

Protecting full-time faculty jobs, improving contract faculty rights

Enrolment up, faculty down

While student enrolment numbers have increased substantially in Ontario's colleges, full-time faculty numbers have stagnated or dropped. Though administrators continue to claim the need for action in the context of austerity, the simple truth is that there are fewer full-time faculty teaching than there were in 1989, while student enrolment has doubled over the same period.

This is reflected both in growing class sizes and workload for full-time faculty, as well as significant

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increases in the number of contract faculty in the college system, and a growing number of non-teaching bodies, such as centres for entrepreneurship and advising departments, staffed by administrators and support staff rather than faculty.

Staffing crisis in Ontario colleges

This has led to a staffing crisis in Ontario colleges. Part-time, partial-load, and sessional faculty (collectively known as contract faculty) now outnumber full-time faculty nearly three to one¹, without accounting for the large number teaching in continuing education, online and part-time studies. Meanwhile, tuition increases raise the cost of education for students, who have reduced access to full-time faculty support.

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A fraction of the pay of full-time faculty

These contract faculty earn only a fraction of what full-time faculty do, despite doing the same work. Most contract faculty workers teaching full-time over an eight-month academic year would make less than \$35,000.

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¹ MacKay, K. (2014). *Report on Education in Ontario's Colleges*. Retrieved from: <https://opseu.org/information/college-faculty-caat-report-education-ontario-colleges>

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In addition, most have none of the benefits or job security offered to full-time faculty, leaving them trapped in precarious work situations. This needs to change. These workers, who do the same work that full-time faculty do, deserve fair pay and benefits like sick days and recognition of seniority. This seniority should also provide a clear path to bring these workers' teaching experience into full-time positions when they are available.

The growing reliance on contract faculty hurts our college system

as a whole, with faculty, students and even the reputation of the institution paying the price.

Full-time faculty important for quality of student experience

While there will always be a need for some contract positions in the system to cover short assignments or spikes in enrolment, full-time faculty provide important stability and improve the quality of student experience. While contract faculty are committed to their jobs and students, without any security

to know whether they will be teaching the same course the next semester, they have less time and incentive to keep courses up to date with the latest research.

Recruitment difficulties

The increasing reliance on contract positions only makes it harder for Ontario's colleges to recruit and retain the faculty needed to be leaders in delivering post-secondary education.

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