

MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association
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Fair Employment Week, October 22-26, 2018

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Earlier this year, CAUT released its first ever survey of contract academic staff (CAS), and results reveal a number of disturbing trends that affect all members of the academic community. As noted in the Introduction, the survey challenges the stereotype of “CAS as happy moonlighters” who appreciate flexibility or simply wish to supplement their income.¹ In fact, over half of survey respondents (53%) want a tenure-track job, including many who have been teaching in part-time positions for over 15 years.

The survey addresses in some detail the ramifications of casualization, including implications for the experiences of students and the various ways in which contract academic staff experience insecurity. Two thirds of respondents reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted by the contingent nature of their jobs,² and only 17% indicated that they felt secure enough in their employment to purchase a home.³

As CAUT Executive Director David Robinson has said, the survey results “reveal that many CAS are underpaid, overworked and sorely under-resourced. It’s a dismal picture for the majority of these academics, who often feel trapped in a ‘gig lifestyle’ of part-time or insecure work.”⁴

No university markets itself by promoting to its students the sort of post-graduation career path now experienced by an increasing number of their professors – one characterized by indefinite periods of precarious work performed for a fraction of the salary earned by the diminishing number of those doing the same work in more secure positions. Yet, universities across the country increasingly rely on a precariously employed academic workforce to deliver academic programs and teach the next generation of undergraduate students. Mount Allison is no exception.

As reported in recent MAFA newsletters, the complement of tenured and tenure-stream academic staff at Mount Allison is declining. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of short-term contract positions and, in particular, a trend towards greater reliance on per-course teaching-only stipendiary appointments. Faculty members hired on a per-course basis are paid less and enjoy fewer benefits than full time faculty. They also have far less or no job security and receive little or no support, and no pay, for their research or scholarly activity. This new reality is not reflected in our university’s promotional discourse which focuses, for example, on opportunities students will have to work directly with faculty on their research or “even co-publish

¹ Karen Foster and Louise Birdsell Bauer, *Out of the Shadows: Experiences of Contract Academic Staff*, September 2018, 5,

https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf

² “CAUT releases results of first national survey of

contract academic staff,” 4 September 2018,

<https://www.caut.ca/latest/2018/09/caut-releases-results-first-national-survey-contract-academic-staff>

³ Foster and Birdsell Bauer, 23.

⁴ “CAUT releases results.”

articles before [they] graduate”⁵ without acknowledging that for many part-time faculty research is not part of their employment contract with the university.

Yet, as the CAUT CAS survey shows, most faculty members hired on a per-course basis are engaged in research and scholarly activity even though this aspect of their work is not recognized by the university. They do so because of their dedication to their profession and discipline and because they know that evidence of an active research agenda will be required when applying for their next position. Of course, if the next position is another per-course appointment, it will again offer no compensation and little or no support for the continuation of this part of their academic work.

This week, MAFA shines a light on the employment practices of university administrations across the country, including our own. At the same time, we celebrate the scholarly achievements of our part-time colleagues, many of whom carry on with their research and creative activity in the absence of compensation or recognition for their efforts. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Fair Employment Week Research Fair on Thursday at 4:30.

Jeff Lilburn
President

SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM THE CAUT CAS SURVEY

CAS feel excluded in Canadian PSE institutions:

“The overall findings, from 2606 respondents, paint a negative picture of highly qualified and committed academics who are underpaid, overworked, and under-resourced, and who feel excluded in the Canadian post-secondary institutions where they try to provide an excellent education to students under dismal working conditions” (4).

Insecurity is the top concern for CAS:

“Job security ranks as the top priority concern. Only 21% of respondents had non-academic full-time, permanent work. If there is a ‘majority’ group among our respondents, it is people who are trying to make a full-time career out of working at a post-secondary institution” (4).

Part-time teaching is precarious work:

“For a substantial number of survey respondents, part-time teaching is precarious work, characterized by income insecurity, exclusion from career development, and unrecognized and unremunerated contributions” (5).

Casualization and increasing reliance on CAS is fundamentally changing our universities and threatens academic freedom:

With the shift towards casualization and associated “spending and planning decisions, PSE institutions are fundamentally altering the jobs and careers of post-secondary educators, the experiences of students, and the entire structures of universities, colleges and polytechnics. Moreover, to the extent that short-term contracts tend to remunerate only teaching, they hive classroom work off from research and administrative work, which compromises PSE missions, and threatens espoused principles of academic freedom, expertise and knowledge creation. There are, as a result, myriad negative effects of casualization on the workers, on the students they teach. The principle of academic freedom which is central to scholarly research and knowledge production is also compromised: CAS’ ability to do funded research which is fully supported and protected by their institutions is compromised by their precarious employment status” (8).

To read the full CAUT survey, *Out of the Shadows: Experiences of Contract Academic Staff*, visit https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf

⁵ Mount Allison University, “Teaching Excellence,”

FOUR MEMBERS RECEIVE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY STIPENDS

MAFA is pleased to advise members of the four part-time members who have won Research and Creative Activity Stipends for the 2017-18 year.

Sarah Fanning (English) received a stipend for her project entitled “Screening Bronte Men: From Hollywood's Golden Age to the Dark Heritage Film.”

Geoff Martin (Politics and International Relations) has received a stipend for “The Deceased Pipeline: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of the Energy East Pipeline.”

San Patten (Sociology) was successful for her proposal entitled “Experiences of HIV-related stigma during Canada's immigration process.”

Finally, Karen Stentaford (Fine Arts) received a research stipend for her “Solo Exhibition at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery - June 2019.”

The stipend, currently valued at \$6858, is salary support for research and creative activity. Under Article 29.02 of the part-time collective agreement, applications submitted by part-time members are considered by the Senate Research and Creative Activity Committee. Applications are due August 31st during each annual competition. This was the second year in which four stipends have been awarded.

“It is fitting that we can announce the research and creative activity stipends to members in conjunction with Fair Employment Week” says MAFA President Jeff Lilburn. “These stipends help part-time members undertake and be compensated for their research and creative activity, and they highlight the important roles they play both within and outside the class room, lab and studio.”

At the same time, the “awarding” of these stipends highlights an important difference in the conditions of employment for part-time members compared to those for full-time members. Whereas all full-time members are compensated for their research and

creative activity, only a subset of part-time members receive compensation for this aspect of their work and those who do need to apply and have their scholarly projects approved.

“While MAFA has been successful in negotiating some support for the research and creative activities of part-time members,” Jeff Lilburn says that “it is clear that we are still a far way away from achieving working conditions that are fair and equitable for all members of our academic staff. Working towards such improvements will be a priority in the upcoming round of collective bargaining”



PART-TIME ISSUES SUBCOMMITTEE – CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Soon MAFA’s Collective Bargaining Committee will announce its subcommittees and its plans for consulting the membership over the coming weeks and months. One area where members can contribute to improving the terms and conditions of work of contract academic staff is the Part-time Issues Subcommittee of the Collective Bargaining Committee.

The subcommittee is being chaired by Sarah Fanning (English) and if you are interested in helping with its work, please email sfanning@mta.ca or mafa@mta.ca.

**RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY
FAIR COMING UP ON THURSDAY
OCTOBER 25TH**

This is your reminder of MAFA's **Research and Creative Activity Fair**, on Thursday, October 25th, from 4:30- 6pm, at the University Club.

Part-time and full-time contract members will be displaying posters, exhibiting creative work, and allowing MAFA to showcase conference papers, articles, book chapters, consultant reports, and other results of research, creative activity and librarianship.

There will be complimentary food and beverages available and all are welcome!

FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK STATEMENT

All members are also invited to read the following statement in classes this week:

Fair Employment Week Statement

The week of October 22nd to 26th has been designated as Fair Employment Week. Its purpose is to highlight that not all professors and librarians here at Mount Allison or elsewhere in Canada are treated equally. A number of your professors and librarians are employed on short-term contracts and are not sure where they will be working next year or next term. Increasingly, both here and across the country, part-time professors are working on a per-course basis and do not have the same level of compensation, benefits, pension, job security or access to the opportunity to do research and creative activity compared to professors appointed to full-time or tenure-track positions. At \$6740 per three-credit course, they would earn only \$33,700 per year for teaching the equivalent of full-time in Arts or Social Sciences, for example, and only \$40,440 per year teaching four courses with a lab component in Science. Please support the Mount Allison Faculty Association and other academic staff associations as we work to improve the terms and conditions of work of these important members of our community.

MAFA 2017-2018 EXECUTIVE

Jeff Lilburn, President (Library)

Leah Garnett, Vice-President (Fine Arts)

**Maritza Fariña, Past President (Modern
Languages and Literatures)**

Matt Litvak, Treasurer (Biology)

David Fleming, Collective Bargaining (Physics)

**Loralea Michaelis, Grievance Officer (Politics
and International Relations)**

**Lori Ann Roness, Membership and Advocacy
(Sociology/MASSIE)**

Toni Roberts, Part-time Officer (Sociology)

