

20 October 2021

Professor Santa J. Ono
President,
The University of British Columbia
Walter C. Koerner Library
7th Floor, 1958 Main Mall

Professor Lesley Cormack
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Principal
Okanagan Campus
102H Campus Administration Building
1138 Alumni Ave, Kelowna BC, V1V 1V7

via Email

Dear Professors Ono & Cormack:

Re: Fair Employment Week 2021

October 18-22, 2021 is Fair Employment Week, an occasion for universities and colleges across North America to reflect on and act on behalf of contingent academics, the growing numbers of scholars on our campuses who are on short-term, insecure contracts. This year, the UBCFA will host a series of virtual events for Contract Faculty at both UBC-V and UBC-O, including an “UnPub” social, a CTLT workshop and a week-long screening and a watch party of the documentary, *In Search of Professor Precarious*. In addition, we will be participating in CAUT’s week of national virtual events that will highlight the precarious positions of Contract Faculty in Canada.

Fair Employment Week is a time for Contract Faculty to celebrate the teaching, research and service contributions of this large and diverse group of scholars and teachers at UBC. It also gives an opportunity for the larger UBC community to learn about the working conditions faced by contract academics at UBC and across the country.

Contract Faculty play an important role at the University: not only do they teach courses but they also do much of the core, crucial work of the academy: they mentor students, run programs, do research and professional development, serve on departmental and university-wide committees and perform community service, while still earning far less than their tenured and tenure track colleagues.

For more than a year in lockdown, our Contract Faculty – Sessional Lecturer and Lecturers – have worked extraordinary hours to teach themselves how to adapt to new ways of teaching and learning. Sessional Lecturers, who are paid by the course, have worked above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that UBC students’ education has continued to be of the highest quality and without interruption.

During the summer, a time when Sessional Lecturers are not paid, many worked just as diligently doing research and training into course design and effective pedagogic practices to ensure that they could continue to deliver such high-quality education and, despite uncertain directions from the University, have prepared to teach in three modes this fall: remotely, in person and through hybrid methods, often without adequate supports. The effects of learning and delivering a whole new

method of educational instruction have amplified the many challenges faced by Contract Faculty in academia, who are burdened with greater financial insecurity, higher workloads and health concerns. Although our Lecturers are salaried, they carry the highest teaching loads at UBC and have been under an extraordinary amount of pressure and stress with the sudden shift to remote teaching. In addition, all Contract Faculty have felt the burden of anxiety in returning to face-to-face teaching without clarity about safety protocol enforcement. Their contractual precarity creates a further burden, because they have little choice but to return to working conditions they might consider unsafe.

The general treatment of Contract Faculty is unfair and inequitable, particularly as the accomplishments of Contract Faculty have contributed to the University's overall success in both national and international rankings making UBC a world-class educational institution. As you are aware from the results of the CAUT and CUPE's independent surveys of Contract Faculty working conditions across Canada, universities are relying on insecure and underpaid contracts at unsustainable levels. UBC should recognize the meaningful work Contract Faculty do and in response offer adequate remuneration and paths to career advancement. We know that you are aware of this problem, and we hope that you view it as a high priority to make UBC a better place for all Contract Faculty.

As part of this year's FEW activities, the Faculty Association will be sponsoring a special screening of a documentary on Contract Faculty entitled "In Search of Professor Precarious". Our members will be able to access the documentary via this link: <https://vimeo.com/613907878/444a7b56bd>; which will be operative from 4 pm, Oct 17 to 11 pm Oct 29 (no password required). We do hope you will take the time to watch this important documentary.

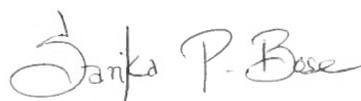
Fair Employment Week 2021 has been designed to honour the contributions of faculty on short-term contracts, and to further our joint desire to make UBC a stable, inclusive, equitable, respectful and world-class place to work and learn.

We look forward to working with you to make it fair for our Contract Faculty.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Richardson
President



Sarika Bose
Chair, Contract Faculty Committee