Appendix A – Equal Pay for Equal Teaching

Currently, sessional lecturers are paid $780 - $3300 less per course than instructors with the same qualifications. This amount recognizes that service and research are NOT part of sessional duties (thus, these amounts solely reflect the teaching workload of instructors).

We believe that the unequal compensation of sessionals for equal teaching cannot continue if the University of Regina expects to improve the quality of student learning – the core of our mission and the source of our collective future well-being. The University’s ability to rely on precariously employed teachers as a result of their cheap labour is devaluing higher education for students, sessionals, and faculty alike. This cheap labour flies in the face of their professed commitment to education and the University of Regina’s Values of Mutual Respect, Integrity, and Honesty, which states, “The members of our community are our defining resource”. The overuse and overreliance on sessionals as a result of their cheap labour is short-changing students who are being taught by overworked, underpaid academics with whom they are unable to consistently make meaningful connections to. Above all other goals, student success should be the primary focus of any University, especially considering the 36% increase in their tuition over the last 10 years. Equal pay for equal teaching allows those delivering courses to focus on their work and builds a better sense of commitment to students, departments/faculties, and the University.

In conflict with the mission of the academy and the principles of academia, those delivering over 50% of undergraduate courses belong to what is now called the precariat - a group whose working lives lack predictability or financial security – and as a result, these members often don’t exercise their academic freedom, which hurts the quality of education for everybody and de-professionalizes the University. If the difference in compensation between sessionals and permanent academic staff members is reduced, this trend is less pronounced and reduces the reliance and overuse of sessionals. Equal pay for equal teaching also reduces the incentive to rely on sessionals to teach an expanding student body and to replace permanent positions with precarious ones. Current language in Article 5.4 of the collective agreements reads:
The University is committed to maintaining the quality of instruction at this institution and shall work toward decreasing the proportion of (full-time equivalent) sessional to full-time appointments.

Cheap sessional labour, however, leaves no incentive to reduce the University’s reliance on sessionals.

To address the inequities surrounding compensation for course delivery, we proposed the following sessional lecturer stipend adjustments on April 17th, 2018: increase Sessional Lecturer I stipend by $780 to fall just below the floor pay of Instructor I; increase Sessional Lecturer II stipend by $980 to fall just below the floor pay of Instructor II; and increase Sessional Lecturer III stipend by $1200 to fall just below the floor pay of Instructor III.

On January 16th, 2019, the University responded to our Appendix A proposal by striking out all language surrounding increases to sessional stipends. No explanation was given for this deletion; in fact, this strikeout was never addressed or discussed.

On January 21st, 2019, URFA presented a package of all remaining articles, which included the same increases to sessional stipends in Appendix A.

On January 29th, 2019, the University responded to our Appendix A proposal by striking out all language surrounding increases to sessional stipends. Again, this strikeout was never addressed or discussed.

The University’s ability to rely on precariously employed teachers as a result of their cheap labour erodes the consistency, quality, and attentiveness of instruction, with long-term impacts on public institutions. As disinvestment and declining academic outcomes deepen, the overall institutional integrity of the higher education systems erodes. As administrators make more and more teaching positions precarious, allegedly for cost savings, they don’t apply that same logic to themselves. While the precarious University teacher is now the norm, the percentage of precarious or part-time administrators has actually gone down. Their salaries, too, unlike those of academic staff members, continue to go up.

Society relies on higher education for not only career training but also an educated citizenry. If allowed to exploit workers as a result of cheap labour, it raises concern for the overall wellbeing of society. Along those lines, the University of Regina’s Values of Community and Social Responsibility outline that the University “illuminate[s] pressing social problems and seeks solutions”. We believe the University of Regina should be a model employer in society and not one that models inequity.