



Concordia University Part-time Faculty Association

Association des professeur(e)s à temps partiel de l'Université Concordia

Concordia Part-time Faculty to Strike

"After six years of fruitless negotiations, we have no other choice."

Join Concordia's part-time faculty as we protest six years of fruitless negotiations. The press conference is dedicated to the over 30,000 students part-time faculty serve at Concordia University. Our strike action is supported by the Concordia Student Union, the Fine Arts Student Alliance and the Arts and Science Student Association.

After six years of collective bargaining, Concordia's part-time faculty are planning to go on strike. CUPFA (The Concordia University Part-Time Association) an independent union represents over 900 part-time faculty. CUPFA members teach 40% of Concordia courses and have been working without a new contract for 6 years. It is the first time in the history of Concordia that faculty are preparing to walk out of their classrooms.

"Our CUPFA members represent the best in real world education," says CUPFA President and Political Science professor Maria Peluso. "Many have PhDs and do research. All bring essential practical experience into the class room. We teach at the graduate and undergraduate level. We are equal to full-time faculty at all levels of teaching and yet get less than 17 cents for every dollar the University spends on full-time faculty. We are essential to Concordia's academic mission. However we are in an impossible situation and are now being conned by Con U. The administration is refusing to negotiate in good faith. It is with real regret that, after six year of negotiations, our members have decided that some kind of strike action is necessary."

Consider the following:

- CUPFA members have been without a new contract since 2002.
- Salaries for part-time faculty have not increased since January 2003 but workload and class size has increased to the point where sound pedagogy is being ignored.
- In fact, computers are replacing teachers with cyber-classrooms. Online courses are the cash cow for an institution of higher learning that is no longer interested in dispensing knowledge. Our students are being denied a quality education. The difficulties with eConcordia speaks for itself and raises pedagogical and labour concerns for the entire University community and not just its part-time faculty.
- Ignoring the existing contract, the University administration repeatedly pays full-time faculty more money for teaching part-time courses than part-time faculty for the same courses. The administration refuses to pay what it owes CUPFA members despite having lost its case in several court challenges. There is no internal equity for the salaries of part-time faculty.
- There is no external equity of salaries with other part-time faculty teaching at UQAM, the University of Montreal, or with other part-time faculty unions in Quebec. The administration is not conforming to the norms of the labour market for its part-time faculty.
- Concordia does however, spend its money on legal actions against unions and associations. It gives compensation packages worth millions to former President Lajeunesse and other key members of the administration when they leave before their terms are up. The University administration is not acting in good faith and is

squandering public money.

- Part-time faculty do not have adequate offices to fulfill their teaching responsibilities and meet with their students. Offices that do exist must be shared by several teachers. They are small spaces with no telephones, worn-out computers, no filing cabinets, few desks or often not even a place to hang your coat. It is not possible to provide students with any privacy. "Our teaching conditions are our students learning conditions".
- Part-time faculty have no pro-rated benefits in the area of medical health insurance, parental leave, disability insurance, or pension plans.
- Part-time faculty work with an administration that often hires glamorous faculty by dubious means to teach courses. For example, Bernard Landry, who was paid \$35,000 when regular members are paid \$5,400 to teach the same course. The administration abuses their discretion in providing reserve courses to outsiders with little regard to their teaching abilities or the strength of loyal and skilled part-time faculty.
- Part-time faculty are contingent labour and have no job security.

In October CUPFA members gave its executive a mandate for strike action. "We had hoped that Concordia would begin negotiating in good faith to avoid declaring an actual strike but that has not happened." says Maria Peluso, CUPFA's President. "Check out our history and visit our website at www.cupfa.org. Examine our YouTube videos. The history of our court case, our negotiations, and how our employer deals with conflict provides the stark reality of how part-time faculty are treated. Parents and alumnae should be particularly concerned. We teach 40% of all courses. Today's students are not getting the quality education the University promised".

CUPFA has the support of both the Concordia community, all its labour unions and other outside organizations. I encourage you to examine the impressive list of our supporters from the Canadian Association of University Teachers to the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labour an international body representing part-time faculty unions across Quebec, Canada, the United States and Mexico. We have the support of FNEEQ-CSN Fédération nationale des enseignants et des enseignants du Québec, representing the most impressive body of part-time faculty unions in this province.

"We are no longer dealing with a labour issue but one of social justice. Our students understand us. After six years, CUPFA is placing its employer on red alert. Enough is enough. Our strike action compels the justice that has been denied for part-time faculty who teach at ConU."

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