

OCADFA Sessional Town Hall

10 August 2020

11:00 am to 1:00 pm — Online via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Alize Zorlutuna, Bernhard Dietz, Beverly Dywan, Bogdan Luca, Clifford Caines, Eric Steenbergen, Esery Mondesir, Greg Mably, Heather Gentleman, Henry Zhnag, June Pak, Kathryn Adams, Laura Lovell-Anderson, Mariana Grezova, Mary Eileen Wennekers, Milan Pavlovic, Min Sook Lee, Surendra Lawoti, Suzy Oliveira.

Minutes

Welcome remarks | *Bogdan and Min Sook*

- Land acknowledgement and introduction

Presentation | *Mary Eileen*

- Theme: Uncertain Future of Instructors (annual reapplication for jobs by sessional faculty, etc.)
- Status of bargaining process: Mediation. Next steps are ratification and, if necessary, binding arbitration.
- Membership survey: Of OCADFA's 556 members, the survey obtained 162 responses including 64 sessional respondents (40%).
- The significant majority of Sessionals identify and function of as long-term members of OCAD U's faculty and understand their role contributes service work.
- Precarity of Sessional labour is having a significant effect on our health, wellbeing, and ability to plan for the future.
- OCADU Sessional Instructors Teaching Resource Hub
<https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/1620/pages/welcome>
- Response questions from members
- How will the survey data be used in the bargaining process? *The survey data can be included in the mediation brief, as well as to help establish both institutional and sectoral norms.*
- What are the resources included in the Teaching Resource Hub? *A library of online teaching resources from internal departments, professional organizations, etc. ranging from isolation and mental health, land acknowledgment, tools, etc. The Hub includes a discussion forum.*
- What internal student resources for accommodation, equity, mental health, and isolation in online learning could be included in either the Teaching Resource Hub or made widely available to instructors? *Instructors are often the first point of contact for student concerns and the Teaching Resource Hub is continually growing with resources for these topics. We need to work with the Student Union, SAS, FCDC, etc. to establish active supports to mitigate crises by balancing the learning environment through both synchronous and asynchronous engagement modes. Further, these challenges and uncertainties are particularly effect BIPOC students.*

Member Question/Answer and Statements of Concern | *Moderated by Bogdan, Mary Eileen, and Laura*

- Reminder: Course instruction (including synchronous, asynchronous, or combination) is at the discretion of the instructor (academic freedom).
- Statement: Concern for integrity of course due to online teaching format and increased course size.

- Statement: Added pressure of posting course outlines three weeks prior to the start of classes (19 August) with last-minute course assignments (less than three weeks prior to start).
- Statement: Praise for FOD Dean Tunstall's MS Teams Q&A session as a mode of support for students prior an unprecedented academic year.
- Statement: Teaching online is difficult for instructors as there is less interaction with students, considering verbal and non-verbal modes of communication.
- Statement: Loss of courses and course reduction is widespread. Sessionals are not notified or part of the decision making process of what courses are offered. University reliance on precarious faculty yet feeling like disposable commodities with dehumanizing work conditions.
- What is the future or options for Sessional faculty who are not teaching this academic year? *We don't know the future, and as Sessionals, we must find opportunities at other institutions and through professional practice.*
- What can we do now to help the bargaining promotes related to Sessionals, i.e. the 'right of first refusal'? What are the main priorities given this year's pandemic in terms of preparation/notification, there is concern about accepting contract in July/August and not getting paid until October for the 2-4 week of preparation?
- Statement: Status of OCAD U's financial audit?
- Statement: Confusion and lack of transparency as to how courses are assigned.
- Statement: Sessional payscale not comparable with other Toronto Universities and not a living wage.

Mobilization | *Moderated by Bogdan, Mary Eileen, and Laura*

- First right of refusal or establish commitment from administration
- In repose to adapting a faculty association structure and culture specific to Sessional labour priorities and grievances, OCADFA advocates labour rights for all categories. OCADFA has considered affiliation with larger unions including CUPE, OPSEU.
- Organizational support through internal restructuring to include an Executive Director to respond to these issues more effectively.