes towards retirement and post-retirement activity are characterized by low response rates, small sample sizes, and are often limited to single US schools (Tizard and Owen, 2001) making the study of exit behavior across gender lines difficult. Broadly speaking, research on North American university retirement can be separated into two categories: 1) research on the impact of low retirement rates on Universities in a post-mandatory retirement era; and 2) research examining the *experiences* and perceptions of university faculty who are preparing for, are already retired, or who have chosen not to retire

from tenured faculty positions. Again, while few of these studies explicitly examine gender as a variable shaping retirement decisions, a number produce results that point to gender specific differences in the data.

Within this literature, the key findings are: (1) retirement and early retirement rates of women are higher than for men (Tizard and Owen, 2001); (2) mandatory retirement has had less impact on women's retirement rates than men's (women continue to demonstrate a higher rate) (Worswick, 2005); and (3) gender is confounded by age and rank in the data that produce differences in the factors influencing women's retirement (Tizard and Owen, 2001). These factors include policy, sometimes difficult working climates, negative interactions with coworkers, lack of support for research, administrative pressures, greater likelihood of caring for a spouse or parent, and other interests. While in some studies, this combination of gender, age, and rank is observed for certain factors, Lozier and Dooris (1991) and Sugar, Pruitt, Anstee, and Harris, (2005) give significant results by gender. Several studies (Dorfman, 2002; Sugar et al., 2005; Worswick & Warman 2010) also found that women who continue to work are more likely to be single and to have no children. Lozier and Dooris further state "The results of this study clearly showed that, perhaps as expected, money, as a factor in the retirement decision, matters to nearly everyone" and "… even when there were statistically significant differences by either discipline or gender, financial considerations were still the predominant factors in the retirement decision." In the US context, Clarke and Ambrosio (2005) examine relationships between low retirement rates and hiring opportunities, noting how low retirement rates affect the academic pipeline.

The results of the UBC study echo many themes found in previous studies, including working environment, personal or family care obligations, recruitment of the next generation, financial concerns, and the impact of the moratorium on mandatory retirement. In addition, the themes of transparency, flexibility, and planning in the retirement process appeared throughout the UBC study.

FR Focus groups– 2011:

In October 2011 UBC Faculty Relations conducted a series of in-person focus groups, email interviews, and phone interviews focusing on retirement at UBC. Participants included ten Heads/Directors, eight faculty members, and one Professor Emeritus. Discussions covered a range of topics including awareness, improvements, incentives, and barriers for the retirement process, perspectives on options for phased in retirement, and ways to support faculty as they retire. The most commonly cited barriers were financial concerns, concerns about succession or legacy, and potential loss of activities or self- identity in retirement. The most frequently noted supports or incentives in retirement were financial incentives, access to a meaningful Professor

Emeritus appointment, continuation of (health) benefits, and regular communication about retirement options. These investigations also revealed that many retired faculty members are interested to be active and engaged with their units and/or the University, so that support for their activities and involvement would be a good investment. It was noted that the fixed term of phased-in retirement options may be unattractive, particularly in times of financial uncertainty, and that there may be limited flexibility or lack of productivity in cases where a reduced appointment or scope is adopted.

The themes of financial concerns, succession or legacy, identity, flexibility and agency in retirement processes and activities appear again in the present UBC study.

METHODS:

A preliminary data analysis of UBC faculty appointment termination data and a literature review were done in late 2012 –early 2013. In consultation with a number of subject matter experts at UBC, a proposal for the study was written, together with the development of interview questions. The proposal received BREB approval in March 2013.

The original invitation for the in-person interviews went out to all UBC faculty age 55 and above. There was an enthusiastic response to this invitation, well beyond the goal of 45-50 interviews. To increase the capacity for faculty participation beyond in-person interviews, a revised study was approved that included an online survey which was aligned with the in-person interviews. Invitations to participate in the online study were sent to those who had expressed interest in the original interview invitation, but could not be accommodated in the in-person interview schedule. Invitations were available to faculty at both UBC-Vancouver (UBC-V) and UBC-Okanagan (UBC-O), and ultimately no faculty from UBC-O participated in the study.

The report is based on three main sources: in-person interviews, an online survey, and central UBC faculty and retirement data for the period 1997-2013. The interview schedule consisted of both semi-structured and open-ended questions designed to probe the various factors shaping retirement decisions and experiences. This approach to interviewing (as opposed to a fixed schedule) allowed for richer data gathering, with data gathered on both anticipated and unanticipated topics. Through a process of questioning research participants were provided an opportunity to raise issues of personal relevance that may not be anticipated by the investigators. The online survey obviously had more structure, and mostly consisted of a series of questions with multiple choice answers. Most of the questions also provided respondents with the opportunity to add comments or to highlight important issues. Adding an online survey to the study provided the opportunity to obtain more information from a larger sample of faculty of all types.

The UBC retirement data, presented below and online, reports by gender the average age of retirements, the rates of retirements, and retirement ages relative to the common retirement age of 65. Responses to online survey questions with multiple choice answers are reported graphically (see Main Themes and all graphs), and were also analyzed to identify any areas where there were statistically significant differences in the responses based on gender. The 53 individual 30 to 60 minute interviews were brought together in anonymized transcripts, in total amassing to approximately 500 pages of single-spaced text. They provided rich insight into the experiences and perspectives of both retired and not retired faculty. Participant responses were collected and organized using an interpretive thematic analysis based on qualitatively derived data. Common answers, themes and a variety of quotations, both common and unique, were highlighted. Topics that appeared relatively often in the interviews were also summarized by the frequency with which they were raised. Interviews with male and female faculty were helpful in probing how gender, alongside other factors, may shape differences in retirement rates and perspectives. Interview responses and online responses were analyzed separately, and then combined in the report to identify common themes as well as differences between various subgroups where applicable.

PARTICIPANTS:

A total of 53 in-person interviews were conducted: 15 women and 16 men who had retired or who were in the process of retiring, and 12 men and ten women who are not retired. A total of 70 people responded to the online survey, nine women and 24 men who had retired or who were in the process of retiring, and 19 women and 16 men who are not retired. One retired and one non-retired respondent did not self-identify as either male or female. The retired participants included faculty who had chosen one of the UBC faculty retirement options and faculty who participated in the Early Termination Agreement (ETA) program, which was offered by the university prior to 2003.

The retirement ages of the retired participants ranged from mid 50's to high 80's, with average age in the low 70's. The time since retirement ranged from less than a year to more than 15 years. The ages of non-retired participants ranged from mid 50's to low 70's, with average age in the low 60's. The average retirement age was lower for female participants than for male participants for both online respondents and in-person interviewees.

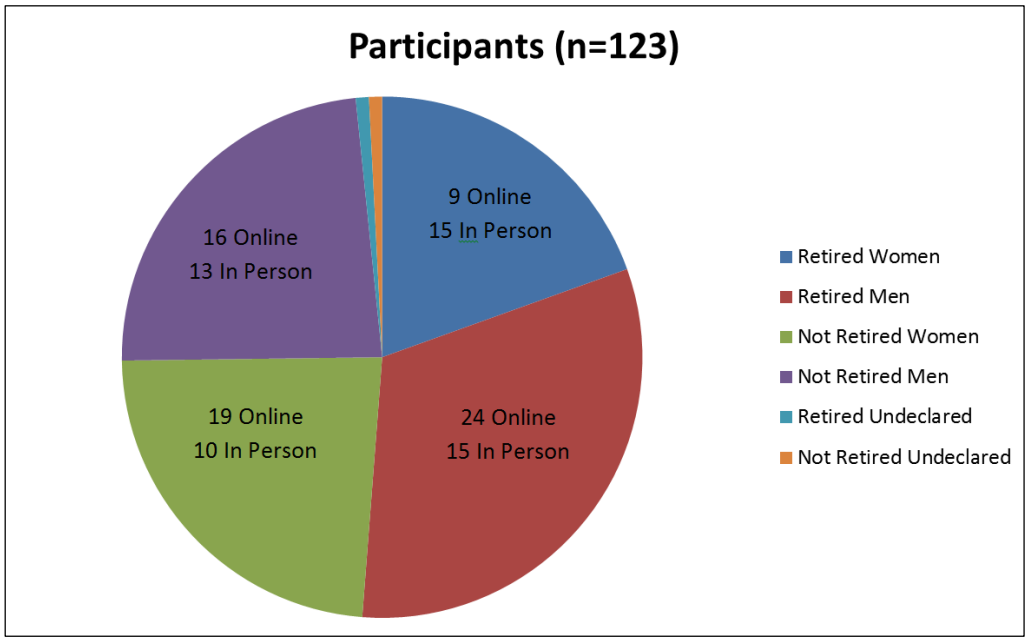

Fig. 1. All participants by retirement status, gender and source.

Online respondents were asked to report their areas of faculty engagement (see Figure 2), with nearly all individuals reporting at least three or more roles as a faculty member. Note that quite a few participants indicated having experience in an administrative role.

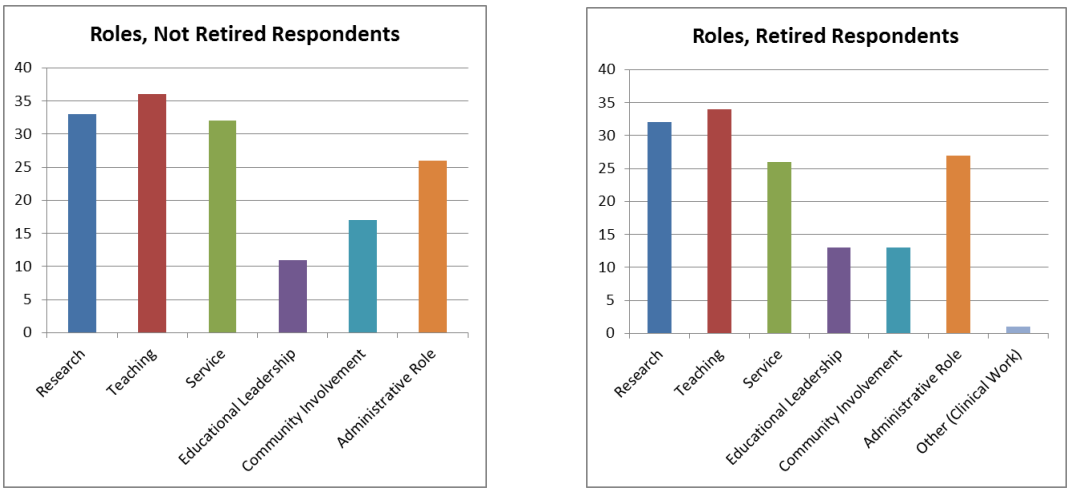

Fig 2. Responses from Retired and Not Retired online survey respondents when asked to "Please indicate your various roles as a faculty member of UBC. "

UBC Faculty Retirement Data: Figure A3 in the online charts and Figure 3 below indicate the rate and averaged age of retirement by year. Rate of retirement is given as the percentage of faculty, aged 55 or older on July 1st, who retire in a given calendar year. Average rates for the years 1997- 2007, in the mandatory retirement (MR) period, are compared with average rates

for the post-mandatory retirement period (2008-2013). The average retirement rates for 1997-2007, 7.4% for women and 8.7% for men, are greater than the average rates in the post-mandatory retirement period 2008-2013, 3.3% for women and 3.5% for men.

While the average rates of retirement do not indicate noticeable gender differences, the data on average age of retirement in Figure 4 tells a different story. The age of all retirees at their date of retirement in a calendar year was averaged for both men and women. The average retirement age of men is clearly greater than that of women, 63.7/65.6 for men before/after 2007, and 62.8./63.7 for women. Note that the increase in average retirement age for men is just over twice the increase in average retirement age for women. This increase in age is also reflected in Figure 4 below, summarizing the percentage of retirements taken by men and women before the age of 65, at age 65, and after age 65.

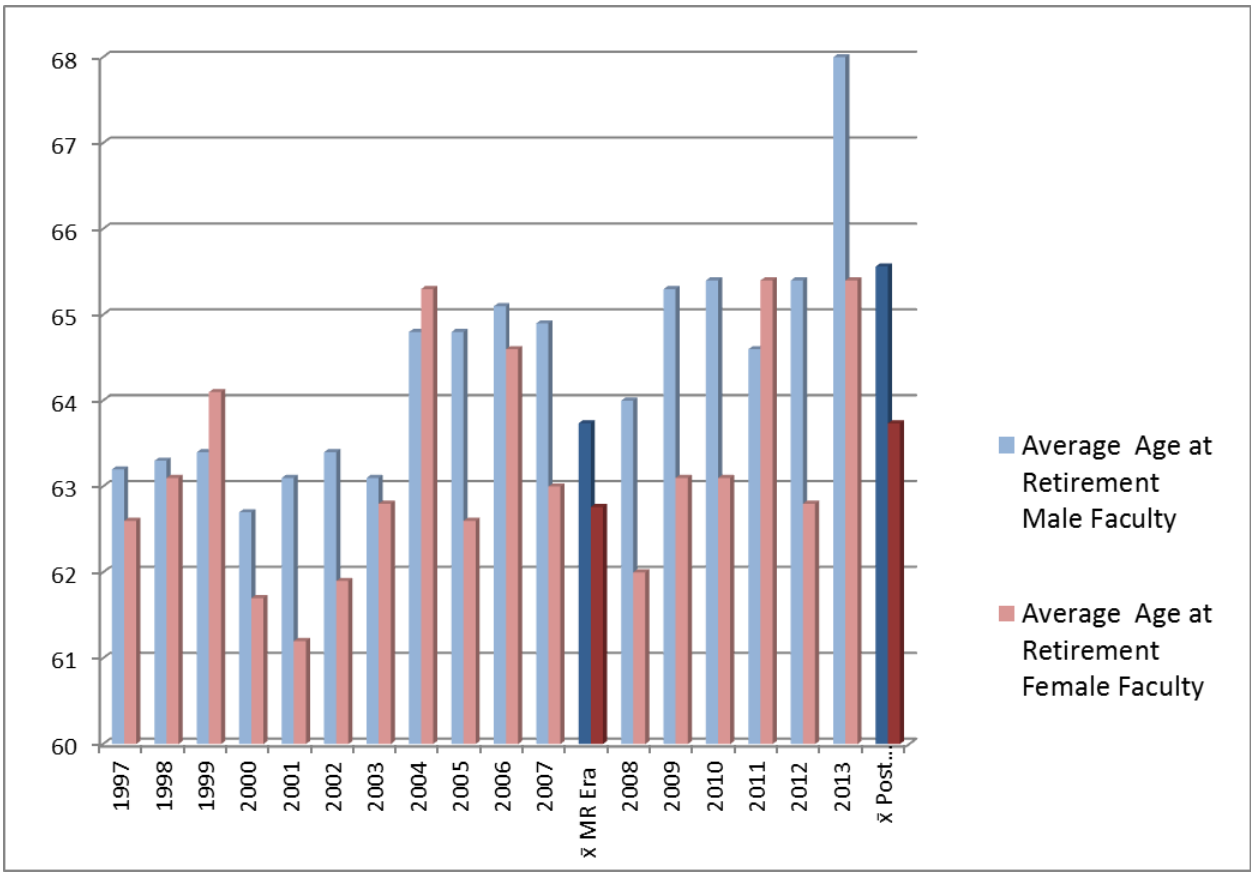

Fig 3: Average age at retirement for all retirements in a calendar year, 1997-2013.

This figure displays the average age at retirement for male and female faculty in both the Mandatory Retirement (MR) Era (1997-2007) and the Post Mandatory Retirement Era (2008-2013). The Early Termination Agreement program was in effect until 2003, likely influencing retirement ages in the years leading up to its discontinuation.

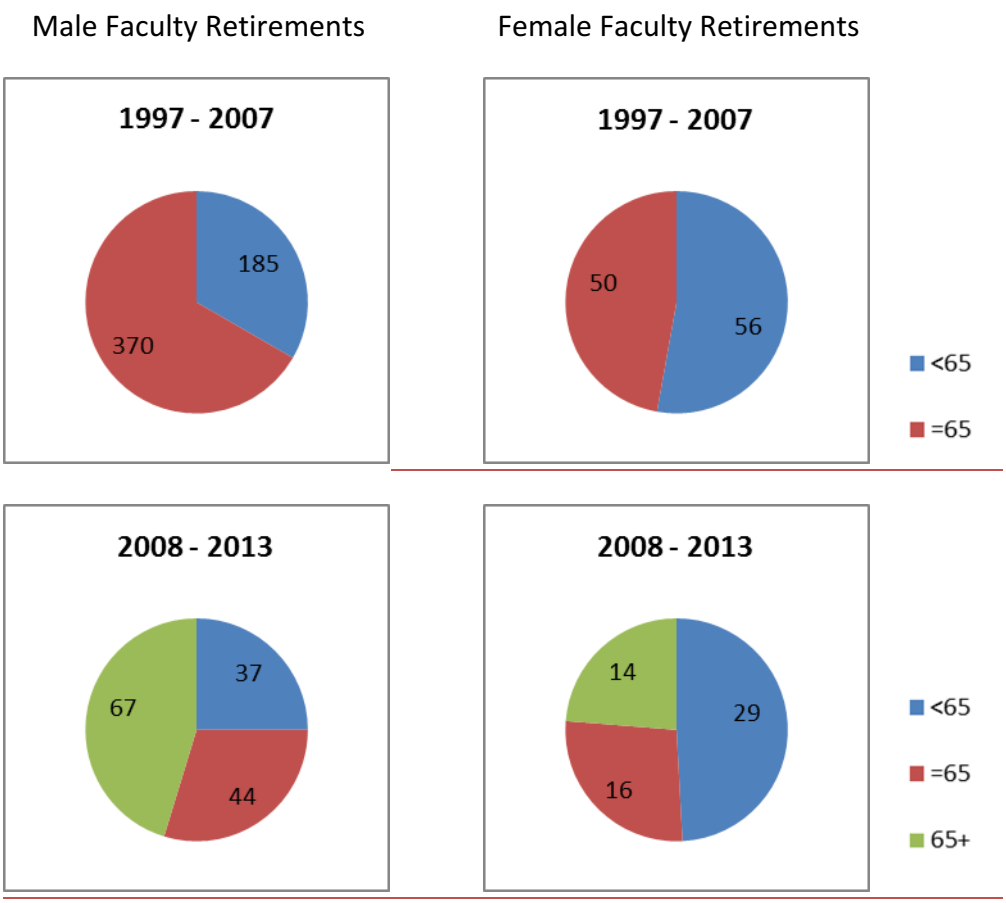

Fig. 4: Retirement ages (before 65, at 65, above age 65) for the Mandatory Retirement Era (1997-2007) and Post Mandatory Retirement Eras (2008-2013) for male and female faculty retirees at both UBC-O and UBC-V. The number in each coloured sector indicates the number of individuals retiring in that range for the period of time indicated.

Between 2008 and the end of 2013, 70 retirements or retirement agreements were based on one of the three Faculty Retirement Options with 60 of these based on either the Part-time or Reduced Scope option. An additional 15 retirements were based on the Transitional Year Appointment option (TRY), available only to faculty at UBC-O. This limited time offer was available to all members of the Faculty Association at UBC-O campus, they had to be entered into from April to August of 2012 and result in a retirement no later than June 30th, 2014.

2015 REVIEW: As a follow-up to this study, the retirement options chosen in retirement agreements were again reviewed in late 2015. As indicated in the recommendation summary, the primary purpose of this review was to ensure that options are applied fairly and with clear expectations. With this question in mind, the focus was on the frequency of Reduced Scope options taken over longer periods (e.g. 4 years), where increased flexibility could leave the door open for inequitable application. As observed early, most options taken were either Part-time

or Reduced Scope, for less than 3 years. As of late 2015 very few longer term Reduced Scope options were taken, and the few that existed had clear workload agreements.

Additional Note: An important piece of contextual information to keep in mind is that the gender composition of tenure track or tenured faculty aged 55+ has changed dramatically since 1997. Then, 14% of faculty members aged 55+ were women (91 out of 639), while in 2013, 31% of faculty aged 55+ were women (347/1112). Given the present representation in UBC faculty, that percentage is expected to increase.