

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mount Royal Faculty Association to host Fair Employment Week #ABPSE Relies Too Much on Precarious Labour; We Must #MakeItFair

The Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) observes Fair Employment Week from October 23 to October 27, in recognition of the approximate half of our 800 members, and estimated one-third of the 75,000 professors across Canada, who work under precarious conditions of short-term, contract employment. At Mount Royal University, contract faculty undertake almost 60% of the institution's credit instruction.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) estimates that contract academic staff get paid about one-third less than their full-time counterparts. For less pay, fewer benefits and little to no job security, contract staff are expected to teach to a high standard, but without institutional support or compensation for conducting research that keeps them up to date in their respective academic disciplines and to remain competitive in the search for full-time employment or even simply semester-by-semester contract reappointment. Most contract staff must reapply for teaching appointments every four months.

To cut costs in response to diminishing provincial support for post-secondary education, universities have employed more contract staff in recent years. CAUT estimates that since 1999, hiring of contract staff across Canada has increased 200 percent while hiring of full-time faculty has increased by only 14 percent. This trend reflects employment conditions across the Canadian economy, which, according to 2016 data from the OECD, has a part-time employment rate 15% higher than the OECD and European Union averages, and 7.9% higher than the G7 average.

One result of this crisis in post-secondary education is the current strike 12,000 instructors at Ontario colleges, who want to reduce the ratio of contract staff to full-time staff from its current status of three out of four. The MRFA wants this province and its post-secondary institutions to be proactive in fixing the current situation in Alberta, and advocates for a better and more stable funding model for post-secondary education.

The citizens of Alberta want the same: A 2014 survey conducted at the University of Alberta found that a mere 4% of Albertans wanted the government to spend *less* or *much less* on post-secondary education in Alberta. That was a stark contrast to the 56% of those surveyed who wanted the government to spend *more*, and the remaining 24%, who wanted the province to *spend much more*.

Past government decisions to cut funding to post-secondary education led to the elimination of programs, the loss of jobs, and less access for students. But that was the past; now is time to invest in Alberta's future. Let's start by making #ABPSE less reliant on precarious labour, and increase the number of full-time positions.

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