

## A Seat at the Table: A Strong Voice for Better Working Conditions for Contract Academic Staff

Conference 2023 / Friday, October 20 and Saturday, October 21, 2023 / Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre

### Conference Overview

Despite their significant contributions as professionals, practitioners, and researchers, contract academic staff are often marginalized from collegial decision-making bodies and the broader academic community. To ensure fairness and better working conditions, contract academic staff need to have a seat at the table – whether that’s at departmental committees, Senates, Boards, or in bargaining.

Join contract academic staff colleagues from across the country as we explore how the voices of contract academic staff should be included in governance and decision-making bodies, and within our academic staff associations. The conference will also be an opportunity to discuss ongoing and emerging issues facing contract academic staff and provide participants with the skills and resources needed to run effective campaigns for change.

## Agenda

### Friday, October 20

- 08:00 – 09:00 **Registration / Breakfast** *(provided)*
- 09:00 – 09:15 **Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement, and Opening Remarks**
- Peter McInnis, CAUT President
  - Nick Papatheodorakos, Chair, CAUT Contract Academic Staff Committee
- 09:15 – 10:30 **Keynote Address – Lessons in Solidarity from the Rutgers Strike**
- Dr. Rebecca Givan, President, Rutgers Chapter of the American Association of University Professors – American Federation of Teachers (AAUP-AFT)
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Refreshment Break**
- 11:00 – 12:30 **Session One – Collegial Governance: A Seat at the Table for Contract Academic Staff**
- The participation of contract academic staff in academic governance bodies can help build a more democratic and inclusive workplace. This panel will look at cases where contract academic staff have a seat at the governance table and highlight how this can improve their status, recognition, and rights.
- Susan Findlay, University of Lethbridge
  - Robert Soroka, Concordia University Part-Time Faculty Association
  - Robin Whitaker, CAUT Vice-President
- 12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch** *(provided)*

- 13:30 – 15:00 **Session Two – A Seat at the Negotiating Table: Bargaining Gains for Contract Academic Staff**  
In this session, participants will learn about recent collective bargaining gains for contract academic staff. Topics include contract renewals, seniority clauses, and the right of CAS to academic freedom.
- Michael Arfken, University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association
  - Paul Deguire, University of Moncton
  - Colin Jones, British Columbia Institute of Technology Faculty Association
- 14:30 – 15:00 **Refreshment Break**
- 15:30 – 17:00 **Session Three – Education Technology: What’s at Stake for Contract Academic Staff?**  
Emerging technologies are being deployed by universities and colleges, most often without consultation with academic staff. Due to the precarious nature of their employment status, contract academic staff are particularly vulnerable to the impact of new technologies. In this session, panelists will explore ways that contract academic staff can have a voice in shaping the use of educational technologies in ways that protect their employment rights and uphold academic integrity.
- Alison Hearn, Western University
  - Cal Murgu, Consultant, Elsevier Canada and Western University
  - Nick Papatheodorakos, Chair, CAUT Contract Academic Staff Committee
- 17:30 – 19:00 **Reception**

## Saturday, October 21

- 08:00 – 09:00 **Breakfast** *(provided)*
- 09:00 – 10:30 **Session Four – Organizing Contract Academic Staff: Part I**  
Collective action is our greatest power and most effective vehicle for winning better working conditions for contract academic staff. In this session, panelists will describe the tools they’ve used to organize contract academic staff members around collective bargaining, strike action, and advocacy.
- Adango Miadonye, Cape Breton University Faculty Association
  - Caroline Quesnel, Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN)
  - Tom Robles, Unit 3-CUPE 3902, University of Toronto
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Refreshment Break**

- 11:00 – 12:30 **Session Five – Organizing Contract Academic Staff: Part II**  
Participants will break into working groups to apply the organizing lessons learned in the previous session to develop local Fair Employment Week campaigns.
- 12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch** (*provided*)
- 13:30 – 15:00 **Session Six – Report Back from Group Activities**  
Participants will share and discuss the Fair Employment Week campaign strategies and plans developed in the workshops.
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Refreshment Break**
- 15:30 – 16:45 **Roundtable Discussion – Emerging Issues for Contract Academic Staff**  
This session will begin with a roundtable followed by a general discussion during which participants will have an opportunity to identify emerging issues for contract academic staff and how best to confront them.
- Weldon Cowan, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of British Columbia
  - Laura Schechter, University of Alberta
  - Ayca Tomac, Queen’s University
- 16:45 – 17:00 **Wrap-Up and Concluding Remarks**
- Peter McInnis, CAUT President
  - Nick Papatheodorakos, Chair, CAUT Contract Academic Staff Committee