

✉ THE  
BRIEF



# NB MEDIA CO-OP

SHARE A  
STORY

[Articles en français](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Canada](#)

[World](#)

[Environment](#)

[Indigenous](#)

[Labour](#)

[Gender](#)

[Politics](#)

[Culture](#)

[Videos](#)

[NB debrief](#)

[Home](#) > [Education](#)

# STATEMENT: Precarious teaching staff suffer from chronic underfunding of universities

Fair Employment Week is October 16-20

by Hector Guy Adégbidi — October 13, 2023 Reading Time: 2min read





Sir Howard Douglas Hall at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Photo: en.wikipedia.org.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) campaign, Fair Employment Week (FEW), is held this year from October 16 to 20. Every year, in October, Canada's public university academic faculty associations draw the attention of our political leaders and the public to the working conditions of university teaching staff with precarious status, our colleagues hired to teach either part-time or full-time under a contract of limited duration.

The underfunding of universities, which has persisted for several decades, forces them to 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 mid – and long-term consequences for the education of young New Brunswickers, is to not replace permanent academic staff members when they leave for retirement or any other reason, and to contract teaching staff on a short-term

basis instead. This state of affairs has been also deplored by the rector and vice-chancellor of the Université de Moncton, among others.

The recourse to precarious contract academic staff also has a negative impact on students, their permanent academic colleagues, and the university as a whole. The recourse to a greater number of precarious contract academic staff has as a result, a lack of faculty resources to help and assist students outside of class hours, to supervise students in learning activities that are 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. In New Brunswick, around 30% of courses are taught by part-time teachers.

Very often, these precarious status teachers do not know until the very last minute whether they will get a contract to teach next semester, making it impossible for them to plan their professional and personal lives as the following quotes from two colleagues with precarious status clearly illustrate (from the results of a study conducted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) –

*“Contract work is unstable and unreliable. I work as much as possible in order to build up my savings in case one term or one year I do not get any work. I’ve given up all other parts of my life to work as much as possible out of fear and instability.”*

*“I have never had a ‘real job’ that’s full time with benefits. It is always precarious under-employment that takes more than 40 hours per week. My wife is the main breadwinner. I have no way to say this to people that sounds good. It’s becoming a major trigger for anxiety.”*

According to the CAUT, the number of university teachers working part-time, part-year grew by 79 per cent from 2005 to 2015.

We appeal here to the Government of New Brunswick, in particular the Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, to seriously consider the issues and benefits in the short, medium,