

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

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, CAUT Contract Academic Staff Committee Chair
- 09:15 – 10:30 **Keynote Address – Lessons in Solidarity from the Rutgers Strike**
- 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 government 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.
- 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.

- 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 area 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.
- 17:30 – 19:00 **Reception (Cash bar)**

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.
- 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 discussion 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.
- 16:45 – 17:00 **Wrap-Up and Concluding Remarks**
- Peter McInnis, CAUT President
 - Nick Papatheodorakos, CAUT Contract Academic Staff Committee Chair