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Contact: Lee Easton  
Phone: 403-827-6732  
Email: [President@mrfa.net](mailto:President@mrfa.net)

*Faculty Advocate for Fair Employment Practices at MRU*

**Calgary, AB. (October 18, 2021)** October 18-22 is Fair Employment Week, an annual national campaign to raise awareness about precarious employment practices at post-secondary institutions and to support local organizing to improve the working conditions of contract academic staff. Members of the Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) are calling for an end to precarious employment at their university by participating in multiple activities that have been planned throughout the week.

“Precarious employment includes the rampant overuse of contract appointment categories, such as per-course ‘sessional’ contracts, for carrying out the University’s core academic mission, which includes delivering credit instruction to 10,000+ full-load-equivalent students,” says Lee Easton, President of the MRFA.

According to Mount Royal Faculty Association membership data, well about half of the academic staff at MRU are employed on a contract basis. These highly qualified colleagues, responsible for over half of all credit instruction at the University, strive to develop course materials and provide learning environments of superior quality and yet must do so without adequate institutional supports: meaningful job security, compensation for research and for maintaining other forms of professional currency, offices, adequate levels of pay, and, in many cases, even basic benefits. Instead, even long-serving contract faculty must reapply for work each semester, with little or no certainty about what they will be offered, if anything, ahead of each new term. Most experience long periods between teaching semesters during which they are not employed by the University, even when developing or updating course materials in preparation for an anticipated future contract.

“Within Canada, women, members of racialized groups, and members of other marginalized groups are overrepresented within contract appointment categories. Data at MRU suggest that, for many, their contract work is a primary source of income and that close to half would be unable to pay their bills without it. The pandemic has deepened the exploitation of these colleagues by relying on them even more heavily to keep the institution running, without adequate supports or job security”, says Easton. Association efforts are focused on building solidarity and organizing members to push for positive change, as well as on drawing public attention to the crisis at the heart of public post-secondary education.

**About the Mount Royal Faculty Association:** The Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) represents all credit academic staff at Mount Royal University as stipulated under Alberta’s Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA). For more information, please visit [www.mrfa.net/few](http://www.mrfa.net/few)