

AT A GLANCE

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Gone are the days when UPEI's faculty complement was composed predominantly of tenured and tenure track members. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09¹ the number of sessional instructors employed by the University increased by 31 percent, and the number of term faculty mushroomed by 61 percent. Comparatively, the number of tenured/tenure track faculty increased by a mere 2 percent during those five years. In concrete terms, the numbers show us that there were *only 16 more* tenured/tenure track faculty in our 2008-09 faculty complement than there were Sessional or Term Members. We are witnessing the casualization of our academic workforce, a problem not endemic or specific to UPEI. According to USA data, 60 percent of academic appointments in that country are off the tenure track. Statistics Canada does not have such statistics available for national comparison.

The implications of the casualization of UPEI's academic complement are numerous and serious. In the past, university administrators used short-term contracts to meet special or extraordinary needs of academic departments – but increasingly, established and long-term faculty staffing requirements are responded to with temporary and often part-time appointments. Ultimately, the entire faculty complement is exploited: Sessional Instructors who labour for inadequate salary, few benefits, and little job security; Term Contract faculty who perform the work of permanent faculty with no job security; and permanent and probationary faculty who, while shrinking as a percentage of the workforce, carry increased service demands. As the

Canadian Association of University Teachers has stated, “the inappropriate use of contract appointments is an academic freedom issue, a professional issue, a workload issue, an instructional issue, a curriculum issue, a governance issue, a research issue and a collective bargaining issue.”

Thus, the UPEIFA is pursuing this issue of casualization, and the implications surrounding it, vigorously at the bargaining table. In particular, we are seeking a series of improvements for Sessional Instructors under the theme of “regularization.” In the simplest of forms, the proposals seek to construct a system where established Sessional Instructors could apply for three-year renewable contracts, thereby improving levels of job security. After established long-term service, and with appropriate qualifications, a Sessional Instructor may apply for a pro-rata (part-time), continuing appointment. Our proposals seek to remedy some of the systematic exploitation of Sessional Instructors, colleagues who often do not know from term to term (let alone year to year) what their prospects for employment are – yet they continue to provide essential service to the University.

We have introduced proposals that would provide grant-based funding for the scholarly activities of Sessional Instructors, as well as professional development and travel reimbursement (PDTR) allocations to further support this important facet of a Member's career. By securing institutional support for the scholarly activities of Sessional Instructors, we protect and defend the full nature

¹ These are the most current available statistics.

of academic work for *all* of us: teaching *and* service *and* scholarly activity.

We have made headway at the bargaining table, but the Administration remains resistant to the concept of pro-rata appointments. The recurring argument they offer is that full-time faculty constitute the “core” complement of the workforce – Sessional Instructors and Term Members constitute a casual group that the Administration claims it needs for “flexibility.” This Administrative rationalization flies in the face of fair treatment of Sessional and Term Members, and belies the true nature of appointments at UPEI today. The numbers tell the tale: the “casual” workforce is not, in fact, a short-term solution to extraordinary circumstances; it is approaching nearly half of our academic complement. Our casual workforce needs defending, as does the wholeness of the profession of which we are *all* a part.

Perhaps the most blatant example of the Administration’s lack of sensitivity to Sessional Instructors’ need for security is a proposal that we have nicknamed “the bump.” Under their proposal (for example, when a full-time Faculty Member’s course suffers inadequate enrolment), the University would have the ability to cancel the contract of a Sessional Instructor and re-direct the teaching responsibility of that Sessional’s course to a full-time Faculty Member, *even if the Sessional has already done significant work in preparation for it.* While the implications for Sessionals are severe, there are equally disturbing implications for full-time Faculty Members who could then find themselves unexpectedly parachuted into courses for which they have completed no prior preparation. The broader implications for students and the academic integrity of the University are obvious and immensely disturbing.

In the latest exchange of language, we also received an indication that the Administration seeks to create two different contract streams for Sessional Instructors: the kind that currently exists, and a new form of contract that would have an enrolment level stipulation attached. In the latter, if a course were cancelled because of failure to meet the enrolment qualification, the Sessional would *not* receive the cancellation fee

they are currently entitled to under the Collective Agreement. This is a backwards step, and clearly unacceptable.

While the Association is seeking to guard against the exploitation of Sessional Instructors, it is also seeking to ensure that the continued casualization of our academic complement is checked. We have proposed language that would ensure the number of full-time tenured/tenure track faculty drops no further than current levels (for the life of the contract), and that the ratio of full-time and term faculty to students be locked-in at current levels (1:18) for the same period. There is tremendous resistance to this from the Administration side, which has indicated it has “absolutely no interest in complement language.” But the UPEIFA Membership does, and the matter is being pursued through collective bargaining.

Plan to Attend General Meeting

**Thurs., Dec. 2, 1:00-2:30 p.m.
Dr. Steel Recital Hall**

A strong attendance at meetings shows *support for our Negotiating Team* and sends a strong message to the Employer that *we are behind our Union.*

Each of us has an *obligation to participate* in the process, which is best done by showing up at meetings. *Either we care or we don't* about the one process that significantly affects each of our working careers and the University's governance. *It's that simple.*

If we show up, no problem; we'll have a successful negotiation. If we don't, we fail to demonstrate our support and seriously undermine our ability to negotiate anything on behalf of the Membership.

**Do your part.
Attend this meeting!**