



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

OCUFA Provincial Party Leaders Survey

Provincial Election 2018

Fairness for contract faculty

A growing number of faculty at Ontario universities are being hired on short-term, precarious contracts. OCUFA estimates that the number of courses taught by contract faculty has doubled since 2000. Recent research from the Council of Ontario Universities shows that over 50 per cent of university teaching is done by contract faculty. It is widely acknowledged that contract faculty earn less for the same work as their full-time colleagues, lack access to benefits, often juggle jobs at multiple institutions, and face unpredictable scheduling and job insecurity. However, universities are well placed to provide good, stable jobs in our communities, and 93 per cent of Ontarians expect universities to be model employers.

How will your party address precarious work at Ontario universities and will your party commit to delivering job security, equal pay, and access to benefits for university contract faculty?

Recent changes to labour laws will bring more fairness to workplaces across Ontario. For contract faculty, new equal pay provisions are an important step forward. However, loopholes and broad exemptions in the equal pay provisions leave too much room for universities to avoid paying their contract workers fairly. Government can help by facilitating the implementation of new labour laws and making the public investments required to set a standard of fairness for contract faculty across the postsecondary sector.

Will your party implement and fund new labour laws, including equal pay provisions for university contract faculty?

Faculty renewal

Faculty are at the heart of Ontario universities – they teach courses, mentor students, and conduct research that expands knowledge and drives the economy. In the last decade, student enrolment has increased seven times faster than full-time faculty hiring at Ontario universities. This has left Ontario with the highest student-faculty ratios in Canada, resulting in larger class sizes and less one-on-one engagement between students and their professors.

Will your party commit to launching a faculty renewal strategy that supports quality education through additional full-time faculty hiring, replacing retiring faculty, and creating pathways for contract faculty into secure, full-time positions?

University funding

Strong public funding for universities is necessary to support excellence in teaching and research. On a per-student basis, public funding has been on a downward trend in Ontario since 2008 and Ontario's universities receive the lowest level of per-student funding in all of Canada. In recent years, some positive steps have been taken to improve access for students, but parallel investments are not being made to ensure that students have a quality education and are

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supported throughout their studies. Operating funding for our institutions is not even keeping up with inflation.

Will your party commit to increased investments in core operating funding for Ontario's universities to support quality research and education?

For many years, the government has allocated operating funding based primarily on student enrolment. Following a recent review of the funding formula, a new component of funding was introduced that is tied to performance, as measured by a series of metrics. By design, performance based funding works against quality improvement by withholding funds from universities that fail to meet prescribed targets. This approach to funding punishes students at institutions unable to meet their targets and makes it more difficult for those institutions to improve.

What is your party's position on performance based funding for postsecondary education? Will your party repeal the performance based component of Ontario's university funding model?

Since 2014, each of Ontario's universities has worked with the government to develop Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs) that outline their institutional priorities. The most recent round of SMAs was negotiated in 2017 and will be in place until 2020. At most institutions, the process of developing SMAs has not included meaningful consultation with the campus community, including faculty. Faculty experience and expertise are invaluable in determining strategic directions for the province's universities.

Will your party require meaningful consultation with faculty as part of the Strategic Mandate Agreement development process?

Accessible postsecondary education

Ontario currently has the highest fees in Canada – undergraduate tuition fees are 76 per cent higher than the average for the rest of the country. Tuition fees are a barrier to access that prevent students from pursuing a postsecondary education and should not be relied upon as a foundation for university funding. The recent reorganization of student assistance will help many students and their families cover the costs of tuition fees. However, without a commitment to address increasing tuition fees, Ontario will be moving further away from the promise of accessible postsecondary education.

Will your party respond to calls from student groups to freeze tuition fees and improve access to postsecondary education for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds?

Other issues

Is your party proposing any additional policies or initiatives that will directly impact university education in Ontario?

About OCUFA

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations has been the provincial voice of university faculty since 1964. OCUFA represents over 17,000 professors and academic librarians in 29 faculty associations across Ontario. OCUFA is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of higher education in Ontario.