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Contract Academic Staff

A great number of university faculty, i.e., contract academic staff (CAS) are not full-time permanent employees of the university where they teach but work on limited-term contracts. Some CAS faculty teach full-time (i.e., the full number of classes carried by regular faculty) but for a limited time. Other CAS faculty teach part-time (one or more courses) also for a limited time.

Originally, they were hired in smaller numbers to impart their knowledge and experience when full-time permanent faculty needed to take on other responsibilities on a temporary basis with a reduced teaching workload, or take a leave of absence, or when the institution lacked expertise among its permanent faculty to teach specific courses. CAS are very valuable to universities' mission. But it must be acknowledged that nowadays contract academic staff have become a panacea for public universities, due to their reluctance to hire and retain full-time permanent faculty, as an easy and immediate cost-cutting measure.

Such a trend in hiring is increasing. About a third (31.8%) of all academic staff in New Brunswick are CAS teaching one or more courses and are minimally paid, i.e., well below 50% of full-time permanent faculty's salary. They have little or no social benefits and only receive limited support for their academic activities such as research and community service. This situation is a great source of stress for CAS.

According to the 2018 CAUT report*, Shattering myths about contract academic staff: *“over half (53 per cent) want a tenure-track university or full-time, permanent college job, and this desire holds even for people who have been teaching for 16–20 years.”*

The FNBFA opposes the casualization of university work.

*Results of a 2018 Canadian Association of University Teacher (CAUT) Survey: <https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2018/09/shattering-myths-about-contract-academic-staff>

#MoreThanAcademics