



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

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CAUT Contract Academic Staff Conference

Stronger Together: Achieving Fairness for Contract Academic Staff

October 20–21, 2017 – Courtyard Marriott Toronto Downtown

Conference Overview

Academic staff spent many years building workplaces characterized by secure employment and dedicated to research, teaching, and service. But this model is being taken apart by administrators, politicians and business leaders pushing a discourse of austerity and an agenda that undermines economic security, devalues the combination of research, teaching, and service, and erodes the public good.

With one out of every three academic staff in Canada in contingent, precarious positions, now is the time to rise up. This conference will boost our ability to fight for core employment rights, achieve parity between contract and full-time colleagues, and intervene in broader public policy debates.

Day one examines bargaining, grievance handling and mobilization issues. Day two incorporates hands-on skills-training to equip participants with the campaign tools necessary to restore good jobs and pursue the public good. Please join with colleagues from across Canada at this important event.

Agenda

Friday, October 20

08:00 – 09:00

Registration

09:00 – 09:30

Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement, and Opening Remarks

- CAUT President
- David Robinson, CAUT Executive Director

- 09:30 – 10:30 **Session One – We Know what is Wrong**
- From our own experience as academic staff, and our broader theoretical understanding of the issues, we know how difficult it is for many to pursue an academic career. This session will briefly examine the challenges faced by academic staff and discuss in more depth the necessity of collective action to create positive change.
- 10:30 – 10:45 **Refreshment Break**
- 10:45 – 12:00 **Session Two – Core Struggles I - Bargaining**
- Academic staff associations have bargained for Contract Academic Staff (CAS) rights for the past two decades. What are the results of these efforts to achieve fairness, equity, conversion, pro rata, and other gains? A panel of CAS-bargainers will discuss breakthroughs and continuing challenges.
- 12:00 – 13:30 **Lunch** (*On one's own*)
- 13:30 – 14:30 **Session Three – Core Struggles II – Grievance Handling**
- The casualization of academic staff has meant that employment security is being fundamentally transformed at colleges and universities across the country. A panel of experienced grievance-handlers discusses the challenges of representing diverse, contingent, precarious labour in the grievance arbitration process.
- 14:30 – 15:30 **Session Four – Core Struggles III: Mobilization**
- Successful unions, while building strong bargaining and grievance handling capabilities, have also adopted a mobilizing model that engages and includes all the membership and external allies in political campaigns to create fairer, more diverse workplaces and a better society. Advocates of this strategy will make their case for this approach.
- 15:30 – 15:45 **Refreshment Break**
- 15:45 – 16:45 **Session Five – Fair is Fair: A Critical Examination of Fair Employment Week**
- Fair Employment Week is a major focus of CAS political advocacy. But how successful has it been at moving our agenda forward? A panel of front-line CAS activists reviews the history, achievements and future of the event.
- 16:45 – 17:00 **Session Six – Overview of Saturday's Activities**
- Conference facilitators explain the logistics of Saturday's hands-on, skills-building agenda:
- Participants form into x groups
 - The groups review a scenario designed to highlight CAS challenges

- Each group is assigned a different project that will assist in confronting and solving the problem
- Group One – Create collective agreement language and formulate a bargaining strategy to address the issue
- Group Two – Write a grievance and formulate a grievance strategy to address the issue
- Group Three – Prepare material (poster, flyer, button, etc.) to educate members and the public on the issue
- Group Four – Produce a video on the issue and the association’s response to it
- Group Five – Prepare a press release and hold a press conference to publicize the issue

17:00 – 17:30

Session Seven – Breakout Groups

Conference participants meet in their breakout groups, review the scenario that forms the basis for Saturday’s activities, and discuss their assigned tasks.

18:00 – 19:00

Reception (Cash bar)**Saturday, October 21**

09:00 – 10:30

Session Eight – “Ten Minute” Experts: Activist Skills

To prepare conference participants for the day’s exercise, five ten-minute presentations will rapidly unfold on:

- talking to members
- filing grievances
- creating attractive visual material
- making effective smart phone movies
- communicating through the media

10:30 – 10:45

Refreshment Break

10:45 – 12:00

Session Nine – Group Work I

The hands-on portion of the event commences with participants combining into their X groups and commencing work on their projects.

- Group One – Collective bargaining response
- Group Two – Grievance response
- Group Three – Campaign material
- Group Four – Video
- Group Five – Media

12:00 – 13:30

Lunch (Working lunch)

13:30 – 14:30

Session Nine – Group Work II

Groups complete work on their projects.

14:30 – 15:30 **Session Ten – The Presentations**

Groups one and two present their bargaining and grievance plans.

15:30 – 15:45 **Refreshment Break**

15:45 – 17:00 **Session Ten – The Presentations Continued**

Groups three, four and five present their campaign material, videos and media plan.

17:00 – 17:30 **Wrap-Up and Concluding Remarks**