

SESSIONALS, UP CLOSE



Sessional instructors are now a crucial part of the teaching equation at most Canadian universities. Some say it's time to include them more fully in the life of the institution



THEY ARE CALLED SESSIONAL LECTURERS, part-time instructors, contract or contingent faculty and chargés de cours. Some are fresh out of graduate studies, others may have taught for years. Whatever their name, these non-tenured, non-permanent teaching staff share a common desire for better recognition, pay and treatment that more closely resembles how institutions treat full-time faculty.

University Affairs has assembled a sampling of what the pay, benefits, job security and other key work-related conditions look like for sessionals at a range of small, medium and large Canadian postsecondary institutions. Most were randomly chosen, while ensuring geographic representation. York University and University of Toronto were deliberately picked because they have a reputation among sessional teachers and with faculty associations for some of the best contracts for sessionals in the country. Vancouver Community College, which is neither a university nor a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, is included (in a separate chart, page 29) because its contract with sessional staff has been described as the “gold standard” by the New Faculty Majority, a group of academics in the U.S. that has organized to improve the working conditions of sessionals in that country.

In the charts on the following pages, salary scales presented are base rates; various academic departments may have their own arrangements for compensating contingent faculty. And, although universities employ a host of different kinds of non-permanent academic staff – including

graduate students who may use sessional teaching as a way to gain experience – these charts focus on the teaching members who are no longer students and who teach on a course-by-course basis.

Pay is always a factor and, as our charts show, there is a wide range. But as important a benchmark as it is, it may not be the top job concern.

“The biggest one is job security. Its absence is profound,” says Leslie Jermyn, chair of the contract academic staff committee for the Canadian Association of University Teachers. She currently works on a 24-month, contractually limited appointment, teaching three full courses a year at York. A sessional teacher since 1993, Dr. Jermyn began teaching two years before finishing her PhD.

Her career is emblematic of a way of life. What once was a stepping stone for a PhD en route to a full-time, tenure-track appointment – or an interesting way to use a master’s degree – has become, for many, a way to earn a living. Some teach at more than one institution and in more than one city. To be sure, there are also those who do the job as a complement to full-time work in their fields, including business people, lawyers and civil servants.

Job insecurity

For those who hold a PhD, the difficulty in securing tenure-track jobs compounds the problem. While universities sometimes agree to seniority provisions that give an experienced sessional a leg up the next time a course they’ve already taught is posted – often called the “right of first

What was once a stepping stone en route to a full-time, tenure-track appointment has become, for many, a way to earn a living.



refusal” – the reality for many is having to reapply every term for a course they may have taught for years. Often they don’t know with any certainty from one semester to the next whether they’ll have a contract at all.

“I’ve been called on a Thursday and told I’ll be teaching a full course starting on Tuesday,” says Janice McKendrick, a sessional instructor at the University of Prince Edward Island since 2008 who is taking a break this year due to family responsibilities. “You’re always watching for application deadlines to make sure you get in, not knowing if you’ll get the job or not.”

Many work without access to employer benefit plans. If they fall ill for more than a week, they may lose the job entirely. Pre-term preparation time is usually not fully compensated, if at all. Temporary unemployment between semesters is typical.

“If the courses I teach aren’t being offered anymore, or if I became sick, or if I decide to walk away,” says Jennifer Dimoff, “I walk away with nothing.” Ms. Dimoff is president of CUPE 3912, representing about 1,500 part-time faculty at Dalhousie, Mount St. Vincent and Saint Mary’s universities in Halifax. She has taught courses in religious studies and philosophy for 14 years.

Some might say take it or leave it – sessional work was never intended to be a full-time living, and it does not include the research or service expectations of tenured positions, so it deserves to be less well compensated than tenured positions. And that is true.

What that sidesteps is how dependent universities have become on sessional instructors’ services and how their use may affect the life of the institution.

No one we talked to for this article knew of any consistent tracking of sessional use across the country. Some faculty associations are keeping track of the proportion of sessionals to regular faculty: at the University of Calgary, for example, the 529 sessional instructors represent 23 percent of the faculty workforce. But the union doesn’t know what proportion of courses are taught by sessional instructors. In Ontario, the recent Auditor General’s Report (which reviewed how three universities support and assess the quality of undergraduate teaching) noted that at one institution, sessional staff “accounted for 24 percent of full-time equivalent staff and were responsible for teaching approximately 40 percent of its courses.”

In the United States, which does collect some statistics, one-third of faculty at four-year colleges and universities are contract workers, according to 2011 data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Some observers in Canada say that the overall proportion in Canada is probably similar.

For the 10 institutions featured in this story, the numbers of non-student sessional teachers, as provided by their bargaining unit, ranged from 177 at the University of Winnipeg to about 1,000 at York University. Because the universities include different categories of contract faculty and the figures aren’t all comparable, these numbers aren’t provided in the charts.

A funding problem

Richard Sigurdson, dean of arts at the University of Calgary, agrees that there is a “documented increase” across North America, and beyond, in the reliance by universities and colleges on non-permanent academic staff. Sessional instructors represent a cheaper and more flexible labour pool when universities are straining to adapt to changing needs under tight budgets. “There is no secret here that it is directly related to the decline in funding,” as well as the rise in enrolments, says Dr. Sigurdson.

Although the position of sessional instructors is still “precarious,” Dr. Sigurdson believes their working conditions have improved in recent years, simply because their growing numbers give them more clout and thus make university administrators more aware of the employment challenges that these workers face.

Bonnie Patterson, president of the Council of Ontario Universities, says sessional instructors “play an incredibly important role for us in terms of our responsiveness to student demands and the fluctuations that occur in various areas of study as they change over time.”

There’s no doubt, she says, that some institutions are using sessionals “as a pretty important part of their financial strategy.” But “equally important, this is also a way of getting the right human resources in the right places, given the kind of change that can occur, and trying to balance the multiple responsibilities of the permanent, core faculty members.”

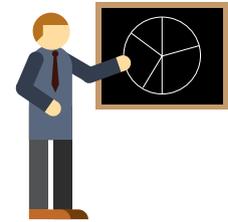
So the institutions need them. And, an important academic staff group that is unhappy with its lot eventually influences the tone of the university. “If nothing else, it’s a real morale problem” says Doug Owram, former deputy vice-chancellor of the University of British Columbia Okanagan. Surveys at UBC Okanagan showed sessionals were the staff group with the lowest morale because of their lack of job security, he says.

A host of potential solutions have been proposed, from multi-year teaching contracts to teaching-only positions. The better contracts for ses-

	 ENROLMENT	 TEACHING LOAD	 BASE SALARY
01 UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	3,370 full-time undergraduate students	Fewer than nine contact hours per semester; when teaching nine or more hours, instructor is offered full-time term contract	\$10,248 to \$10,778 for two half-year courses; plus 1.25% of assistant professor floor-rate when there's a lab component for 10 weeks of the term
02 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY	18,312 full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate students	Three half-year courses in the fall/winter term; three courses over the summer terms	\$9,131 to \$11,166 per full-year course, including vacation pay
03 UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE	12,602 FTE undergraduate students	No more than four courses per term; eight term courses per year	\$15,452 to \$19,206 for two three-credit courses, incl. vacation pay; PhDs receive a \$500 bonus
04 UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTREAL	27,608 FTE undergraduates (does not include HEC or École Polytechnique)	Nine term courses per year if this is the teacher's primary occupation / Two to three term courses if teacher has another occupation	\$16,776 per two-term course, incl. vacation pay
05 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO	54,334 FTE undergraduates at three campuses	No limit	\$14,250 to \$15,850 per full-year course, incl. vacation pay
06 YORK UNIVERSITY	43,700 FTE undergraduates	5.5 full-course equivalents per calendar year	\$15,731 per academic session (two terms), plus 4% vacation pay
07 MCMASTER UNIVERSITY	25,174 FTE undergraduates	No limit	\$13,029 to \$13,802 per full-year course, incl. 4% vacation pay
08 UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG	7,958 FTE undergraduates	Three full-year course equivalents per academic year except for special conditions	\$7,556 per full-year course, plus \$404 lump sum / Retired full-time faculty receive 10% additional pay
09 UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY	29,429 FTE undergraduates	No limit	\$12,098 to \$13,478 for two half-course equivalents plus 4% vacation pay

THE LATEST RESEARCH

An American research project called the Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success is being led by Adrianna Kezar of the University of Southern California. You can read Dr. Kezar's views about the latest research on contingent faculty in an opinion piece, coming soon to our website, universityaffairs.ca.



sionals provide access to funds for professional development and even grants for research, something sessionals complain is hard to do without university support.

Teaching-only positions, as a remedy for the job-security complaint, remain controversial. How desirable they are depends on how these positions are structured. At York University, “alternate stream” full-time positions are tenured, focused on teaching and pay about 10 percent less than regular faculty positions. But Ms. Dimoff, in Halifax, says she considered a lecturer position whose job security and benefits were appealing, but decided that teaching 10 three-credit courses a year for \$60,000 was a recipe for “a burnout job.”

From the university’s point of view, quality control is an issue. And one barrier to offering improved job security for sessionals may be the university’s concern that it could get stuck with a bad lecturer.

But the solution to that is to set the bar high at the beginning, says Frank Cosco, president of the faculty association at Vancouver Community College. The institution can mandate a probation period and rigorous evaluation throughout it, so that it hires teachers it can feel confident about. VCC has “stringent hiring committees that are dominated by faculty,” says Mr. Cosco. “We know there has to be a trade-off: if you want job security, you have to show you’re going to get quality teaching.”

Exemplary contract

At VCC, as few distinctions as possible are made between part-time and full-time instructors. Tiered systems of pay and benefits are almost non-existent. If instructors teach less than a full-time load, their pay is pro-rated against a full-time salary. Those teaching half-time (defined as a minimum of 12.5 hours of assigned work, including service) also receive benefits and become “regularized” as permanent staff after satisfactory completion of a probationary period of two to four years.

The pay-off to the institution, says Mr. Cosco, is that “people are focused on their work” instead of what their next job scramble will be. “That builds a better sense of commitment to the college and to the department.” Of course, colleges are not the same environments as universities. Full-time college faculty aren’t expected to do research, making it easier to find ways to put part-timers on par with full-timers.

But there still may be ways universities can improve things for sessionals, and some of these cost little to nothing at all. “The biggest need is just a change in attitude,” says Trevor Tucker, a sessional instructor in English for the last 10 years at the University of Ottawa.

Mr. Tucker compiled a list of ideas for making sessional instructors feel like valued members of the university community. “The need for connection to the university,” says Mr. Tucker, “may be a bigger issue than the pay issue.”

His suggestions for alleviating the “teach-and-leave” sessional syndrome include offering training and mentoring in teaching, with some of the training given by senior members of a department. Another recommendation is to allow sessional instructors to pitch ideas about new courses they believe would be of interest to students and potentially to teach them, too. Creating some office space for them, together in one area and close to regular faculty, could improve collegiality and intellectual interaction.

“There is no attention to this vast resource” known as sessionals, says Mr. Tucker. “And it could hugely benefit the institution.”

Meanwhile, U of Calgary dean Dr. Sigurdson suggests that launching teaching awards specifically for sessional instructors could have at least two positive results: they would create incentives for sessionals and recognize their value to the university. The University of Manitoba, where he previously worked, is one university that offers such awards.

Continued on page 29

SCHOOL	PENSION ELIGIBILITY
01 University of Prince Edward Island	None
02 Dalhousie University	None
03 Université de Sherbrooke	Retirement allocation, if retiring at or after age 60 with at least 100 seniority points, based on salary average for the five best years out of the last 10.
04 Université de Montréal	Allocation at retirement, if aged 60 to 64 with at least 100 points (45 class hrs. = 1 point), based on salary for the five best years out of the last 10.
05 University of Toronto	Voluntary participation in group RRSP, 5% - 6% of eligible income, contributions matched by university / Those previously in the U of T faculty association grandfathered into its pension plan
06 York University	Opportunity to participate in university pension plan after teaching two consecutive years; university matches employee contributions plus 3%
07 McMaster University	None
09 University of Winnipeg	None
09 University of Calgary	Participation in the academic pension plan with 50/50 split on contributions / Participation mandatory under some conditions after two consecutive years of employment

REPRESENTATION

+ BENEFITS

<p>Sessional instructors are represented by the University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association</p>	<p>6% of pay in lieu of benefits after teaching four courses</p>
<p>Part-time academics who teach in degree-granting programs (except law, architecture, computer science, dentistry, most medicine and most engineering courses), hired on a per-course basis are represented by Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)</p>	<p>No health benefits / Accidental death and dismemberment insurance / Occupational medical accident insurance</p>
<p>Part-time lecturers represented by the Syndicat des chargées et chargés de cours de l'Université de Sherbrooke</p>	<p>Group health and life insurance</p>
<p>Part-time lecturers represented by Syndicat des chargées et chargés de cours de l'Université de Montréal</p>	<p>Same benefits as held by tenured professors: group health/drug plan; dental, and accident/life insurance for work-related travel</p>
<p>Sessional lecturers teaching courses in degree programs (excluding clinical lecturers in medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, and licensed professionals in engineering, law and architecture)</p>	<p>represented by CUPE. Category does not include teachers on contractually limited term appointments (i.e., full-time appointments for a fixed term)</p> <p>Access to Health Care Spending Account, up to \$275 per half course (or the university's health and dental plan for those enrolled before April 2005) for prescriptions, eyewear, physiotherapy, etc.; limit of \$1,375 per year, per family</p>
<p>"Course directors" contracted by the course, who aren't full-time grad students at York and who are responsible for course design and delivery for degree</p>	<p>credit programs (except law, business and admin. studies), are represented by CUPE</p> <p>Dental, long-term disability, drug, vision care, family benefits plan / Employer provides \$175,000 per year to the bargaining unit for employee benefits not covered by agreement</p> <p>/ Subsidies for childcare / Tuition-fee waiver for York degree credit work</p>
<p>All sessional instructors except those in health sciences and continuing education are represented by CUPE</p>	<p>Union-administered benefits fund paid for by the university (last annual contribution by the university was \$50,000)</p> <p>/ Employer-administered employee and family assistance program</p>
<p>Most contract faculty who teach degree-credit courses on a per-course basis are represented by the University of Winnipeg Faculty Association</p>	<p>None</p>

<p>Sessional instructors on "term certain appointments," given for one or more periods of specified duties for one year</p>	<p>or less, are represented by the Faculty Association of the University of Calgary</p>	<p>In lieu of benefits, sessional instructors receive an additional 4% of their salary</p>
---	---	--



SCHOOL	LEAVE		
01 University of Prince Edward Island	One week paid sick leave per semester; lecturer to ensure essential material covered by end of semester	/ Up to five days leave for critical illness or death in immediate family, plus three more days for funerals off the Island	
02 Dalhousie University	May miss up to two classes with no loss of pay for reasons such as a family illness or death, as long as all material covered by end of course	/ Maternity or parental leave in accordance with provincial standards	
03 Université de Sherbrooke	Paid leave for sickness or accident, up to three semesters if the lecturer would have taught over that period: first semester paid in full, second and third equal the average of what teacher earned in two preceding years	/ Maternity leave of 20 consecutive weeks over three semesters and adoption leave of 10 weeks when teacher was scheduled to teach at least one course per term covered	/ Paternity leave of five days / For death in immediate family, up to seven days of paid leave
04 Université de Montréal	Paid sickness or accident leave of up to three consecutive terms / Maternity or adoption leave of 20 consecutive weeks over three semesters provided teacher had been scheduled to teach at least one class per semester covered	/ A lecturer entitled to Quebec's parental insurance plan, who had worked 20 weeks in the three semesters preceding a maternity leave, entitled to the difference between her weekly payments under Quebec	parental leave and 93% of her salary for each class / One week paid paternity leave and unpaid leave of up to five consecutive weeks / Parental leaves can be extended without pay for up to 52 weeks
05 University of Toronto	Six to eight days of paid sick leave per academic year (two terms) / Full pay for up to 10 weeks for maternity leave or, if employee	qualifies for EI maternity leave, employer pays the difference between the EI benefit and 95% of pay until end of course appointment	
06 York University	Paid sick leave up to 6/35ths of employment contract; long-term disability available after 17 weeks	/ Paid maternity leave, up to 17/35ths of employment contract, including if delivery occurs within four months of contract expiry and employee	would otherwise be teaching in the following term / Compassionate leave, bereavement leave, emergency leave, transsexual transition leave
07 McMaster University	Variety of paid leaves such as bereavement, illness, religious, jury and family responsibility / Paid parental, adoption and pregnancy leaves at 40% of	minimum rate of pay for remainder of term /Top-up for pregnancy or adoption leaves for the next term if instructor had been	scheduled to work / Unpaid parental leave also available
08 University of Winnipeg	Short-term personal emergency leave without loss of pay as long as teaching obligations are met over the term / Three days leave for critical illness or death in the	immediate family, as long as teaching duties are met over the term / Three days paid sick leave, as long as the instructor works	with the department to ensure teaching responsibilities are met / 17 weeks unpaid maternity leave for instructors who worked the previous term
09 University of Calgary	Five paid days for "casual illness" for instructors working for more than six consecutive months and who have taught at least six half-course equivalents	/ These instructors who need more than five days' leave are entitled to \$1,000 a month for the duration of the appointment, up to six months	/ One day of casual illness leave may be used to support a sick child or spouse to a maximum three such days in one year / May apply for a variety of other leaves: parenting, urgent personal, compassionate, and court / No provision for maternity leave

JOB SECURITY

Sessional instructors who taught the same or equivalent course three times hold right of recall (first refusal)

/ Sessionals who taught at least one course for three years are eligible for three-year contract for any course where they hold right of recall

/ Sessionals who taught a course in a department within two years become part of the department's sessional roster, accumulating seniority if they've taught in the last two years

No guarantees of job security / Provision for seniority via a precedence list. After a period of probation, instructors are put

on the list and move up through three steps by accumulating points for each course taught / Precedence retained for three years even if not working

Seniority points decide course assignments; one point accrued per 45 hours of course time / Teachers stay on a seniority list if they've taught within the past 24 months, except under a variety of conditions such as

leave of absence for illness or accident, election to political office, postgrad studies / May be offered part- or full-time contracts after probation if they have enough seniority / When on a flat rate (contract) for more than a year, the

teacher is entitled to termination notice of eight to 20 weeks

Lecturers accrue a point for every 45 hours of course time; points are used to generate seniority lists used to determine future course assignments

Hiring preference given to those holding Sessional Lecturer II or III ranking, determined by academic degree or professional accomplishment, and number

of years and courses taught / Level III sessionals entitled to teach two full-year courses in their department in the year following attainment of the rank / For sessionals at the same

rank, preference given to those who have taught a course the most number of times

Instructors with 10 years' experience at York may apply for a Long Service Teaching Appointment, guaranteeing three full courses in each of

three years and an additional \$2,000 per course; at least five of these appointments are to be made each year

/ A chance for conversion to full-time tenure-track position; two such positions are made available each year university-wide

/ Course director appointments based on qualifications; in the qualified pool, candidate with most seniority gets the position

Right of first refusal: If an instructor taught this course for the last two periods it was offered, he or she must be offered the same course twice more

/ "Current seniority" is accrued each time the instructor teaches the same course / "Aggregate seniority" is accrued with each course taught

/ When all other considerations are equal, the individual with most seniority gets the position

Right of first refusal for instructors who have taught the same course at least once in three out of four successive academic years in which the course was offered

/ Where more than one instructor has this right, course is offered to the one who taught the course the longest or who has greater seniority

First consideration for sessional, instructor or senior instructor appointments based on qualifications and record of performance

/ Where two people have equal assessments or qualifications, the appointment is offered to the one with the most service



SCHOOL	 ACCESS TO RESOURCES		 OTHER	
01 University of Prince Edward Island	Departments will endeavour to provide access to appropriate facilities and services including library, computing, audio-visual	facilities, office supplies, email and telephone access	At least one sessional in the department, elected by the others, has departmental voting privileges on behalf of sessionals / Access to a scholarly activity fund for experienced sessionals	(\$6,000 a year from the university) / Access to professional development and travel fund (\$10,000 a year from the university), up to \$300 per sessional per term
02 Dalhousie University	Up to \$300 per sessional from a professional development fund of \$3,000 per academic year / Office space and facilities as determined by the department	/ Library card and email access for instructors who passed probation / Conference and workshop costs paid by the university if it requires the instructor to attend	Instructor retains ownership of lectures and lecture materials	
03 Université de Sherbrooke	Access to a closed furnished office and desk / Access to computers and software / Same access as professors to	secretarial services, stationery and photocopiers / Pre-approved, class-related long distance phone costs covered	After teaching 40 term courses, the instructor is granted "aggregation," which drops the requirement for another probation period, should the	teacher leave the university and not return for a few years
04 Université de Montréal	Access to secretarial services, furniture and material required to teach, including fax and photocopying machines	/ Access to archive of student work and exams / Access to computer services	/ Representation on health and security committee / University recognizes the teacher's intellectual property rights for material created for the course; in cases of collaboration between the university and teacher, a	contract must be signed / Lecturers who design distance education courses and associated materials receive a royalty of \$900 to \$1,100 each term that course is delivered, regardless of who is teaching it
05 University of Toronto	Space to hold office consultations with students / Access to a computer, phone, photocopying, library card	/ Sessionals have the right to the same amount of teaching assistant support as regular faculty	Sessionals are paid at an hourly rate for any required additional work after a term has ended such as marking deferred exams or providing information about allegations of academic offences	/ Access to a professional development fund of \$150,000 that allows CUPE members up to \$1,000 a year each to attend conferences and join professional associations for PD purposes
06 York University	Appropriate space, use of facilities and services, required equipment, adequate access to labs, library, supplies, copying services; continuing library privileges for all CUPE unit members	/ Best efforts made to provide office space to longer-term instructors (at least three years consecutive service in unit) incl. office space between contracts	Participation in governance and departmental meetings must be supported and promoted with the relevant bodies by the employer / Two weeks paid leave to present at conferences / One week of paid leave for PD	directly related to teaching duties / Opportunity for research leaves / Access to research grant fund / PD fund of \$125,000 per year; instructor may apply for up to \$400 per year
07 McMaster University	"Appropriate" and studio space, mailbox, email, library card valid for one year / "Best efforts" made for access to other facilities and services such as photocopying,	audio-visual equipment, telephone / Access to instructional and office materials on the same basis as faculty members	Union-administered professional development fund paid by the university (last contribution was \$30,000); sessionals entitled to \$200 per	three-unit course, up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year
08 University of Winnipeg	Library privileges, email, access to athletic centre for academic year / During teaching term, shared office space with access to private meeting space and	computer, access to telephone with voicemail, Internet, photocopier and printer for course being taught	May attend and participate in departmental meetings but this is voluntary and unpaid; service and research not required	
09 University of Calgary	Access to copying, office equipment and supplies, computer accounts, library and secretarial services, marking and teaching assistants, mail services and inclusion in departmental staff lists	/ Access to desk, office and telephone for meeting students / May attend department meetings; voting rights determined within department	In addition to statutory holidays, "term certain" appointees are paid for Remembrance Day and three designated days between Christmas and New Year's	/ Instructors are entitled to \$150 per half-course for professional expenses, to a maximum of \$1,500 per academic year

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ENROLMENT	7,800 full-time equivalent (FTE) students	LEAVE	Term instructors teaching less than half-time are not entitled to sick leave / Term instructors teaching half-time or more and regularized part-timers accrue sick leave credits pro-rated to 1.5 days per month under a full-time schedule (to a maximum of 261 days); after that, short-term disability available if enrolled; if the employee has insufficient sick leave credits to qualify for STD, days will be advanced / Up to five days paid leave for family illness and immediate family bereavement and half-day paid funeral leave / Education leaves, with conditions, available to full and part-time regular employees employed as such for at least two years; paid 70% of salary, with full benefits / Unpaid maternity leave up to 52 weeks in accordance with Employment Standards Act without loss of appointment / Term instructors are eligible for maternity leave and are not disadvantaged in terms of advancement / Regular part-time and full-time instructors at top end of salary step or having served at least 10 years may apply for unpaid "renewal leave" of up to one year with a monthly stipend pro-rated against \$1,200 a month for full-timers
BASE SALARY	Single scale for all staff, pro-rated for part-time and term faculty. This works out to \$6,475 to \$10,403 per semester section, including direct teaching time and service duties		
PENSION ELIGIBILITY	Eligible for coverage under British Columbia's Public Sector Pension Plan; shared contributions amount to about 9% of the employee's salary		
REPRESENTATION	All faculty are represented by the Vancouver Community College Faculty Association, except for those working in continuing studies. Contract expired March 31, 2012		
BENEFITS	Term instructors teaching half-time or more receive employer-paid insurance for basic medical and extended health, dental, long-term disability, group life, and accidental death and dismemberment. They receive short-term disability, with premiums paid by employees / Part-time (and full-time) regular instructors receive all of the above		
JOB SECURITY	Most term instructors who have taught at least a 50% course load satisfactorily for two years are converted to "regular" status on par with full-time staff and enjoy the same job security provisions. Term instructors accrue seniority on a pro-rated basis / Once hired, a term instructor does not go through the hiring process again but joins a pool of part-time regular and term instructors; these teachers have right of first refusal for term appointments, subject to seniority rules / Assignments are given out first to regular full-time, then regular part-time, then term-appointed instructors	ACCESS TO RESOURCES	Access to all departmental resources
		OTHER	Regular part-time and term instructors are entitled to vacation days or pay credits pro-rated on the basis of 3.66 days per month for full-time work / Term and regular instructors working half-time or more who complete eight months of duty are entitled to 20 paid days per year for professional development; those with seven months get 15 days; the amount is pro-rated for less than full-time work / No overtime is allowed except in emergency cases / All employees are fully included in the life and work of their department and union, with full voting rights, regardless of time or seniority

Continued from page 24

Another idea is to include sessionals in departmental meetings or have designated sessional representation on committees (although where this has happened, sessionals aren't always paid for their time).

In the U.S., some tenured faculty have taken on the cause of contract teachers. One of the most prominent is the Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success (thechangingfaculty.org), a research project led by Adrianna Kezar, associate professor of education at the University of Southern California.

"Few institutions have developed policies and practices to support non-tenure-track faculty members or include them more completely in the life of our campuses," wrote Dr. Kezar and two co-researchers in an

essay for the online publication *Inside Higher Ed* this past fall. It's a situation, they said, that cannot continue if universities and colleges expect to improve the quality of student learning.

With universities so dependent now on sessional teaching, even in Canada, can they really afford to lose experienced sessional teachers who are finding their work situations untenable? "What we end up losing," says Ms. McKendrick, the sessional teacher from UPEI, "are very good teachers who would like to stay in the profession and yet can't manage the conditions." **UA**

Moir MacDonald is a journalist who specializes in education and writes often for *University Affairs*. She has been working as a teaching assistant in Ryerson University's journalism school for the past three years.