



### Fair employment week on university campuses

(Fredericton, October 19, 2020) The Fair Employment Week (FEW) is held this year from October 19-23. Every year, in October, Canada's public university academic faculty associations focus on the precarious working conditions of contract academic staff.

"This year, the member associations of the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA) are even more keen to recognize the work accomplished by our contract academic colleagues and to draw attention to this harmful situation to the successful accomplishment of the university's mission to educate our youth." indicates the FNBFA President, Hector Guy Adégbidi.

The underfunding of universities, which has persisted for several decades, means that they must take various drastic measures in order to compensate for this chronic lack of funds. One of the easiest ways used by universities, but also one with the most damaging medium- and long-term consequences for the education of young New Brunswickers, is to not replace members of the permanent academic staff when they leave for retirement or for any other reason, and to contract teaching staff on a short term basis instead. However, the use of precarious staff also has a negative impact on students, their permanent university colleagues and the university as a whole. "The recourse to a greater number of teachers with precarious status has the effect of the lack of professors to help and assist students outside of class hours, to supervise students as part of prerequisites specialized studies (directed readings, dissertations, theses, internships, laboratories, etc.), to design courses and update study programs or to participate in the collegial management of university institutions", adds Dr. Adégbidi. Such a situation is a source of mental and professional fragility for the contract academic staff.

It should be noted here that the containment measures decreed to counter the COVID-19 pandemic have the effect of increasing the tasks of teaching staff; this has only made the situation worse for contract academic staff who are not compensated for the efforts required of them. The heightened vulnerability of contract academic staff means that their mental health is even more at risk of deteriorating. An unfortunate phenomenon that had already been observed before the pandemic is therefore getting worse.

The FNBFA therefore asks for the collaboration of the Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour in order to ensure that the provincial government fully understands the short, medium and long term advantages of adequate funding for New Brunswick's public universities. Such funding will reverse the unfortunate trend of the all too frequent recourse to teaching staff with a precarious status in our public universities.

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About the FNBFA :

The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations represents the interests of approximately 1,500 professors, contract academic staff, professional librarians and researchers at New Brunswick's four public universities. It advocates the advancement of the standards of their profession and seeks to improve the quality of higher education in the province.

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