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**Report to the Ontario
Ministry of
Advanced Education and
Skills Development**

A Survey of Sessional Faculty in Ontario Publicly-Funded Universities

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Executive Summary

Within the past decade, the unprecedented growth in non-tenure/tenure track faculty has led to speculation as to the learning environment and learning outcomes for students. Both national media and researchers have raised concerns about the growth in short-term contract faculty, yet there is little evidentiary data to support policy development. Our study of sessional faculty in Ontario's publicly funded universities provides much needed data and insight into the current pressures, challenges, and adaptations of the rapidly rising number of university instructors who work on short-term contracts, also known as sessional faculty.

From 2015 to 2016, our team of researchers reached out to 17 universities in Ontario and were able to conduct this study at 12 institutions across the province. Our team approached each institution or union/faculty association representing sessional instructors and asked them to distribute the survey instrument to all part-time, non-full-time, non-tenure-track instructors by email. The response rates ranged from 16% to 48% by institution, though notably we were sometimes only able to obtain estimates of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed because of email list issues. We reached out to roughly 7814 instructors and achieved an overall response rate of 21.5%. However, due to the lack of demographic data available on the whole population we are unable to determine the representativeness of the respondent population. For example, because this sample represents only those who have worked within the previous few years at the institution and where there is current contact information available to the institution or union/ association representatives, our email invitation may not have reached the full population of contract faculty at each institution.

In order to provide clarity and context, qualitative data were obtained through interviews with 52 instructors who volunteered to participate selected from six institutions. The interview data is still being analyzed and will be presented in a subsequent reports and publications.

Demographics

We can conclude that there have been several shifts in the demographics of sessional faculty compared with the population Rajagopal (2002) surveyed in 1991/92. For example, the typical sessional instructor is now female (60.2%); 38.5% of the sample identified as male with an additional non-binary 1.4%. The educational background of sessionals has shifted as well, from primarily a field dominated by professionals (i.e. teaching "on-the-side") to one where 66.4% reported attaining a PhD. The analysis of data led to the identification of two primary subcategories: classic and precarious sessional instructors. Classic sessionals are those who are current or retired professionals, for example lawyers, policy analysts, or leaders in the private sector who have returned to "give back" or "teach for fun" while making a bit of "extra cash on

the side¹.” Most classic sessionals do not have a Ph.D. and have another major source of income such as a full-time job outside the university. Precarious sessionals are typically reliant upon the income from instructional work. Most are female, with a Ph.D., who report working 4-5 years on short-term contracts, and indicate an aspiration to find a full-time position with employee benefits in the academy. There are several subcategories, however, including those precarious sessionals who are seeking any full-time position and have “given up” on academia; in addition there is a subgroup of classic instructors who have taken work in the private or public sectors who are “in waiting” for a full-time academic position. To our knowledge, this is the first study that has noted these subcategories of sessional instructors and this may require further study in the future

The Learning Environment

In response to open-ended questions on how to improve the learning environment, sessional instructors offered a variety of suggestions that primarily fall within five categories. Each category is presented in the order of the number of suggestions received per category. First, sessional faculty indicated that hiring faculty to more stable, full-time positions would reduce stress and enable instructors to better prepare for upcoming courses. Second, many felt that class size, notably for undergraduate courses, was problematic for providing critical thinking opportunities and student engagement. Third, Sessional faculty would like more opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development, frequently requesting greater access to university teaching and learning centres to improve their instructional techniques & pedagogy. In addition, many indicated that more pedagogy and classroom management training in their Ph.D. and master’s programs would have been welcome. Fourth, instructors were concerned with what they perceived to be an increasing need to conduct remedial work in many first year courses, where students are unfamiliar with essay structure or basic requirements for university-level classes. Many felt that offering remedial or preparatory courses, or perhaps better high school preparation in general, would free up classroom time from remedial work and raise expectations and thus learning outcomes. Fifth, while most instructors indicated a positive response overall to questions regarding available teaching resources at most institutions, there were concerns that gaps can affect the learning environment. For example, ill-fitted classroom layouts and a lack of private meeting spaces for faculty were the two most frequently identified issues related to resources.

¹ These quotations are comments selected as representative of the responses provided in the open-ended comment sections of our survey.

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Introduction

As Brownlee (2015) argues, there are persistent challenges in quantifying the shift toward the use of contract labour in Canadian universities. Due to the fact that information on contract instructors is not required for accountability purposes, many institutions do not appear to have good data on non-tenure/tenure-track faculty “despite a burgeoning literature on the precarious nature of contract employment and the threat it poses to teaching and learning, academic freedom, collegial governance and the integrity of the public university” (p. 1). While there have been a number of important studies of this phenomenon, including Indhu Rajagopal’s (2002) *Hidden Academics*, we have very little data to inform our understanding of this complex phenomenon. With a combination of government cuts to Statistics Canada and other agencies that may otherwise have collected data on part-time faculty, the challenge is compounded by a reluctance of institutions to collect or release these data (Brownlee, 2015).

The persistent lack of data on Canadian sessional faculty is problematic, both for understanding a large segment of the academic workforce and the impact that the increasing use of part-time university teachers is having on students and the learning environment. Part-time faculty frequently fall outside of the scope of large-scale studies on faculty life and, at least to-date, have not been included in national and international surveys.² Yet the fiscal realities of public funding for the higher education sector suggests that, in many Western nations, post-secondary learning environments are becoming increasingly reliant on part-time and sessional faculty. Without an informed understanding of the perspectives of this growing segment of academic labour, any assessment of the educational service delivery, training, and academic environment in these institutions would be incomplete.

The objective of this study was to increase our understanding of the perceptions, working conditions and work-related expectations of sessional and part-time faculty in Ontario’s public universities. Our research questions focused on: 1) who are sessional faculty (demographics, educational background, professional experience, aspirations, etc.), 2) what are the working conditions of sessional faculty in Ontario universities, and 3) what are the experiences of sessional faculty in terms of teaching, orientation, access to resources, participation in campus life, and their perceived role in student success. As a large multi-institutional study of sessional and part-time faculty in Ontario, this study used a mixed-methods approach, gathering data from a selected sample of twelve public universities in Ontario. Data were triangulated through 1) institutional document analyses, 2) literature review, 3) a web-based questionnaire survey with closed- and open-ended questions, and 4) semi-structured interviews.

² For example, the Changing Academic Professions survey (see Jones et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Metcalfe et al., 2011).

2. Methodology

Starting in 2015, our research team requested participation from 17 publicly funded institutions in Ontario. To protect participant anonymity, smaller universities were excluded due to the small population of sessional faculty employed by these institutions (such as Nipissing, with a published total of 63 part-time faculty in 2012/13). Four institutions agreed to participate initially in the winter of 2015, including the universities of Lakehead, Ottawa, Toronto, and Trent, in alphabetical order. Upon re-examination of our approach, we attained approval from a further eight universities to conduct the study in the winter of 2016, for a total of 12 universities. The eight institutions include Brock, Carleton, McMaster, UOIT, Wilfrid Laurier, Windsor, York, and one other institution that would prefer not to be identified. This sample offers the benefit of representing the diversity of the Ontario university system, including major research universities, a bilingual university, primarily undergraduate universities, and universities located in rural regions of the province.

Our team approached each institution or union/association representing sessional instructors and asked them to distribute the survey instrument to all part-time, non-full-time, non-tenure-track instructors by email. The response rates ranged from 16% to 48% by institution, though notably we were, at times, only able to obtain estimates of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed because of email and other list-serve issues. Over the span of two years, we reached out to roughly 7814 instructors and achieved an overall response rate of 21.5%. However, due to the lack of demographic data available on the whole population we are unable to determine the representativeness of the respondent population. For example, because this sample represents only those who have worked within the previous few years at the institution, and who have current contact information available to the institution or union/association representatives, our email invitation may not have reached the full population of contract faculty at each institution.

Defining participants

The study focused on short-term contractual instructors, limited-term instructors and part-time instructors, under the common frame of ‘sessional faculty.’ This includes instructors on limited-term contracts up to three years in length, and those paid on a course-by-course basis. Across Ontario’s 20 public universities, collective agreements define these groups in different ways, and therefore our team necessarily had to define participants in terms of the broader category of “sessional faculty” rather than by specific employment categories and terminology used at each institution. The invitation to participate in the web-based questionnaire was sent out through email either by the university or the union.

Self-reporting

It should be noted that the results derived are based on self-reports and therefore represent opinions, perceptions, beliefs and personal accounts of activities. This provides insight into how instructors perceive the learning environments in which they work, what motivates them, and how policies and practices that are put in place are carried out in practice.

3. Terminology

3.1 “Sessional” and “contingent” faculty

It is worth noting that the terminology used to describe various forms of faculty appointments and career tracks is complex, and there is considerable variation by country, by province, and by institution³. “Sessional” is a term used to refer primarily to those who are working on a contractual basis as instructors within the university, typically for those working on semester-by-semester contracts. “Contingent faculty” is a broader term, including sessional faculty and all non-permanent faculty members who are working on part-time or limited term contracts outside the tenure-stream.

Rajagopal (2002), who contributed a great deal to our understanding of contingent faculty in Canada through her studies conducted in the 1990s, acknowledged the challenges of terminology for this population. Simply defining a group as non-full-time faculty is problematic, as this could potentially comprise a range of lecturers including undergraduate and graduate students, post-docs, laboratory instructors, and others, depending on the definition. Rajagopal ultimately used the term “part-timers” to indicate: “those members of an institution’s instructional staff who are employed part time and who do not hold appointments with full-time status” (p. 261). While Rajagopal found the term “part-timers⁴” to be a term best recognized by respondents in 1990-92, and “concluded that respondent universities would be able precisely to recognize this term unambiguously,” our team found this term less helpful in 2015/26, particularly given the complication that many non-full-time faculty are working full-time equivalent hours and course loads. Therefore, “part-time” appears to exclude a large component of the population of non-tenure-track faculty. Given the current context, we found the term ‘part-timers’ to be inadequate in terms of capturing the variety of sessional faculty working in various contractual arrangements.

The sample population for this study is intended to include the variety and range of non-permanent, non-tenure-track sole-course-instructors at each institution in Ontario. For example, our sample includes part-time appointees with teaching responsibilities, full-time graduate students and post-doc’s who have sole teaching responsibilities, and full-time limited-term contract instructors (on non-permanent contracts up to 36 months in duration). Guest lecturers, teaching assistants who do not have sole teaching responsibilities, and other non-remunerated individuals are excluded.

To clarify our sample population, we can offer a comparison to Rajagopal’s sample from 1991-92. While the samples are largely comparable, for example, relatively few laboratory instructors responded to our

³ For a more detailed discussion of definitions of part-time, sessional and contingent faculty across universities in Ontario, please see Field, Jones, Karram-Stephenson, and Khoyestsyan (2014).

⁴ Included within the scope of Rajagopal’s term “part-timers” are “those part-time appointees with teaching responsibilities, for instance, as course director, tutorial/seminar leader, laboratory demonstrator/supervisor)... excluded five categories: part-time academic staff who do not have teaching duties...or who have only occasional duties (such as guest lecturers); people holding appointments as full-timers but teaching only part time or carrying a partial load; full-time students (graduate or undergraduate) performing teaching duties; full-timers teaching overload; additional remuneration; and medical part-timers” (p. 10).

survey, contrary to Rajagopal's sample. While our team asked that the questionnaire be distributed to "sessional instructors, part-time instructors, and all instructors working on a contractual or part-time basis of up to three years in duration" it appears that the wording of our request may have led to the non-deliberate exclusion of laboratory instructors, perhaps simply by not specifically requesting that they be included. Given the remarkably small number of laboratory instructors who responded to our study and our interest in focusing on course instructors, we excluded this small group from our analysis. Therefore, while largely comparable, we do not have an identical sample to the Rajagopal studies.

Given the challenges of defining terms within the Ontario context, it should come as no surprise that there are different terms and definitions found in other jurisdictions. For example, in the United States the popular terminology for non-permanent instructors is "adjunct", while at some Canadian universities an "adjunct" denotes an individual who has a full-time teaching position at one university but teaches part-time at another. The popular term in the U.K. is "auxiliary instructors", and notably in Australia the terms frequently used include "casual academic staff" (May et al, 2013) and "casual staff" (Lane & Hare, 2014). However, "casual staff" and "casual academic staff" were mistaken for non-teaching bureaucratic staff members when initial pilot testing was done for this sample, and therefore we concluded that these terms would be unreasonably confusing in the Canadian context. In order to reduce confusion, we chose the term "sessional" due to general recognition of this term across institutions in Ontario.

3.2 "Classic" and "Precarious" Instructors

Rajagopal (2002) identified two categories of part-time instructors in Canadian universities: "classic" and "contemporary" faculty. "Classic" indicates the traditional sessional faculty member, where a professional from his or her respective field teaches one or two courses per year but is not dependent upon the part-time work provided by a university. As noted in this study, classic faculty tend to indicate teaching as a passion, with the intent of preparing students for the "real world" or "leaving a legacy" and with a hesitancy to leave current employment or come out of retirement in order to work in the academy full-time. We expand the definition of "classic" sessionals to include retired professors and professionals, and faculty who are otherwise not reliant on their income as a sessional instructor.

We use the term "precarious" throughout this study in lieu of "contemporary." Rajagopal indicates that "contemporary" is a broad category of part-time instructor who does not have an alternative career, but rather indicates an interest in working full-time in the academy. Though helpful, this definition is somewhat limiting for our sample, therefore, we are using the term "precarious" for two reasons: first, many are working full-time equivalent workloads (when courses are available) on a semester-by-semester basis, with little or no job security; and second, these sessionals are likely to be either hopeful or disillusioned with the idea of having a full-time permanent career in the academy. Therefore, "precarious" faculty are in many ways a further delineation of the notion of Rajagopal's "contemporary" faculty, as they are "permanent temps" (p. 7), but we need to underscore that these are similar, not identical, categorizations. It is important to keep in mind that the term precarious is explicitly used to identify the nature of employment

4. Literature Review

The following section offers a brief review of literature on sessional instructors that provided an important foundation for this study. This section focuses on literature that provides an overview and context for this study and the Ontario university sector, focusing on the growing student enrolment in universities and the increasing employment of non-permanent faculty.

The number of students enrolled in Canadian universities has increased significantly over the past few decades. In Ontario, a key government priority for the last decade was to increase access to higher education. In our analysis of data from the Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) system, undergraduate (full-time equivalent, FTE) enrolment rose from 311,660 in 2002-2003 to 400,272 in 2012-2013, an increase of 28% over the decade. At the same time, graduate enrolment increased 53% from 36,654 to 56,118 during the same time period. In this same period, total FTE enrolment for both undergraduate and graduate students increased by 31% from 348,314 to 456,460.

When comparing the increase in FTE enrolment and tenure-stream faculty, there is a notable gap. From 2000/01 to 2009/10, the number of full-time equivalent students in Ontario universities increased by 52%, whereas the number of full-time tenure-stream faculty increased by only 30% (Statistics Canada, UCASS data). It is generally assumed that sessional faculty are playing an increasing role in filling this gap, though data on the number of sessional faculty are not readily available. The most recent CAUT Almanac (2014/15) describes university expenditures on full-time faculty as significantly decreasing as an overall percentage of expenditure. “Despite the significant increase in university spending over the past 30 years, spending on academic salaries as a proportion of total university expenditures has declined steadily during this period. In 2012, spending on academic rank salaries represented only 20% of university expenditures, down from 30% in 1981” (p. 1).

From the 1980s onward, there has been a consistent trend toward a more flexible labour market in Canada (Kainer, 2002; Law Commission of Ontario, 2015; Rajagopal, 2002; Zeytinoglu & Muteshi, 2000; Vosko, 2006). Between 1980 and 1990, there was an increasing ‘casualization’ of work, where market forces have been inclined toward the deregulated part-time non-permanent side of the labour market, and increasingly away from the regulations surrounding full-time workers in which there are benefits, social programs, unionization and stricter labour codes. “As a result, the full-time, continuous contract jobs were replaced with part-time and casual jobs...with newcomers’ starting at a pay rate much less than their previously employed (and full-time) counterparts, and received few or no benefits” (Zeytinoglu et al, 2005, p. 90). Many international policies changed in the mid-1990s with the need for recognition of part-time workers across the industrialized world, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Part-Time Work Convention (1994). With the focus on the creation of capital rather than former policies of full-employment or creation of full-time jobs, the clear trend toward deregulated, part-time and casual work became part and parcel of arguments for economic growth (Vosko, 2006). Current trends are to replace regular workers with temporary labour in order to reduce costs of providing job security, protections, and benefits for workers and dependents. Workers in the

academic marketplace are no exception, as Rajagopal (2002) pointed out, in the Canadian context. As confirmed by the works of Jones and Skolnik (1992), Slaughter & Leslie (1997) and Rajogopal (2002), “Canada has a tradition of less government intervention for a mostly publicly funded higher education system than is the case in Australia, Britain or the United States... However, Canadian universities are finding it increasingly difficult to resist the ever-increasing government demand for profit-yielding cost-benefit analyses” (Rajagopal, p. 10). Concurrent forces of job scarcity and demand for higher education created what Rajagopal refers to as “professionals in reserve,” where an increasing number of PhDs are poised to become part of the academic labour market, but seem unable to gain entry on a full-time basis. Reduced funding and the increasing corporatized leadership of universities has contributed to a preference for short-term contracts over tenure-track positions.

With much of the literature on sessional and part-time faculty focusing on American and United Kingdom perspectives, policy makers in Canada have little evidence as to the working conditions and experiences of the ‘other’ instructors in our universities. For example, non-tenure/tenure-track faculty fall outside of the scope of large-scale studies on faculty life and are seldom included in national and international surveys (for example, the Changing Academic Professions survey, see Jones et al, 2012; Jones et al. 2013; Metcalfe, et al, 2011). Rajagopal offers interesting insights, yet the data stems from surveys and interviews conducted in 1990-1992, and while there are a limited number of studies for individual institutions, there are few reports over the past decade that cross institutional boundaries. Brownlee’s recent study (2015) confirms the dramatic rise in the employment of sessional faculty at several institutions in Ontario, including several that are included in this study. The study confirms, as did our initial report from 2014 (Field et al.), that sessional faculty numbers have been relatively stable at some institutions, and increasing at a remarkable rate at others. Brownlee’s approach was to collect data through Freedom of Information Act requests in response to the reality that there is so little publicly available data.

At some universities, such as Brock, Nipissing, Queen’s, Lakehead and Toronto, the number of full-time contract faculty did remain relatively stable. At most institutions, however, the number and proportion of full-time contract hires increased significantly. At Trent, for example, the full-time intensity ratio fell from an average of 5.6 between 2000 and 2005 to 3.4 between 2006 and 2010 (Brownlee, n/p).

The University of Ottawa is noted as having a high ratio of full-time sessionals to tenure-track faculty in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences, where “the number of full-time sessionals increased nearly six fold between 2000 and 2008... much higher than the 41% increase in tenure stream hiring” (Brownlee, 2015, p. 11). Other institutions also experienced increases, including Wilfrid Laurier University which had a “much greater proportional increase compared with tenure stream hiring” (p. 10). “Similar patterns were also noted at “Western, where the number of full-time sessionals in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Social Science rose by 229 % between 2001–02 and 2010–11” (p. 10-11). From these and other studies, we can confirm a trend at many universities in Canada toward an increasingly part-time non-secure contractual labour force.

5. Demographics of Survey Respondents

Introduction

In her analysis of data collected from 1990 to 1992, Rajagopal (2002), found that those working in part-time positions tended to be primarily male in all but one university in her national survey; notably there was only one university where women comprised a majority (55%) of part-timers (see p. 109). Our 2015/2016 study suggests, however, that the majority of sessional faculty are now female. The overall sample indicates a ratio of 2 women to 1 man; similar trends were observed within each institution in the sample where the number of women responding from each institution typically outnumbered the number of men. The exception was one institution where the male-female ratio was relatively on par, with 43% male and 47% female respondents, and 10% preferring not to answer. However, most institutions ranged from 30-42% male and 56-67% female, with a non-binary 0.1-2% of the sample, and a further 3-11% preferring not to answer. This may indicate a general “feminization” of contractual teaching positions in the academy.

The highest degree reported by sessional faculty was most frequently a PhD, with 59.4% reporting a PhD and 29.8% reporting a Master’s degree. Just over 10% of faculty did not respond to this question, some of whom offered write-in statements regarding obtaining either a Bachelors, a Bachelor of Education, or another professional certification or designation.

As noted in the literature review, Rajagopal identified two categories, “Classic” and “Contemporary” to delineate between two subgroupings of non-full-time faculty. In this study, we echo these categories with the designation of classic and precarious sessional instructors. Classic sessionals are those who have other primary work, are retired, or are otherwise not reliant on the income from short-term teaching contracts. They tend to be current or retired professionals, for example lawyers, policy analysts, or leaders in the private sector who have returned to “give back” or “teach for fun” while making a bit of “extra cash on the side.”⁵ In general, fewer classic sessionals had a Ph.D. than those in the precarious category. A caveat is that a significant number of classic sessionals who are retirees over 65 reported that they are reliant on the income from sessional instruction which may be a reflection of the challenges for retirees following the 2009 crash, among other factors, but nonetheless their main objective is not to find full-time employment in academia.

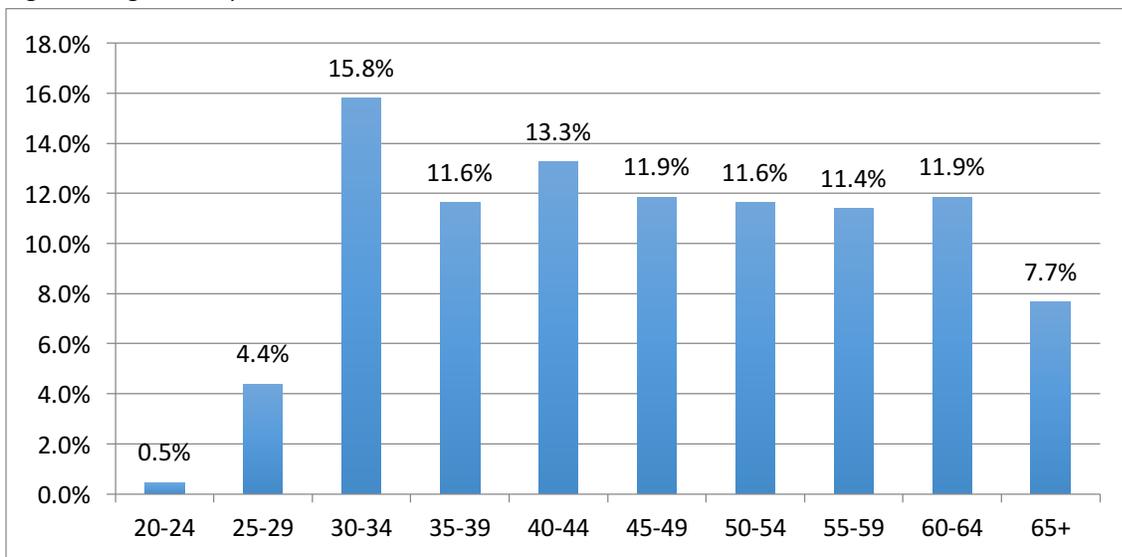
However, those in the “precarious” category are reliant upon the income from instructional work. Most precarious sessionals are female, have a Ph.D., reported working 4-5 years on short-term contracts, and indicated an aspiration to find a full-time academic position with employee benefits.

⁵ These are anonymous quotes to represent the “classic” category; these quotations are selected from responses to open-ended questions in the survey regarding the primary reason for teaching.

Demographics

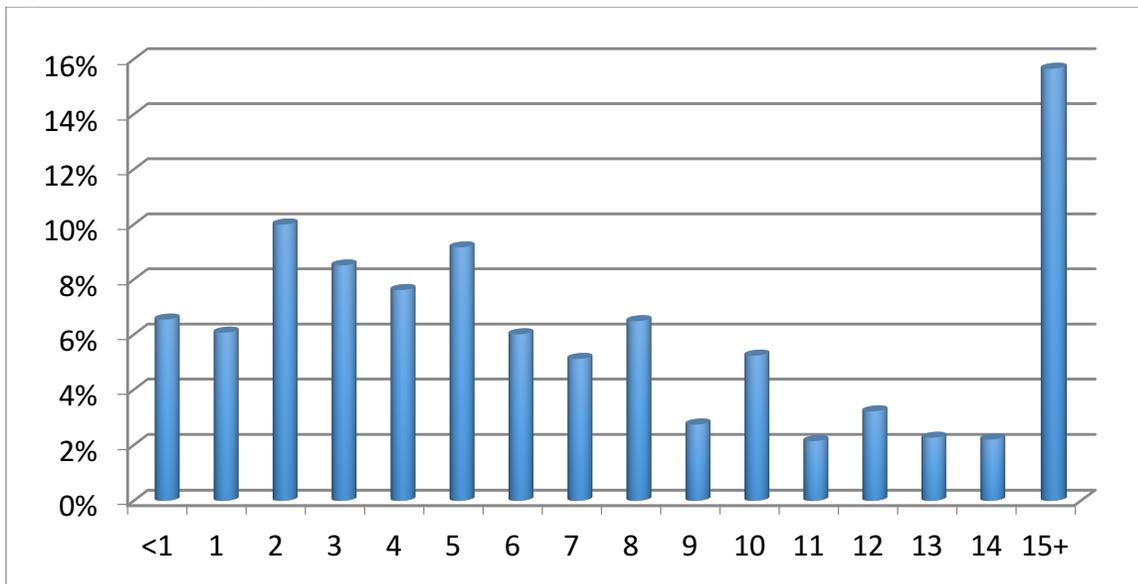
Respondents were asked to provide basic demographic information such as their age, gender, years of short-term contractual lecturing, etc. Unsurprisingly, given the number of years required for a terminal degree or the development of a professional career outside of academia, the majority of survey respondents (95.2%) were thirty years of age or older. The figure below shows that more respondents were in the 30-34 age group than the other age categories, though overall there is a relatively flat age distribution.

Figure 1: Age of Respondents



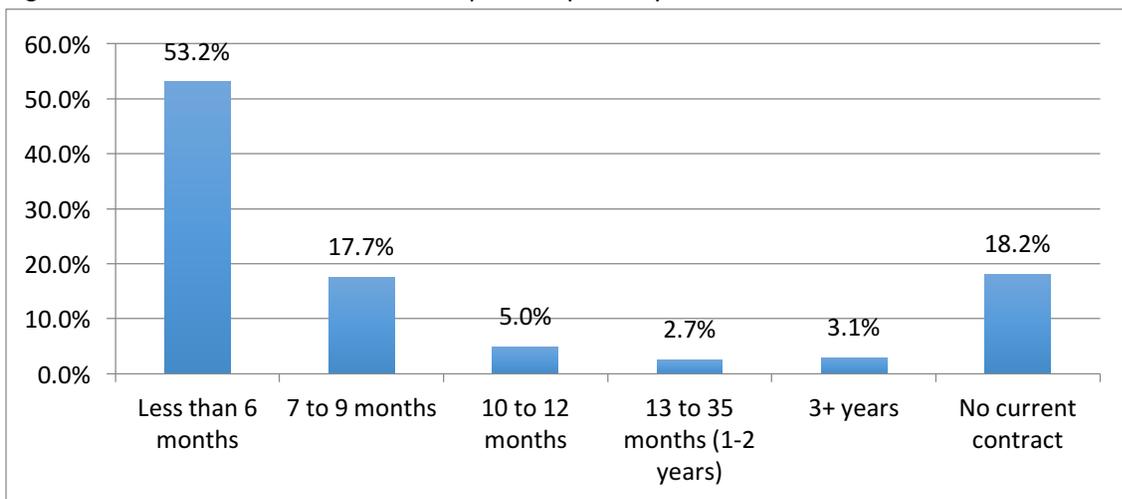
One of the most surprising findings is that sessional faculty are not as transient a group as one might have anticipated. In fact, over 15% of our sample have been working for more than 15 years as a sessional instructor (Figure 2, below). Only 12.6% of respondents reported that they had worked one year or less, with 26.12% having between 2 and 4 years of experience, and 26.8% having between 5 and 8 years of experience. Those with 9 to 14 years of experience make up the final 17.8%. Roughly one-third of all respondents had 9 or more years of experience as a sessional instructor.

Figure 2: Years working as a sessional instructor



The majority of respondents were currently on short term contracts of less than 6 months (53.9%), and, with the addition of 17.7% of respondents working on contracts of 7-9 months, over two-thirds of respondents were on contracts of 12 months or less (see Figure 3). Only 5.8% of respondents held contracts of 13 months or longer.

Figure 3: Current Contract Duration as Reported by Participants



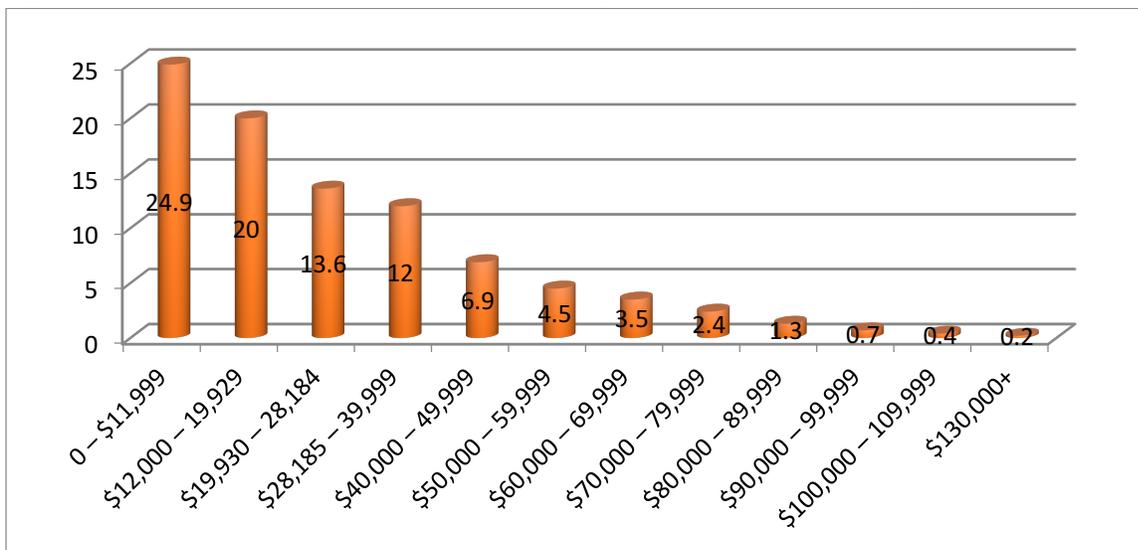
Most respondents (57.6%) felt they would be rehired to teach the same course if it was offered next year, but there were also concerns that the course might not be offered, or that a tenured faculty member might decide to teach the course. The respondents generally reported a low level of confidence concerning the prospects of rehiring.

Income

Respondents were asked several questions regarding income and alternative work throughout the survey. A majority of respondents provided an estimated after-tax income from work as a sessional instructor, with a minority indicating an after-tax personal income for all work. While data is self-reported and anonymous, it should be noted that the distribution appears to indicate several worrying trends. For many instructors, income levels from part-time sessional contracts are significantly less than the LIM-AT measure of the poverty line. The low income measure after tax (LIM-AT) \$19,930 for a single adult and \$28,185 for a family (StatsCan, 2013).

The question posed in our survey was to “estimate income from work as a sessional, part-time or contract faculty member” with the intent of excluding income from other work. Roughly 45% of Sessional faculty indicated that they do not make more than \$19,930, the Low income measure after tax (LIM-AT) through teaching on a sessional, part-time or contract basis, excluding income from other work. Notably, there are a small number of sessional faculty, some of whom appear to be capitalizing on multiple contracts throughout each semester, with 17.3% reporting a middle-class income of between \$40,000 and \$80,000. This suggests that a middle-class income is possible, though by no means common, among sessional faculty in Ontario. Additionally, 2.6% of respondents indicated an income of between \$80,000 to 109,000, and 0.2% indicated that they make over \$130,000 per annum. It is remarkable that contract faculty report a range of incomes from under \$12,000 per year to over \$130,000, though notably the top end of the spectrum is sparsely populated.

Figure 4: Estimated income from work as a sessional, part-time or contract faculty member

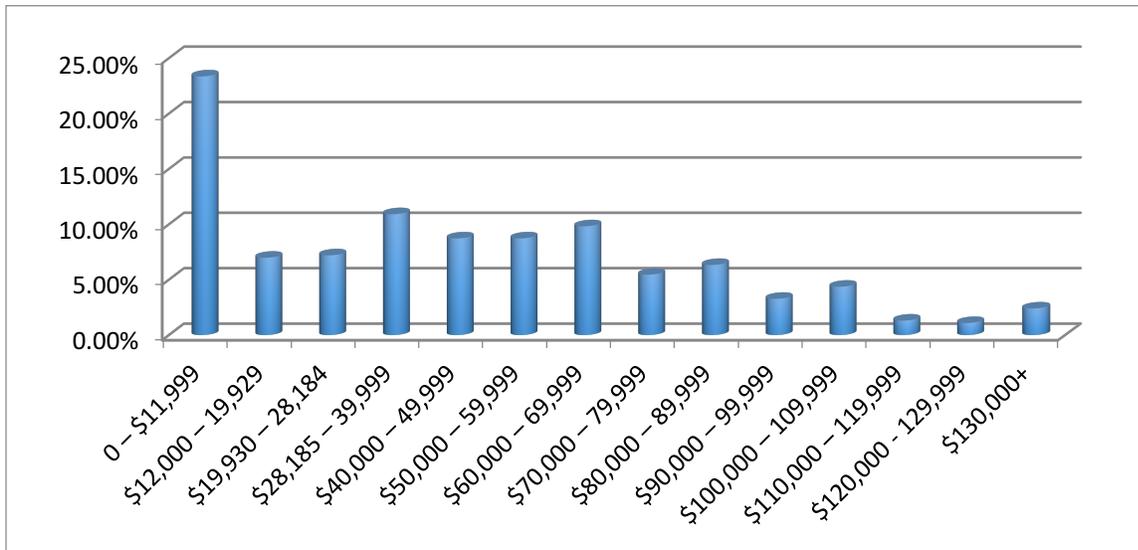


*Note: the Low Income Measures were used as cut-off points for the 12,000-19,929 and 19,930-28,184 in order to provide measures that are useful specifically for the province of Ontario.

**Note: no responses for either the 110-199,999 or 120,000-129,999

The majority (59.7%) of sessionals reported that they had alternative sources of income. Even with roughly 60 percent of sessional instructors having additional sources of income, 30.4% remain below the LIM-AT measure of \$19,929 (see Figure 5, below) when including all sources of income. This indicates that nearly 1 in 3 remain below the after-tax poverty line, despite having two or more sources of income. This prompted our team to further inquire as to how sessional faculty fit within Rajagopal’s categorizations of ‘classic’ and ‘contemporary’ instructors, as discussed in the following section.

Figure 5: Estimated total after-tax personal income (including sessional and other work)



Classic and Precarious Sessional Instructors

In a previous study, Rajagopal (2002) categorized Canadian sessional faculty as either “classic” and “contemporary” faculty. The term “classic” indicates the more traditional role of a working professional or retired professional who enters the classroom to share his or her expertise; this individual is not dependent upon the part-time income for this position as provided by a university. As noted in this study, classic faculty tend to indicate teaching as a passion, with the intent of preparing students for the “real world” or “leaving a legacy” and with a hesitancy to leave current employment or come out of retirement in order to work in the academy full-time. When survey respondents were asked to describe the benefits of classic sessional faculty, one indicated that, “There is a great value for both teachers and students in employing sessionals who (being part-time) are able to maintain careers in their field, bringing the most up-to-date practices into the classroom.” The data suggest that there are several subcategories to consider within both precarious and classic classifications.

Roughly one-quarter of our sample can be classified as “classic,” with 24.8% of respondents meeting the criteria. Approximately 50% of classic sessionals (12% of all respondents) are working full-time in other fields, while the other portion of ‘classic’ sessionals are retirees.

“Precarious” faculty are a delineation of the notion of Rajagopal’s “contemporary” faculty. “Contemporary” faculty represent a broad category of part-time instructors who do not have an alternative career, but rather indicate an interest in working in the academy as a full-time career. This definition does not quite fit our “precarious” group, for two reasons: first, many are working full-time equivalent workloads, when courses are available, on a semester-by-semester basis, with little or no job security; and second, many are disillusioned with the idea of having a full-time permanent career in the academy (see Table 14, below). Therefore, the term “Precarious” is used to indicate the nature of employment and the reliance on the income stream that these faculty have, where they may work at multiple campuses or have another part-time non-permanent job in order to make ends meet. Both “precarious” and “contemporary” faculty may be positioned as “permanent temps” (Rajagopal, 2002, p. 7), though our samples are somewhat different (please see section 3, Terminology, for more details).

Just over sixty percent (61.3%) of respondents could be classified as Precarious instructors, specifically identifying those that indicate that part-time non-permanent work is their primary source of income and employment. Interestingly, 63.1% of precarious instructors responded that they average at least two or more courses per semester in the winter/fall. Some respondents have heavy course loads and are still seeking alternative employment, typically to “make ends meet.” Again, these are not professionals with full-time work in other sectors but rather those who consider themselves primarily to be contract instructors. One quarter of precarious instructors (24.8%) taught at least two or more courses in both the fall and winter semesters with no additional income or other work. The remaining held a teaching load averaging up to one class per semester. This group was relatively evenly split between those with and without additional part-time, non-permanent work in another sector. There appear to be several subcategories to consider here, including those precarious sessionals who are seeking any full-time position and have “given up” on academia; therefore they are currently reliant on income from lecturing contracts but are seeking a full-time career outside of academia. These instructors are currently termed “precarious” but may be better thought of as “exiting” academics.

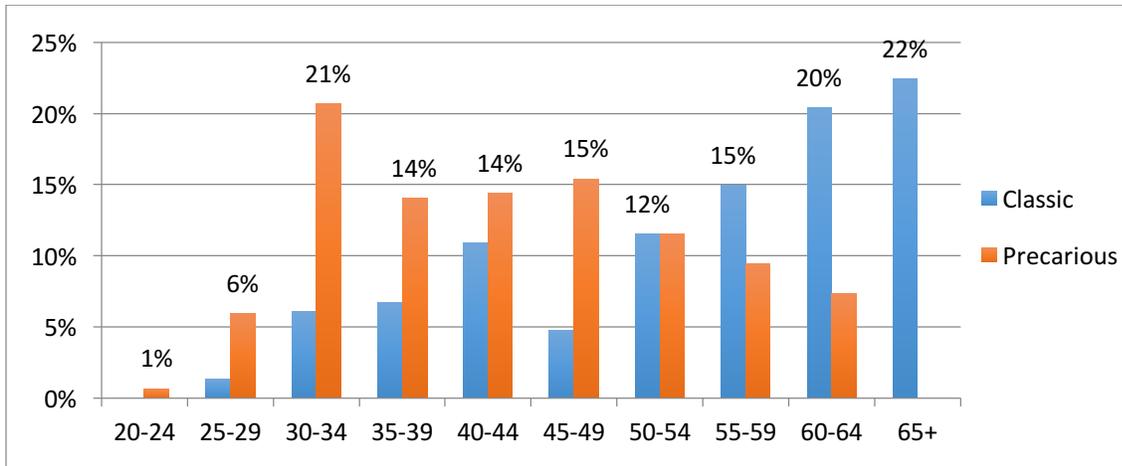
It is important to note that our survey was designed to allow participants to skip questions that they would prefer not to answer, and therefore we do not have sufficient data on 13.9% of the sample to determine if they fall into either the Classic or Precarious categories. This segment of the population is not included in the assessments of the differences between classic and precarious sessionals.

Age

Overall, precarious instructors tended to be younger than classic instructors, with 71% of the former below the age of 50, while two-thirds of classic faculty (67%) were at or above the age of 50 (see Figure 6). As with our study, Rajagopal found “age and education interaction is significant” (p. 136); however, our findings are not the same. Rajagopal’s survey from 1990-92 indicated that those under 30 were more likely to be classics, though those 50 or above were more likely to fall into the contemporary category (see p. 134-135). Rajagopal’s study found that it was “true of the under-30s, where those with doctorates are most likely of all age-related education groups to be Classics” (p. 136). Due to “interaction effects” of age and education, “younger part-timers (under 30) are much more likely to be Classics, while the older (over 50) are more often Contemporaries” (p. 135). Unlike the findings

presented in *Hidden Academics*, where “Those in the age groups between – 30s and 40s – lean in neither direction” (p. 134-135), we find that those in their 30s and 40s are more likely to be classified as precarious than classic.

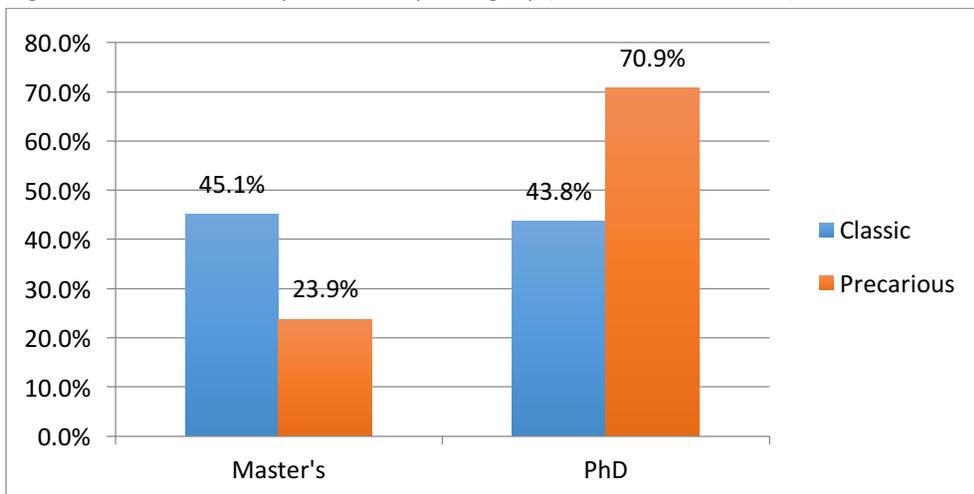
Figure 6: Age of Respondents by Category (Classic v. Precarious)



Education

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest degree. Of those who responded to this question, over seventy percent (70.9%) of precarious sessionals indicated their highest degree to be a PhD, with 23.9% indicating a Master’s degree. Classics were relatively split with 45.1% indicating their highest degree to be a Master’s and 43.8% indicating a PhD.

Figure 7: Gender of Respondents by Category (Classic v. Precarious)

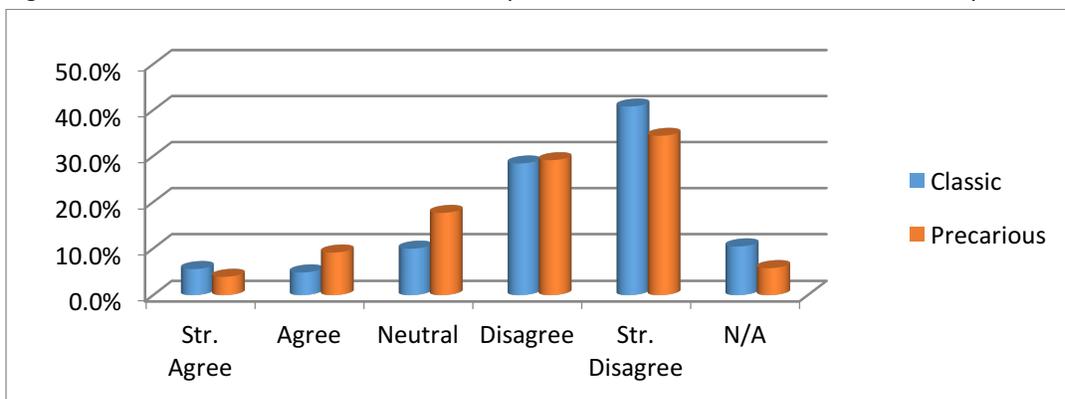


Career aspirations

Three-quarters of respondents (76.4%, n=1,599) indicated that they would prefer to have a permanent, full-time position in academia; however, confidence in moving into a full-time position was low, and nearly half would prefer a full-time teaching position over the traditional tenure-track (49.1%). Just over 40% would exit academia if they could find secure work in another field.

The widely held aspiration (76.4%) to enter academia on a full-time basis was not reflected in aspirations for the tenure-track. Less than one in three, 29.6%, indicated that they intended to have a career with tenure and were actively seeking this goal. Only 27.1% (n=1602) felt confident that they could achieve a tenure-track position if they “work hard enough,” while 50% felt that this was an unachievable goal. Further, only 13.1% believed that they would move into a full-time position in academia within the next two years (see Figure 8 below), with the majority of both classic and precarious sessionals indicating that they did not believe that would be able to find full-time employment in the near-term. However, a surprising number of classic sessionals, despite having a full-time position in another field, felt that they would move into a full-time position in academia, indicating that they are waiting for an opportunity to exit their current occupational field. Some classic sessionals who responded with “N/A” were retirees, while the precarious individuals were those who were also pessimistic about job prospects in academia in general.

Figure 8: I believe I will move into a full-time position in academia within the next two years

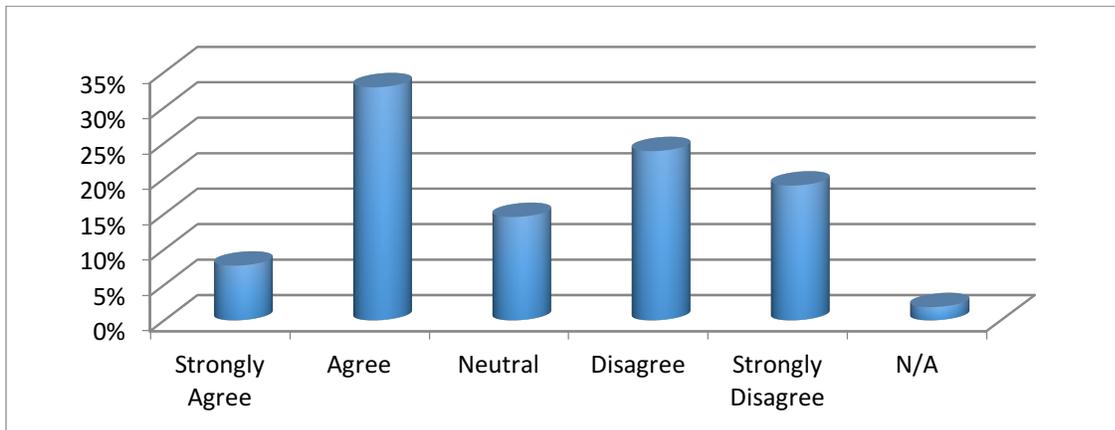


Seventeen percent (17%) of classic faculty indicated that they were actively intending to pursue a tenure-stream position in academia, opposed to 45% of precarious faculty. In follow-up interviews it was indicated that precarious sessionals likely started teaching with the intent of entering the tenure-track eventually, but had “given up” on that dream after several years in precarious employment. Precarious faculty who had “given up” also tended to be those who felt that there

would be little improvement in their job prospects even with a full economic recovery, as well as those who felt invisible as a faculty member. Classic faculty who responded that they intended to enter a full-time position in academia were most likely to be those seeking to exit careers in the private or public sectors, though there were a number who intended to continue with other careers on a part-time basis.

When asked about alternative career aspirations, there was a relatively even split between those academics who would leave the position if job security were offered in another field and those who would not. Just over forty percent (40.6%) indicated that they would leave, though were less likely to feel “strongly” about the decision than the 42.9% that would not be interested in another field.

Figure 9: I would leave this position for another field if job security were offered



6. Academic Work

Sessional instructors provided responses to a range of questions regarding preferences and perceptions of their role in the academy. When asked, “do you have a preference for teaching or research?” most sessional faculty indicated a preference for teaching. A total of 78.5% of classics either preferred teaching or leaned toward teaching, along with 69.5% of precarious sessionals. More classic sessionals reported that they preferred only teaching (43.0% of classic vs. 24.0% of precarious faculty), while precarious faculty indicated stronger preferences for research than classic faculty (28.0% vs. 18.8%, respectively). There are very few sessional faculty, whether categorized as classic or precarious, who prefer only research (2.2% and 2.0%, respectively).

Figure 10: Do you have a preference for teaching or research?

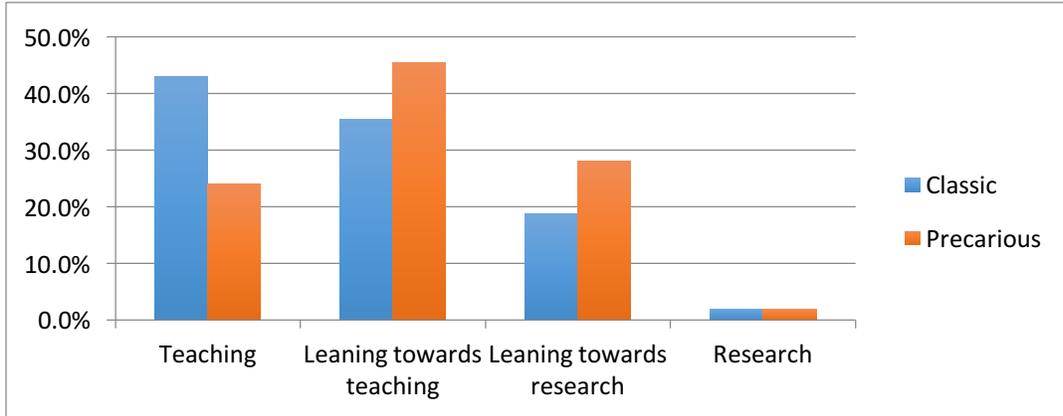
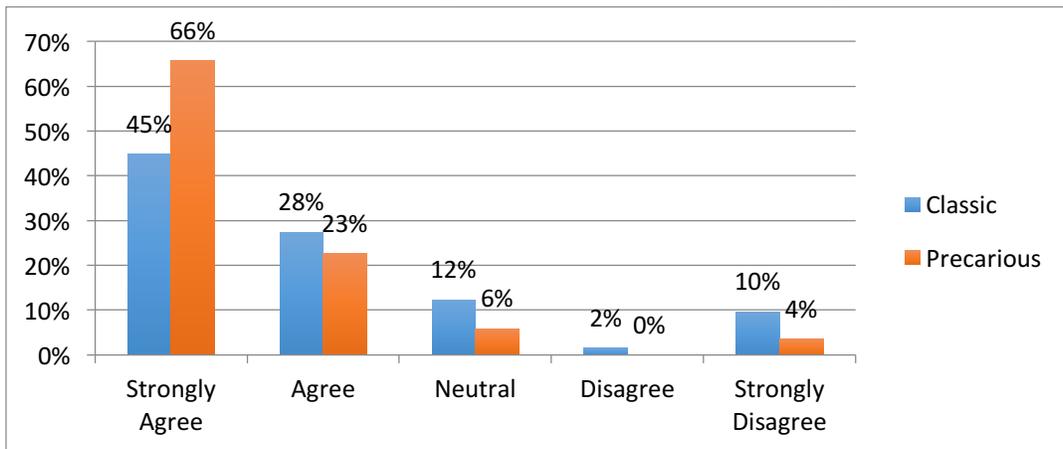


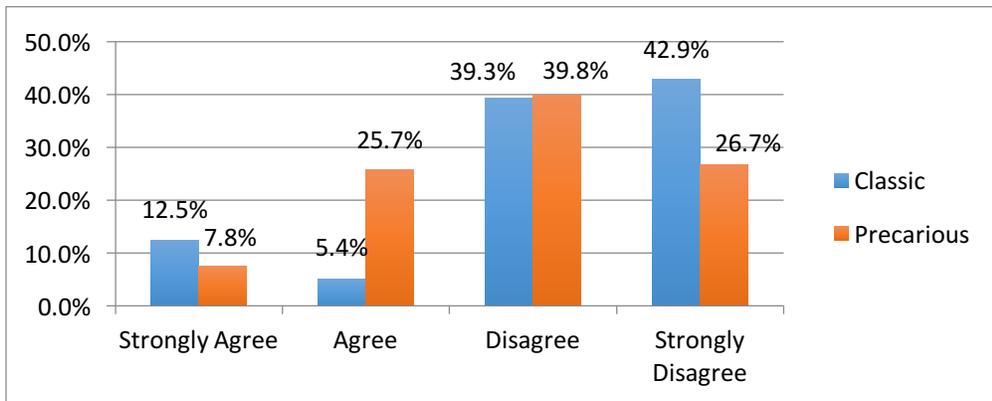
Figure 11: Sessional and contract faculty should be considered for teaching awards



Respondents were presented with a series of statements about the learning environment and asked to agree or disagree. Overall, most sessionals indicated agreement with the idea that sessional faculty should be considered for teaching awards. A larger percentage of precarious sessionals (89%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement than did classics (73%).

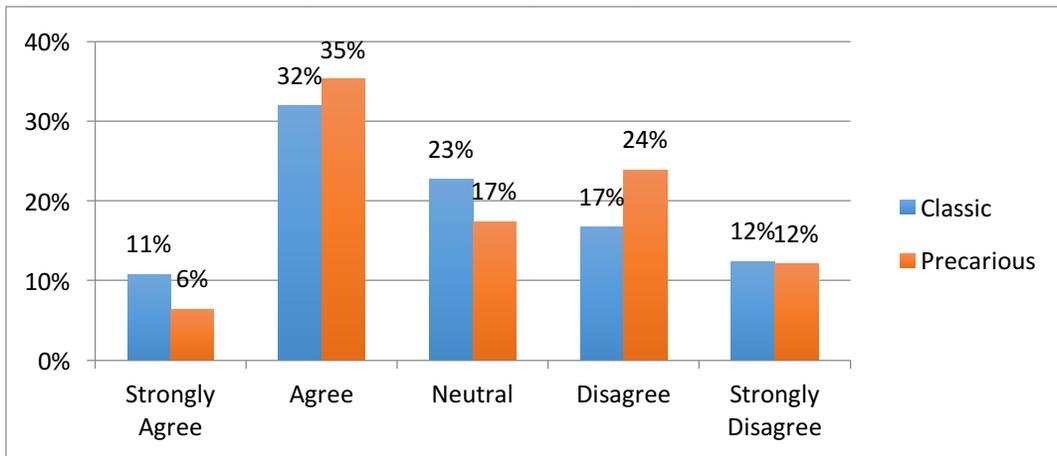
One of the questions concerning the learning environment was designed to gauge whether sessionals are teaching within their fields of expertise, or were being employed to teach in a broader range of subject areas. As illustrated in Figure 29, the majority of faculty, both precarious and classic, disagreed with the statement “I teach courses that are outside my field of expertise.” With 66.5% of precarious and 82.2% of classic faculty disagreeing, the data clearly indicates that most sessionals are teaching courses within their fields of expertise. However, 33.5% of precarious and 17.9% of classic sessionals indicate that they do teach courses outside their fields. While this is a minority of respondents, these responses signal a possible concern with the appointment of sessional lecturers outside of their areas of specialization.

Figure 12: I teach courses that are outside my field of expertise



Rajagopal noted that there was a “neglect of professional development” (p. 46) opportunities for sessional faculty, arguing that the career mobility of part-timers is limited due to the underwhelming support for sessional faculty. “Despite rhetoric on improving teaching quality in general, universities have paid little attention to professional development for part-timers” (p. 78). Approximately a third (35%) of classic sessionals and 28% of precarious sessionals agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to professional development opportunities though a larger percentage disagreed with the statement suggesting major differences in availability or perceived availability of professional development opportunities.

Figure 13: I have access to professional development opportunities



Approximately 37% of precarious sessionals and 32% of classics agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they are pursuing an active program of research. Responses provided by some classic sessionals suggest that their research may be for personal growth, student benefit, and general interest, and not related to the pursuit of a career in academia. Several respondents indicated that they felt their work would not be recognized in academia, for example one individual noted that “Practical, community-based research, teaching and publishing are undervalued, and recognized less, in the academic setting. Academic credentialing and assessment need to identify, highlight and reward such community-based work that has academic rigour.”

Figure 14: I am pursuing an active program of research

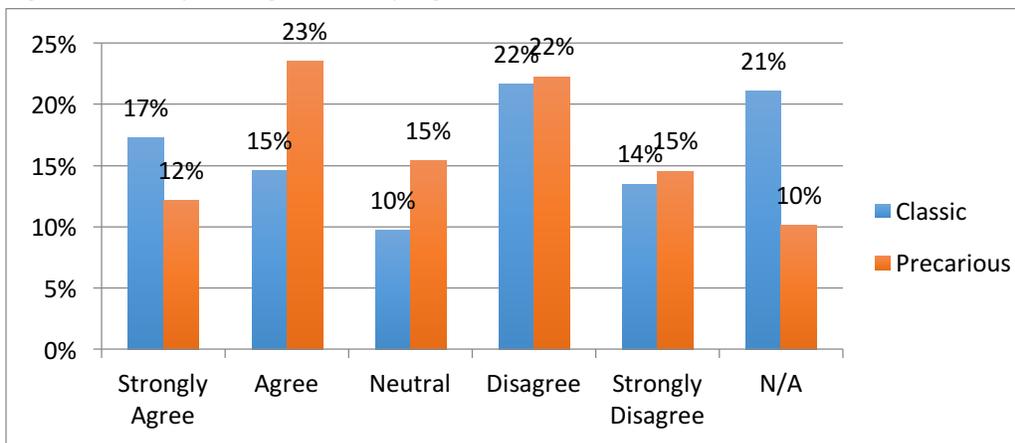


Figure 15: I am satisfied with the level of remuneration I receive as a sessional instructor

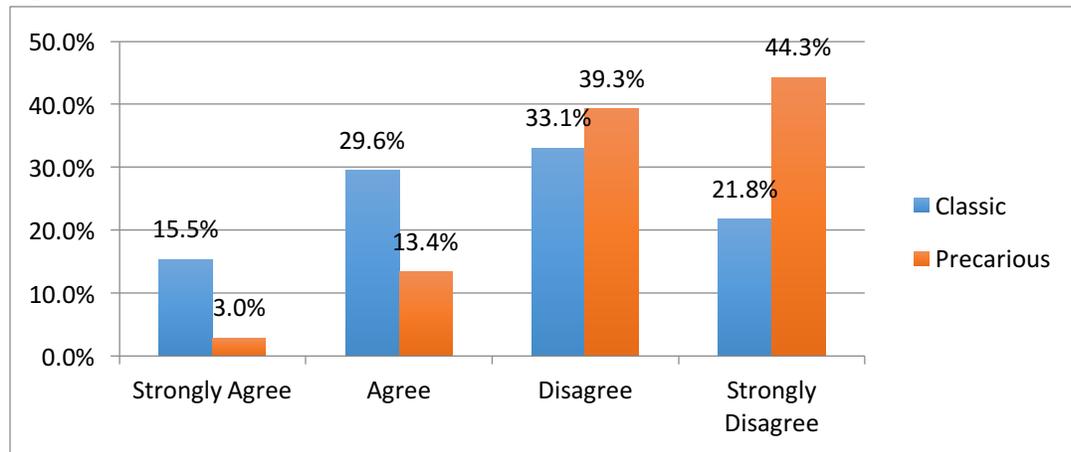


Figure 15 illustrates that the vast majority of sessional faculty are dissatisfied with the level of remuneration they receive from teaching contracts. Approximately 84% of precarious sessionals indicated some dissatisfaction with the level of remuneration that they received, with most reporting that they “strongly disagree.” Only 16.4% of precarious instructors appeared to have some level of satisfaction with remuneration. As the example below indicates, many precarious sessionals offered write-in comments, frequently indicating disappointment at their current income level and at living close to or below the poverty-line.

As I'm leaving academia, I really do hope that the situation improves for Sessional faculty. We work as hard as the TT [tenure-track] faculty, but we're living under the poverty line... I make less than \$11,000 with a PhD.

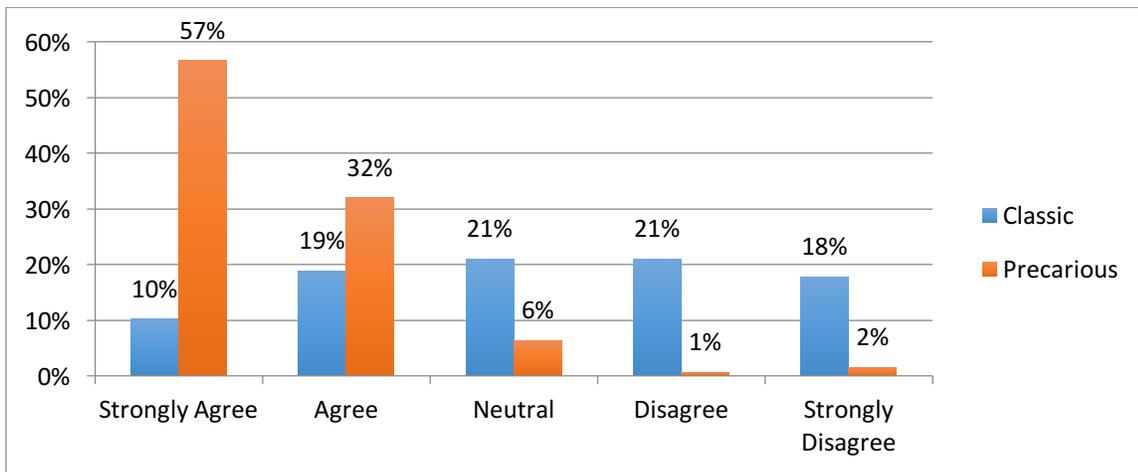
In contrast, 45.1% of classic sessionals indicated satisfaction with the level of remuneration, which seems to affirm that there is a distinction between the categories. However, given that a majority of classic instructors (54.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement despite the fact that they are not dependent on the income from this source may be worth further discussion. Several classic respondents left comments in the open-ended section such as: “I love teaching, I love inspiring critical thinking, but the pay is terrible for the number of hours I actually put in” and “Given the large numbers of students (i.e. 100-200) that I often teach in an online course and given the large amount of tuition each student pays for each course (approx. \$1500), realistically I am far underpaid.”

Since classic instructors are either retired or have other primary sources of income, the level of remuneration appears to be less of an issue. While many feel that remuneration is low for the number of hours expected outside of the classroom (curriculum development, grading, email, student feedback, post-course hours, etc.) some indicated that they were satisfied with other aspects of the job such as “seeing light-bulbs go off in a students’ mind” or other less tangible aspects of the job.

“University teaching is not my major source of income; I do it because I love my subject matter and want to inspire students to pursue graduate work and careers in my field. It's generally a pleasure to work with students, especially those who really want to learn.”

Respondents were asked whether they had “experienced considerable personal strain due to short-term contractual employment.” As illustrated in the figure below, 40% of respondents strongly agreed and an additional 26% agreed with the statement. In other words, the vast majority of respondents (66%) reported experiencing considerable personal strain.

Figure 16: I have experienced considerable personal strain due to short-term contractual employment (classic & precarious)



Responses to this question illuminate important differences between classic and precarious sessional faculty. As shown in Figure 16, 89% of precarious instructors agreed or strongly agreed that short-term contractual employment was a source of considerable personal strain, compared with only 29% of classic faculty. This suggests that short-term contracts are stressful for the vast majority of precarious faculty (89%), but this is true for less than a third of classic sessionals who are generally less reliant on income from teaching contracts. As one individual indicated, even if one is employed full-time in another sector of the economy, or retired and teaching for pleasure, the stress “of the hiring process is ridiculous, I never know if I’m going to get rehired so I can’t make any long-term plans.” Many classic sessionals indicated a strong preference for longer-term contracts and more job security to reduce stress associated with short-term contracts, even if they held jobs in the private or public sectors. One respondent clearly articulated the stress and disillusionment that some sessional faculty aspiring to academic careers experience in the following statement:

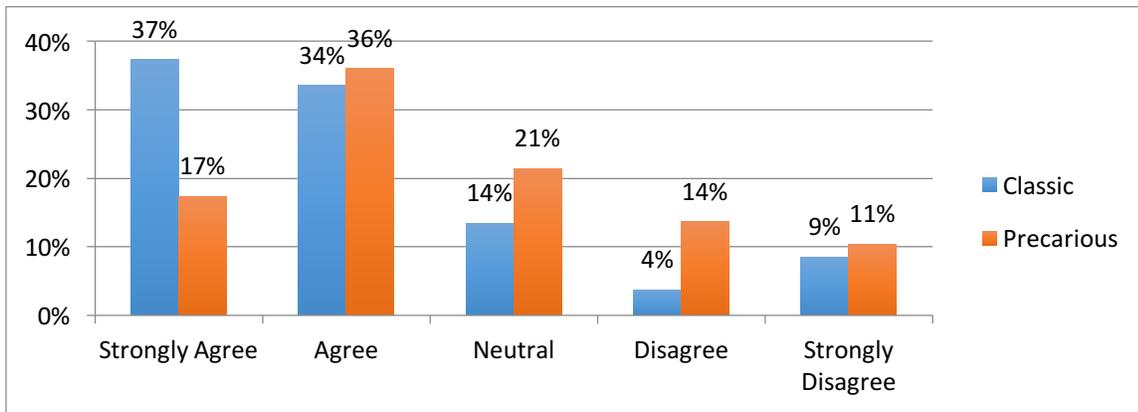
I have had to maintain both a full-time job in my profession and teaching part-time. This makes it challenging to also publish and do research that would enable me to obtain a tenure-track position... I am leaning to give up teaching as a sessional instructor due to poor working conditions... and exploitation of sessionals. If I can't work as a tenure-track academic then I refuse to be exploited in this way.

Follow-up interviews revealed an interesting caveat for the small subset of the population (9%) of precarious sessional faculty who were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Several respondents indicated that “those who have the resources to hold on as sessional instructors have a better shot at a full-time position, so those who can rely on parents or spouses may be at an advantage in the market.” Some added that it was not worth being concerned due to the limited job opportunities in all sectors of the Canadian economy, and therefore they could “no longer feel the stress from it all, it’s just the way it is”. Another respondent suggested that “there are a lot of us who believe it will get better, you just hold on until there’s an opportunity, so you can’t be stressed out about it because it’s supposed to be short-term.”

I was offered a position to teach my course for the third year, but I had to decline because my current job would not allow me the time off each week. Had I been able to teach another course I would have gladly left my current job to teach full time. It is sad that the universities are losing valuable teachers because of financial issues.

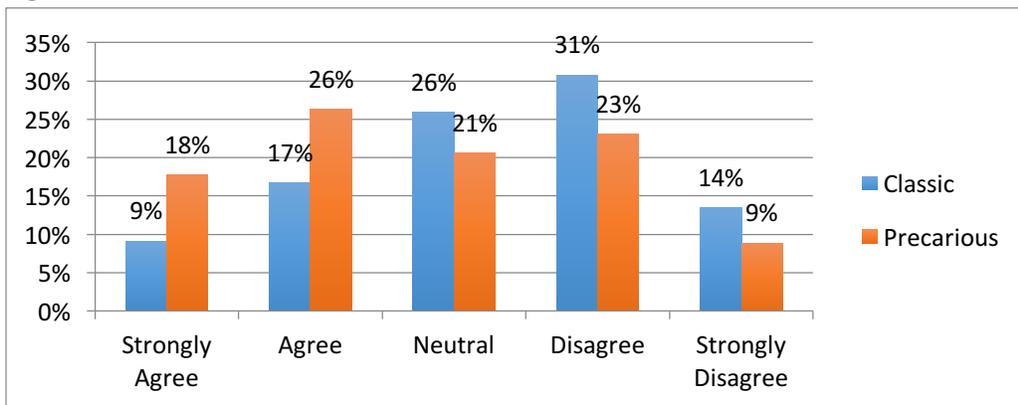
For the majority (89%) of precarious sessionals, the short-term contractual nature of their employment was the source of a considerable personal stress, and this point was reaffirmed by a number of the comments provided by respondents: “Contract lecturers are considered the McJob's of the academic world. There are no benefits, there is no stability, there is little chance of advancement” and “I have taught as sessional since [the 1980s] ... great student Evals, single wage earner ... very little pension, would like to retire sometime but cannot.” While serious concerns were expressed regarding the short-term, contractual nature of these positions and the level of remuneration, many respondents indicated that teaching as a sessional instructor is a source of personal pride. The majority of both precarious (53%) and classic (71%) sessionals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Figure 17: Teaching as a sessional instructor is a source of personal pride.



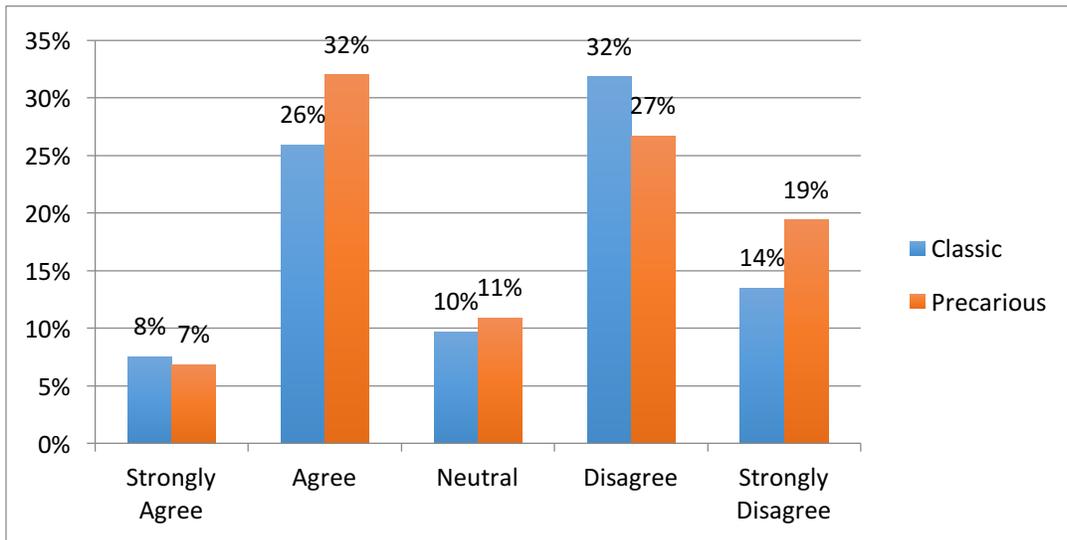
Respondents were posed a series of statements concerning the working environment of sessional lecturers and asked whether they agree or disagree. Over 82% of sessionals indicated that “there needs to be more public discussion on the working conditions of sessional, part-time and other contract faculty” in our universities, with less than 4% disagreeing with this statement. One of these questions was “I feel invisible. No one cares what I do.” Approximately 26% of classic sessionals and 44% of precarious sessionals strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, while 45% of classic and 31% of precarious sessionals indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Figure 18).

Figure 18: I feel invisible. No one cares what I do.



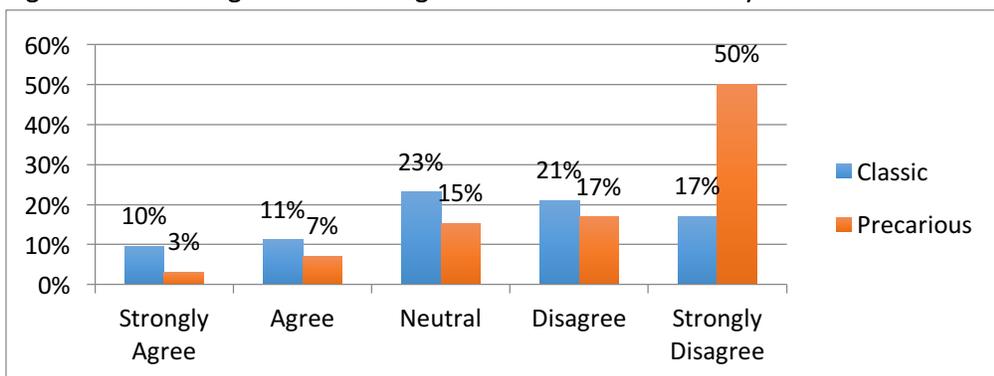
Unfortunately, we found that many sessional faculty do not have a clear understanding of the “system of seniority/promotion for contingent faculty at my university.” While 34% of classic and 39% of precarious sessionals strongly agreed or agreed that they understand these systems, an additional 46% of classic and 46% of precarious disagreed with the statement (Figure 19).

Figure 19: I understand the system of seniority/promotion for contingent faculty at my university



Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that “this is a good time to begin an academic career in my field.” While classics were more likely than precarious sessionals to agree that “this is a good time to begin an academic career in my field,” a minority of all respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement. Once again, the responses illuminate important differences in how the current state of the academic profession is perceived by the two categories of sessional faculty (see Figure 20). The majority (67%) of precarious faculty strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, compared to 38% of classic sessionals. Only 10% of precarious faculty agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, compared to 21% of classic sessionals.

Figure 20: This is a good time to begin an academic career in my field



7. Access to Resources

7.1 Introduction

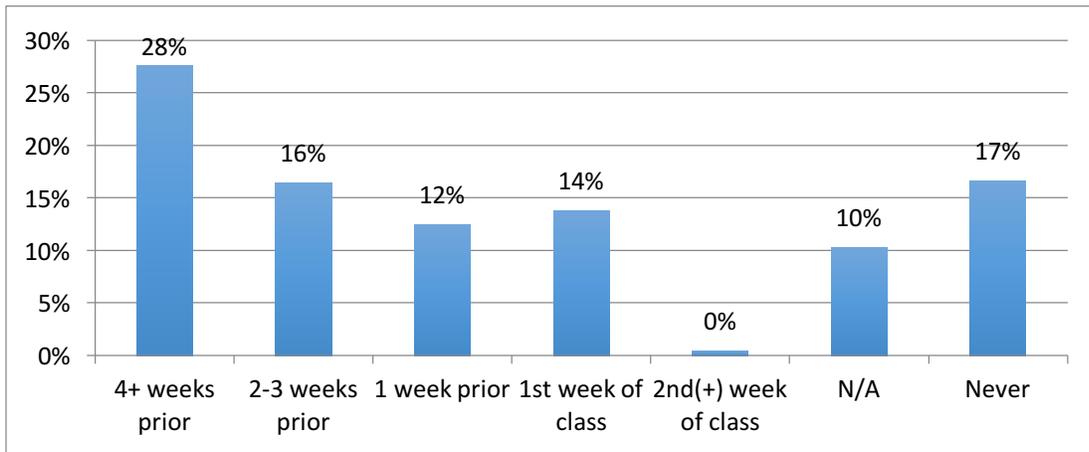
In order to facilitate classroom instruction, faculty frequently require access to a variety of resources such as an institutional email address, library privileges, copying services, IT support, and access to online learning platforms. In the following section, these resources are discussed in terms of the question posed in the survey: “For your current position, when were you provided with the following resources?” While we do not offer a comparable chart for full-time faculty, we offer the following section as a reference for understanding the provisions available to sessional faculty.

Part of this discussion is to contribute to an understanding of whether there could be quality issues associated with resource allocation and access. There are varying degrees of requirement for each resource, and much as a carpenter is still a carpenter without a measuring tape, there are certain tools that allow for a higher quality outcome. While many professions require that an individual possess his or her own tools, there are certain resources that can only be provided by the university. As such, our discussion offers some indication of whether sessional faculty have the resources to specific resources that one might assume are available to their tenure stream peers, such as office space, the library, online support, an institutional phone number and an email account, parking, etc. While we acknowledge that tenure/tenure-track faculty may certainly have complaints about these resources as well, there is general anecdotal evidence that sessional faculty have less access to key educational resources. We offer some indication of sessional faculty perceptions of the availability and access to resources.

7.2 Office space

Both classic and precarious faculty had concerns about privacy and shared office space. The timeline of when an office could be allocated varied (see Figure 16), ranging from at least four weeks prior to the start of class to no allocation at all. As we review the responses to questions about specific resources in the following sections, it is valuable to keep in mind that there seem to be two extremes, those that had access to resources at least four weeks prior to the start of class, and those that never gained access to resources. For example, in Figure 16, while a majority (56%) received access to office space at least one week prior to the start of class, 17% of respondents never gained access to an office, and 10% felt it unnecessary or non-applicable.

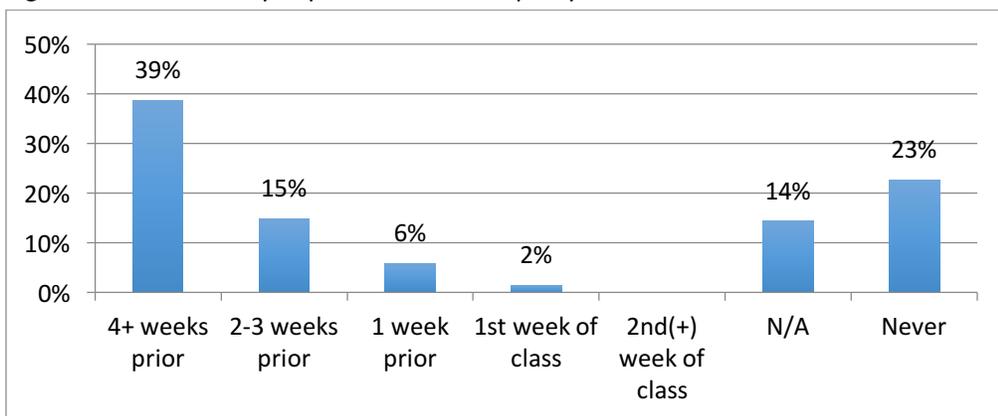
Figure 21: When were you offered access to office space



Concerns expressed by faculty related to office space in response to open-ended questions can be summed up as follows: 1) lack of privacy when talking with students in a shared office space; 2) challenges in coordinating and scheduling office hours with the administration and colleagues; 3) difficulties in connecting and meeting with students due to limitations on the use of shared office space; 4) noise and distractions caused challenges in open or shared office spaces; and 5) frustration at the lack of security for belongings and having to carry props and class materials to and from class each week. Each of these frustrations was expressed with both understanding of the limitations of the university to provide office space, and a general need, as one interviewee noted, for “something to be done, where even lockers for our laptops and books would help, but for privacy with a student, I think email may be the only option, there’s just not enough space on campus.”

7.3 Sample Syllabi

Figure 22: When were you provided with sample syllabi?



Sample syllabi can be helpful in planning course materials, identifying the normative distribution of assignments and weighting of grades, as well as provide a general overview of how any previous or similar courses have been organized. For those who are hired relatively close to the start of a course, these can be invaluable. As Figure 22, above, indicates that 60% of sessional faculty received sample syllabi prior to the start of class, while 14% found this to be not-applicable for their circumstances, and 23% indicated that they were never provided with a sample.

Figure 23: When were you provided with Sample Syllabi? (Classic v. Precarious)

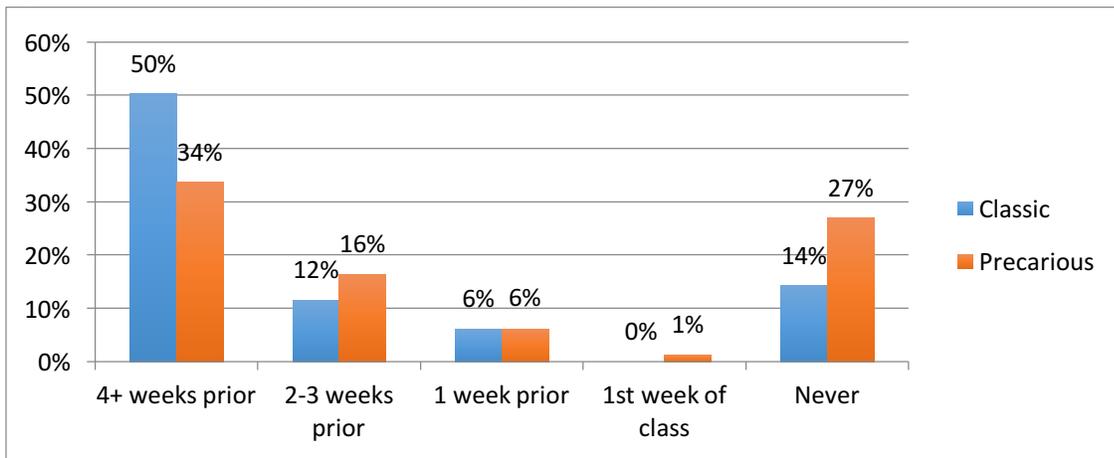


Figure 23, above indicates the difference in responses from precarious and classic sessional faculty. Precarious faculty seemed to have slightly less access overall to sample syllabi than classic sessional instructors, with 57% able to obtain a sample syllabi compared with 68% among classic sessionals. The following comment from one precarious sessional may well illustrate some of the challenges:

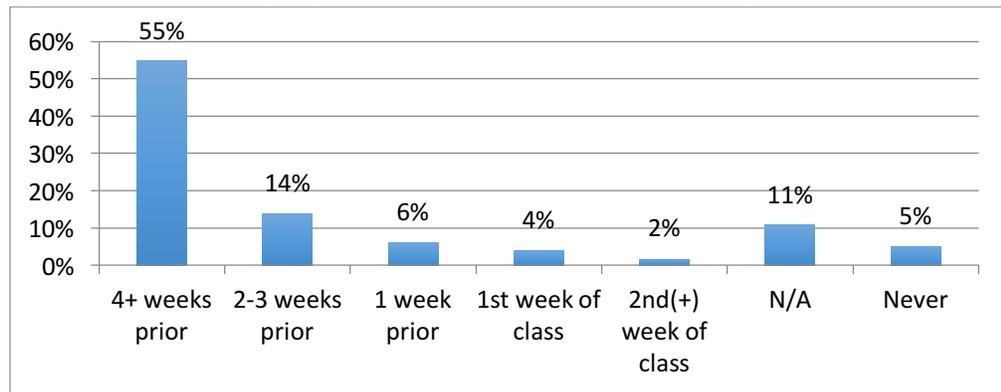
Not knowing what I am going to teach until at least a month before class starts means that I cannot put too much effort into designing innovative syllabi -- I just have to get it done, and get it done quickly because I am required to submit syllabi to the Chair in advance of the start of term. The only sample syllabi are those that I have received after asking colleagues for their input and advice; they are not (as far as I know) available on a departmental level.

There were a few sessionals who expressed concern that sample syllabi could potentially be used to reduce the autonomy and professional decision-making of instructors if the system is standardized. Therefore, they would like to reduce the stress of designing a course in a relatively short period of time by having syllabi available, but not a standardized mechanism that would limit the autonomy of the faculty member.

7.4 Institutional email or phone number

As one may expect, questions about an institutional phone number or email elicited different responses. An institutional email provides the faculty member with a sense of belonging to the institution, some perceived authority within the university community, as opposed to using a Yahoo or Gmail account. Phone numbers, on the other hand, may be less important given the increasing prevalence of electronic communication.

Figure 24: When were you provided with an institutional email or phone number?



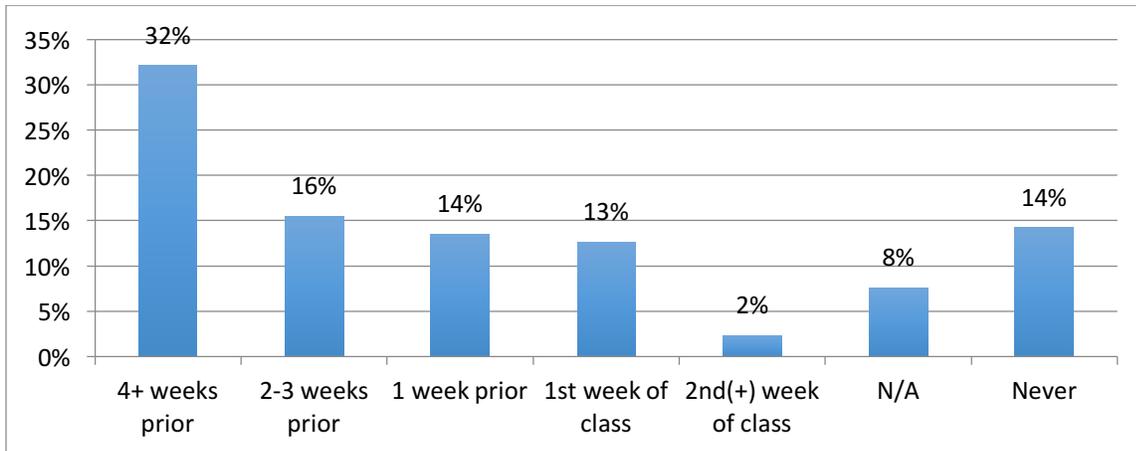
Several precarious instructors indicated a preference for an institutional email, but that they used a personal phone number on syllabi. There were specific problems mentioned with regard to institutional phone numbers. For example, access to a telephone at the institution may be problematic with shared offices and limited hours.

I don't know how they would give me a phone number, I have an hour a week in a shared office with eleven or twelve other people, so if a student were to call me on the phone in the office, I don't even know the number, but I'm not sure how I would even get the message, and it's not like it would be confidential in any way.

Overall, most respondents (81%) were provided with either an email address or a phone number (see Figure 19). Interacting with students is part of the job of a sessional instructor, and while the majority of instructors had either an email address or phone number, the issue is more nuanced than it first appears. Many sessional faculty indicated that their assigned email addresses may be cut-off immediately after final grades were submitted for classes, meaning that students would have no access to follow-up with the instructor. Other instructors indicated significant disagreement with the idea of losing access to email if they are expected to be rehired in the following semester. One precarious sessional commented, "This year the offer from the university admin during bargaining was that we would lose library and email access when not teaching - how do we prepare for courses?"

7.5 Copier or copying services

Figure 25: When did you receive access to a copier or copying services?



Access to a copying machine (or copying services) is one of the most problematic areas for instructors, who indicated that simply having access to a copier does not provide the full scope of the issue. The issue appears to be limitations imposed on the number of copies per instructor.

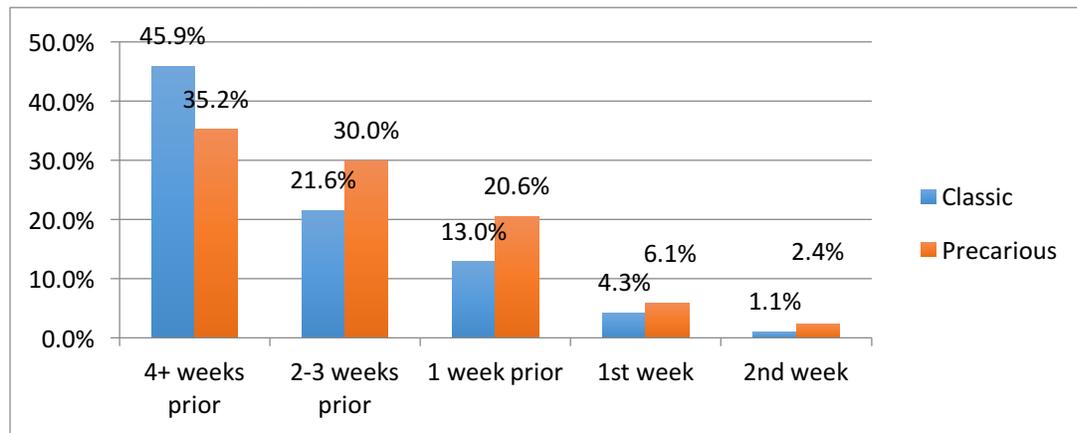
Although our survey results showed that most respondents (62%) had access to these services prior to the first week of class (see Figure 25), with 77% having access by the second week, follow-up interviews suggested that there is great variation in the access granted. In fact, faculty members within the same department at a given university may have significantly different access, and several indicated that the limitations on copying services seems to shift from year to year in some departments. Respondents indicated that budget cut-backs were usually to blame for reduced access: one respondent indicated, “we have only 250 pages throughout the semester, but I’m sure that will be gone by next due to budget cuts.” Decision-making appears to be on a department-by-department basis, for example, some had to make all the copies by their own means and at their own cost, others had very helpful staff in the department preparing the copies for them, and still others had to use the copier sparingly because they were not allowed to exceed the limit of pages allocated by the department. One respondent remarked, “Not having access to copying services means that I have to print off enough copies for all students at home, and sometimes I don’t have enough, or it’s too expensive to print off enough copies, so the students have to share.” While a few sessionals felt that most materials could be distributed online, many more still felt obligated to print off important materials, often because they felt that students should not have to pay to print their own copies. Due to importance of the course syllabus, faculty felt that using only Blackboard or other online platforms would be insufficient; many felt that each student needed a hard-copy of the syllabus and/or curriculum guidelines in order to ensure that they were meeting the requirement of informing the students of their assignments, rights and responsibilities. For these reasons, some faculty felt that they were burdened with the costs of copying course materials, syllabi, and curriculum guidelines.

7.6 Online resources

In order to facilitate classroom instruction, faculty frequently require access to a variety of resources such as an institutional email address, library privileges, copying services, IT support, and access to learning management systems or online learning platforms such as Blackboard, Pepper, Moodle, and/or Desire2Learn.

Online resources are increasingly important in university teaching. Various programs, including for example Blackboard, Pepper and Desire2Learn, allow faculty to upload syllabi, guidelines, papers, references, and other materials for students to use. Students may be able to use online forums to post discussions of class materials, and increasingly participation in online forums can be included in course requirements. The following section reviews the responses provided for our question: “when were you provided with online access for class forums and materials?”

Figure 26: When were you provided with online access for class forums and materials



* Examples include Blackboard, Pepper, Desire2Learn, etc.

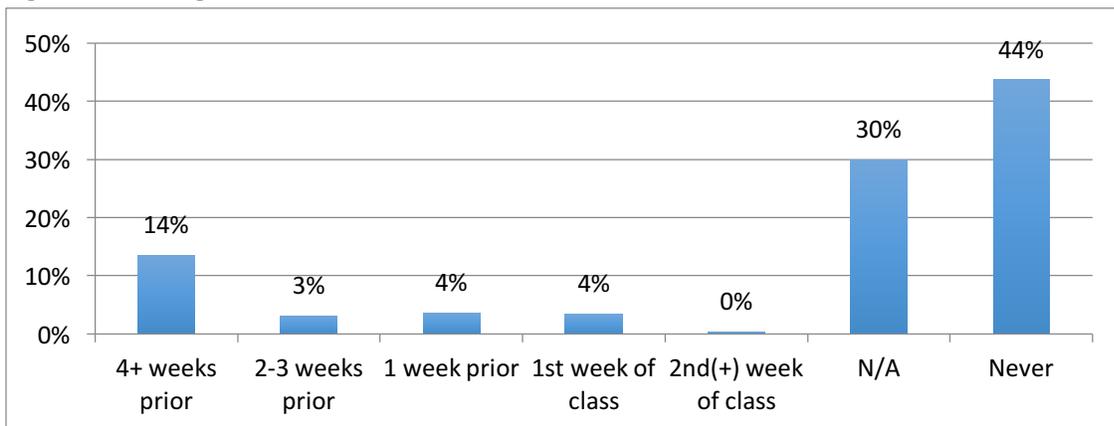
Over eighty-percent of respondents (80.5% classic, 85.8% precarious) had access to online forums by the time class started (see Figure 26). However, a few indicated that they faced some challenges merely to find information on how to activate these programs. Several respondents indicated that the lack of information and support caused delays and confusion for students in terms of accessing and reading the materials. Many of the comments in the open-ended section of this survey specifically regarding resources noted that utilizing these systems could cause significant stress for faculty members. Several of the interview respondents indicated that whether due to the complexity of some of the systems, a lack of orientation to these systems, simply not being told such a system exists, or being hired at the last moment, information could be delayed for students. One respondent pointed out that such complications could potentially present an unfavorable image of the teacher as a disorganized person in the eyes of the students. In addition, there were few opportunities for sessional faculty to learn to use these resources.

Based on the number of comments from the questionnaire responses and interviews, there appears to be some general issues regarding programs such as Blackboard and others. Many participants felt that there was both a lack of orientation to these programs and a lack of available support, especially at the beginning of a busy semester. For some instructors at some universities, access to the online grading system was denied upon the expiry of their contract, however, they were still required to submit grades online, which caused a remarkable amount of frustration for several instructors.

Another thing that is demoralizing... is when my teaching contract - and therefore my access to student marks management and online forms - ends on April 30 and I am expected to mark late exams/assignment and change marks but don't have electronic access to the system. This has happened to me more than once, and the system delivers a message saying that I am not employed by the university. Right. I am working, but not being paid. Being told through an automatized message that I don't work there is a slap in the face.

7.7 Parking

Figure 27: Parking



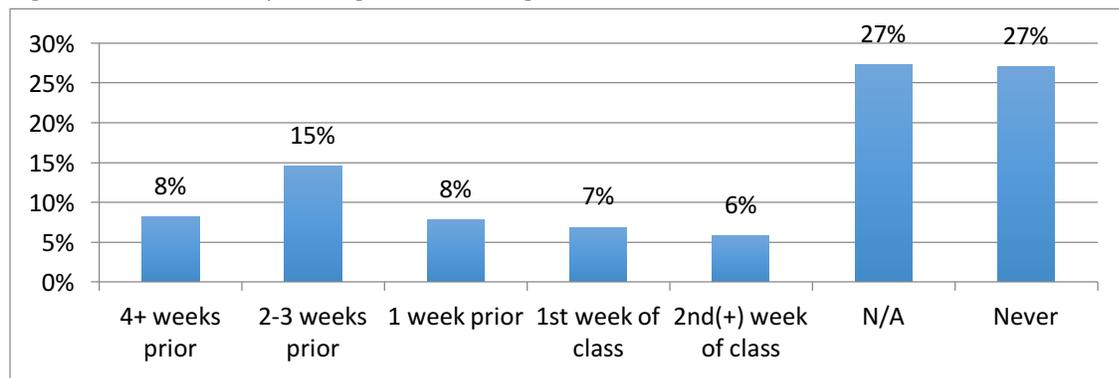
Questions on parking elicited a fairly negative response overall (see Figure 27), with sessionals indicating that they were rather unhappy with the high cost of parking, or finding that the only spaces available required them to move their vehicle every hour to avoid a ticket. One respondent wrote, “Parking eats up my meager wage so I park 20 minutes away and walk in.” That being said, sessionals also seemed to consider the issue of parking not just specific to them, but problematic for full-time faculty as well. For example, “It would have been nice to have parking, but in their defense, everyone pays for parking.” There was a strong sense that faculty parking lots could be made available for sessional faculty at those institutions where this is currently not the practice.

Notably, parking for sessional faculty with disabilities was raised as an issue where sessional faculty were not allowed to park in the faculty lot that was significantly closer to a specific building than general

parking areas. Another issue raised was that of loading zones, where sessional faculty who do not have secure offices are forced to carry equipment, props, or other materials significantly further to the general parking lots. There was no significant difference between the responses of classic and precarious faculty in terms of access to parking, though notably, classic faculty with other full- or part- time positions were less likely to indicate concerns about the costs associated with parking. Precarious faculty members were more likely to mention that they used public transportation options, though this was related to urban areas where public transportation was more available than at rural campuses. Several precarious faculty mentioned that they frequently parked outside of the university in cheaper parking areas, which became more difficult in the winter.

7.8 Teaching assistants

Figure 28: When were you assigned a Teaching Assistant?



Approximately 44% of all respondents indicated that they had been assigned a teaching assistant (TA) between four-weeks prior to the start of the course and two-weeks after the course had started. Approximately 27% of respondents indicated that they were “never” assigned a TA and 27% indicated that the question was “non-applicable” (27%) (see Figure 28).

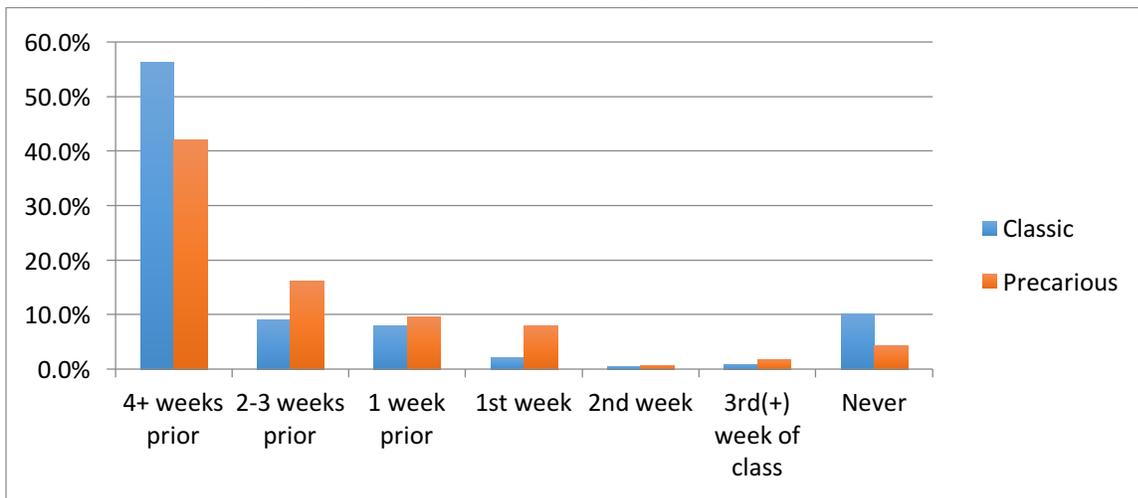
Written responses indicated that there were sometimes challenges associated with TA assignments, sometimes related to insufficient TA hours, sometimes being complicated by union policies, and still other times involving difficulty in coordinating TA activities due to the part-time nature of working as a sessional instructor. One respondent wrote, “Access to teaching assistants is an ongoing issue for CUPE instructors. It takes a very long time to be approved and sometimes not until mid semester. CUPE instructors are also not told in advance when they are eligible to apply for TA's or marking assistance.” Follow-up interviews suggested that the assignment of TAs to sessionals at some universities tended to be on a department-to-department basis, where different departments within the same institution could have very different policies and practices.

Several sessionals indicated that they were taking on extra work when they were assigned TAs who did not have any experience with the course material. This was markedly problematic as the instructor would have to bring the TA up to speed with the course material at a rapid pace, and monitor all of the marking that the TA would complete, thereby reducing or eliminating the benefits of having a TA in some cases. There were some issues noted with a lack of input as to preference for TA assignments, and further challenges with administrative support for sessionals who were experiencing challenges with their assigned TAs. One sessional was so frustrated with the system that the individual decided to turn down all TA assignments. Another respondent summed up his or her experience in the following comment provided in the survey.

Though I believe the amount I am paid is fair, I have certain minor issues in principle. I have chosen, for many years now, not to utilize the option of having a TA. Ultimately I believe the students are better served by me taking on all of those responsibilities, including the marking of full-answer midterms, finals and assignments.

7.9 Library resources

Figure 29: When were you provided with access to library resources?



A majority of survey respondents (73.5% classic; 68.0% precarious) (see Figure 29, above) indicated that they were able to gain access to library resources prior to the start of the semester. Nearly one in ten classic sessionals (11.4%), and 15% of precarious sessionals, indicated that this question was not applicable, with several respondents indicating that they did not require library resources due to the use of textbooks or other class materials not sourced from the library. Just over one-in-ten, or 10.3% reported that they “never” had access to library resources.

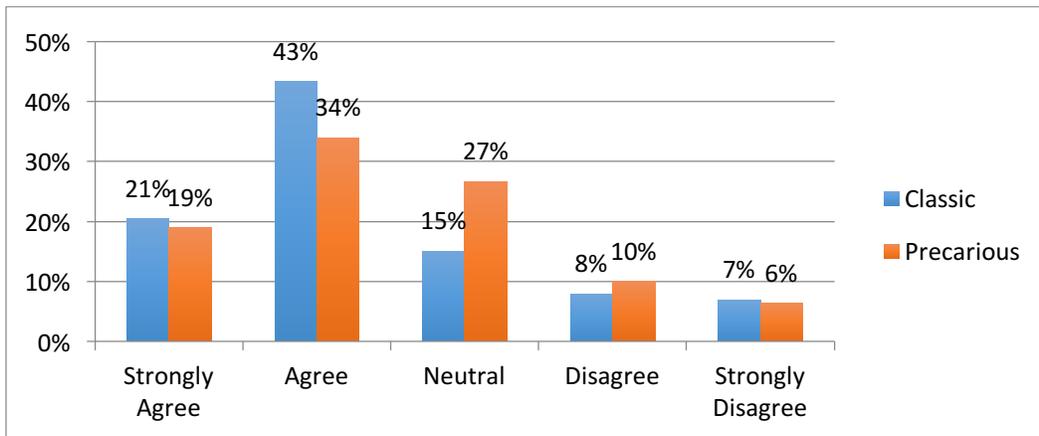
8. The Learning Environment

Part of the intent of this study is to understand the contribution of sessional faculty to the learning environment as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the learning environment from the perspective of sessional faculty.

Our findings, based on both questionnaire data as well as a preliminary analysis of interviews, suggest that most sessional faculty are highly dedicated instructors who are proud of their contributions to the learning environment. Following over 50 interviews with instructors, our team found there to be many highly dedicated instructors working in our sample of Ontario universities.

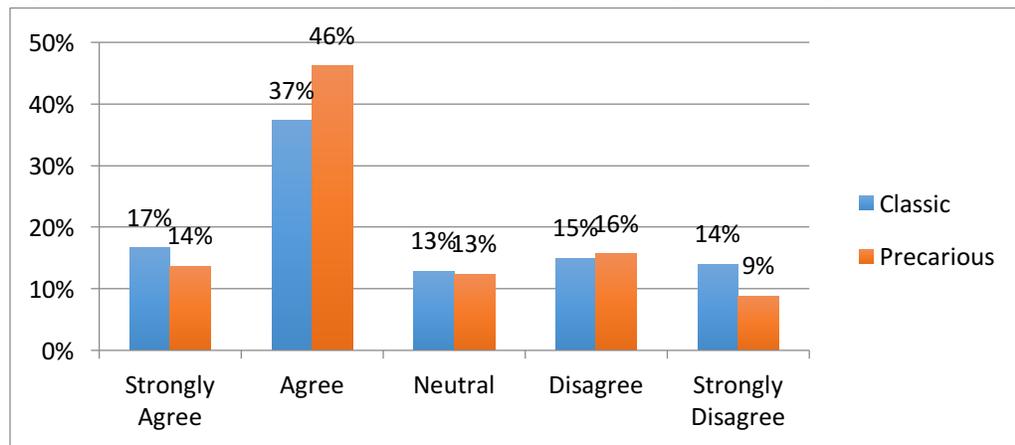
The questionnaire included a question on whether sessionals believed that students provided them with the same respect as tenure-stream faculty (Figure 30). The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, though there were some differences in response between classic sessionals (64%) and precarious sessionals (53%).

Figure 30: Students provide me with the same respect as my tenure-stream colleagues



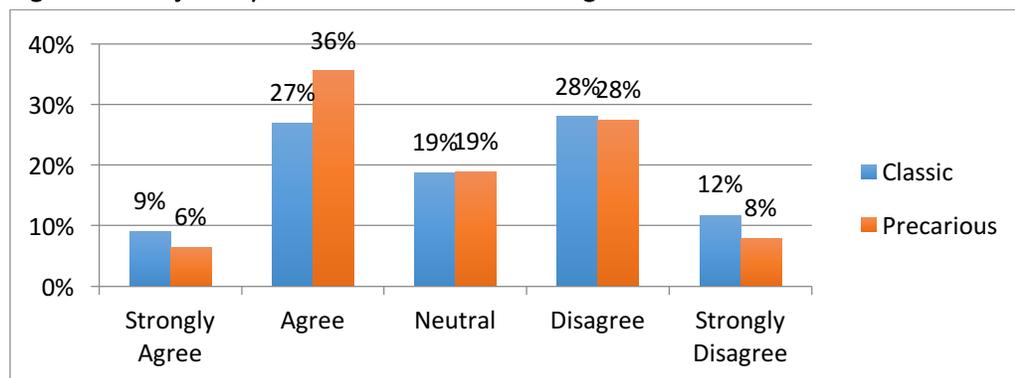
A majority of sessional faculty indicated that they found “student evaluations helpful for improving my teaching materials.” Among both precarious and classic sessionals, student evaluations appear to be viewed as helpful, with 60% of precarious sessionals and 54% of classics strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement (Figure 31).

Figure 31: I find student evaluations helpful for improving my teaching materials



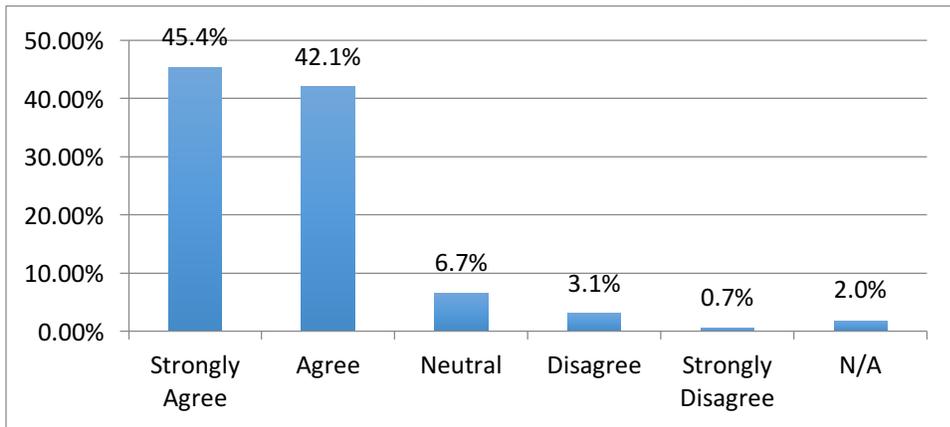
Student feedback and evaluations are not used solely for improving teaching materials, they are also often considered in determining contract renewal and other hiring prospects. Due to concerns raised in the literature, we felt it prudent to ask if sessionals were likely to make course adjustments to avoid negative student feedback. The results suggest that sessional faculty may be wary of the impact of negative student feedback, though only a minority indicated that they adjust course content. Future research is needed to clarify these results, however, but with 42% of those dependent upon income from part-time teaching contracts (i.e. precarious members) indicating some adjustment to their course content. This is an area for future study, especially whether adjusting course content to avoid negative student feedback is always or necessarily a negative outcome, as negative feedback may also mean that the materials need to be improved. More detailed data is required to draw further insights into this matter.

Figure 32: I adjust my course content to avoid negative student feedback



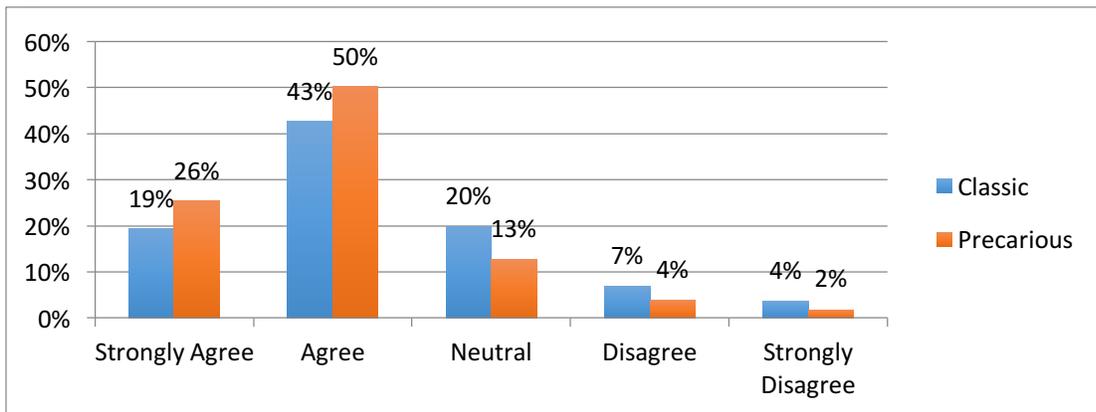
Overall, our survey indicates that the vast majority (87.5%) of sessional faculty strongly agree (45.2%) or agree (42.1%) that they have an “informed pedagogical approach to teaching” There were no notable differences in responses between classic and precarious sessionals.

Figure 33: I have an informed pedagogical approach to teaching



Finally, respondents were asked whether they would like more collaboration with peers, including faculty. The majority, approximately 76% of precarious and 62% of classic sessionals, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This is a strong indication that sessional faculty members are seeking more ties with the institution and networking opportunities with their peers. When combined with the idea that many sessional faculty feel invisible on campus, this could be a method of improving job satisfaction. More research in this area is recommended.

Figure 34: To reach my full potential, I would like more collaboration with peers



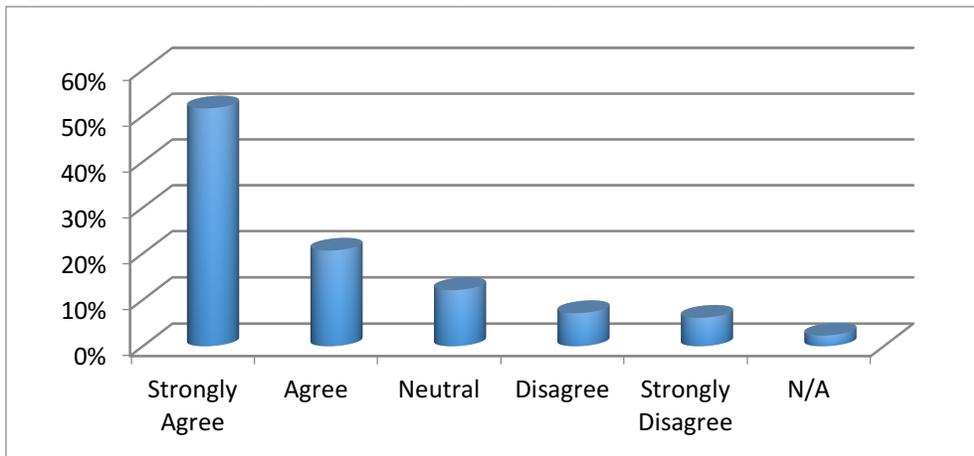
Improving the Learning Environment

In responding to a number of open-ended questions, sessional instructors offered a variety of suggestions on how to improve the learning environment in Ontario's universities. These suggestions primarily fall within five categories. Each category is presented in the order of the number of suggestions received per category. First, sessional faculty indicated that hiring faculty to more stable, full-time positions would reduce stress and enable instructors to better prepare for upcoming courses. Second, many felt that class size, notably for undergraduate courses, was problematic for providing critical thinking opportunities and student engagement. Third, sessional faculty would like more opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development, frequently specifically requesting access to teaching and learning centres to improve their instructional techniques and pedagogy. In addition, many indicated that more pedagogy and classroom management training in their PhD and Master's programs would have been welcome. Fourth, instructors were concerned with what were perceived to be an increasing need to conduct remedial work in many first year courses, where students are unfamiliar with essay structure or basic requirements for university-level classes. Many felt that offering remedial or preparatory courses, or perhaps better high school preparation in general, would free up classroom time from remedial work and raise expectations and thus learning outcomes. Fifth, while most instructors indicated a positive response overall to questions regarding available teaching resources at most institutions, there were concerns that gaps can affect the learning environment. For example, ill-fitted classroom layouts and a lack of private meeting spaces for faculty were the two most frequently identified issues related to resources. The analysis of qualitative data that follows provides insight into how instructors perceive the learning environments in which they work, what motivates them, and how policies and practices that are put in place are carried out in practice.

1. Increased stability

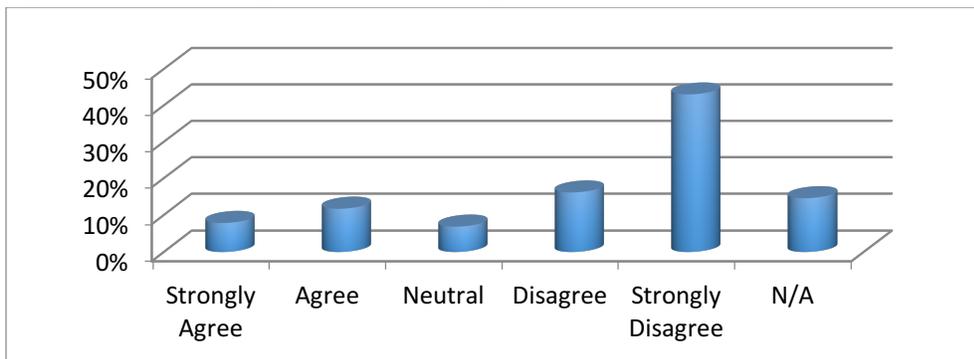
Sessional faculty indicated that hiring faculty to more stable, full-time positions would reduce stress and enable instructors to better prepare for upcoming courses. When asked about whether they were concerned about the contingent nature of their employment, 72.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Those indicating that this was not a source of concern (13.2%) were primarily retirees or other classic sessionals who had alternative sources of employment. Respondents were asked whether they felt comfortable making large financial commitments such as purchasing a car or a home and nearly two-thirds (65.8%) could not make these commitments due to either job instability, level of remuneration, or a combination of the two issues; 16.3% felt comfortable making major financial commitments, though this was primarily classic sessionals who had alternative sources of income.

Figure 35: The contingent nature of my employment is a source of concern



A healthy workforce is important for the general learning environment. Unsurprisingly, many respondents indicated that instability and remuneration were not the only issues that impacted their health. For example, respondents were asked about health and dental coverage, and there is little surprise that the majority (59.12%) indicated that they did not have adequate dental coverage, though nearly 20% (19.5%) indicated adequate coverage. There were similar responses to the question on health coverage, with 56.96% indicating inadequate health coverage and 19.9% indicating adequate coverage.

Figure 36: I have adequate dental coverage as a Sessional instructor



2. Reduced class size to improve critical thinking and engagement

Sessional faculty indicated that there are challenges associated with large class sizes. Class size, notably for upper-level undergraduate courses, was viewed as problematic for providing critical thinking opportunities and student engagement. The following are a sample of respondent suggestions and concerns regarding class size.

Class size is probably one of the easiest changes to make that would make a significant impact. I have taught three different courses - one with ~200 students and no tutorials, while the other two typically have ~60 students. The lack of tutorials/labs/discussion sections means that students are lectured to twice a week and only have a chance to contribute in a large class environment. I try to use different methods to encourage participation and have even used small group exercises in large lecture halls - but that does not replace the importance of small class sizes where meaningful dialogue can be encouraged among professors and students.

Class sizes have doubled twice in the last two years in our program. Classes are moving from small-groups (intensive discussion groups for the development of critical thinking skills) to ever larger groups in order to save money. The result is less interaction, less feedback for students, fewer essays, more multiple-choice tests, and far less opportunity to promote the students' personal/professional/moral/intellectual reflection and development. The students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning is palpably slipping due to the increase in class sizes.

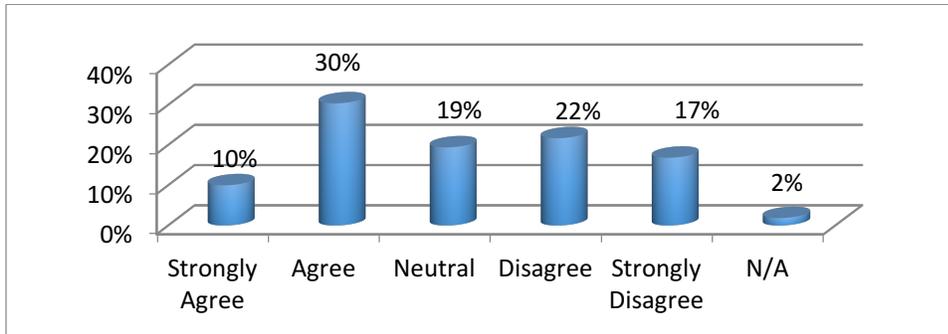
3. Teaching and Learning Centres

As with many countries, the role and functioning of universities have shifted from serving a traditional elite to a significantly broader idea of access for all, thus the role of the instructor has also shifted. When asked about what is changing and what is expected of instructors, many indicated that there are gaps in the high school curriculum in terms of preparation for basic university skills, such as essay writing, note taking, among other important areas. Sessionals further reported that they would like to enhance their instructional skills in order to accommodate a wide range of student needs. Sessionals are asked to work in large, increasingly multicultural classrooms; to place greater emphasis on accommodating and integrating students with special learning needs in their classrooms; to use more information and communication technologies in their classrooms; to meet more stringent criteria in terms of curriculum development within evaluative and accountability frameworks; and often to work without private office space or other resources.

A large number of sessionals identified gaps in their professional development as teachers and requested access to teaching and learning centres, some further indicating that graduate schools should provide more classroom management and pedagogical preparation. At the same time, respondents indicated that graduate programs cannot be expected to prepare sessionals for the increasingly challenging environment of teaching large classes and students with high needs, and therefore ongoing professional development focusing on pedagogy is highly recommended by sessional faculty. Universities may need to provide these instructors with more opportunities for professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality learning environment. Our findings indicate that only 40% of sessionals agree or strongly agree that they have

access to professional development opportunities, with 38.5% indicating that they lack these opportunities, as illustrated in the following chart.

Figure 37: Access to Professional Development Activities



There appears to be a large number of sessional faculty concerned about access to ongoing pedagogical and classroom management training. The following are a sample of the concerns raised in the survey responses.

“If you pay us to complete job related training (instruction techniques & pedagogy) we can better manage large classrooms.”

“I do believe there should be more support for those who do not have background in lesson planning and classroom management background. I would have liked more information about the different challenges of teaching adults.”

Respondents indicated that they would like Teaching and Learning Centres to offer a variety of courses on the following topics areas:

- Helping new and weaker instructors to become more effective;
- Providing information on recent advances in instructional technology or pedagogy;
- Update skills and approaches to classroom management;
- Developing new teaching techniques;
- Networking and gaining peer-support.

4. Remedial support

A substantial number of respondents indicated that they were concerned with the lack of university-ready skills exhibited by first and second year students. Further, this is believed to contribute to problems in the learning environment where instructors have less time for developing broader curriculum goals as they increasingly need to focus on basic skills such as essay composition or basic math, among other areas of concern.

“I know this is a perennial complaint, but I have students who cannot write a grammatically correct sentence, who do not know what a paragraph is, and do not understand any of the rules or guidelines for these things when I explain them.”

“What strikes me most is that so many students are totally unprepared for university-level work and really have no interest in pursuing university studies. This seriously affects the kind of learning that those wanting more academically challenging studies can receive.”

“I would suggest a mandatory, first-year course that teaches students the basics of what is expected in university-level learning.”

“Students come to University having never written a paper longer than four pages!”

“The focus on money means that workshop-based classes will always have too many students in them to be fully productive.”

5. Resources

Respondents indicated that, for the most part, resources are available to provide adequate learning environments in Ontario’s universities. However, there were several issues that emerged from the analysis of questionnaire and interview data. The following is a sample of the issues raised by sessionals when asked about the learning environment.

“We need better physical spaces that are not overcrowded (i.e. more students than chairs), are climate controlled (not so cold you need to wear a winter coat in class), are properly equipped with speakers, smart boards, microphones, etc.”

“Better classroom, better designed for group activities. I teach in a traditional classroom and it is terrible for group work.”

“Provide basic teaching supplies - chart paper, etc., instead of making us buy these supplies ourselves.”

Summary

Respondents provided a number of suggestions for improving the learning environment in the open-ended portion of the survey. These suggestions fall within five categories, including employment stability for contract instructors; reducing or capping class size, notably for undergraduate courses, to improve critical thinking skills; more opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development; methods for improving the university-ready skills of undergraduates; and closing certain gaps in resources available for non-full-time faculty, notably office space and ill-fitting classroom layout. These data provides insight into some of the challenges perceived by sessional faculty in Ontario’s universities.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Summary

Throughout this study, we found the dedication of sessional faculty toward their professional responsibilities, students, and the learning environment to be inspiring. However, the personal stress and feelings of invisibility are cause for concern. For this reason, there is some urgency to understanding non-tenure-track faculty who now make up a majority of instructors in some of our universities (Brownlee, 2015). From our sample, 82.5% of sessionals indicated that “there needs to be more public discussion on the working conditions of sessional, part-time and other contract faculty” in our universities, with less than 4% disagreeing with this statement. This report is a first step in understanding this important and dedicated group of university teachers.

The objective of this report was to provide much-needed basic data on sessional faculty, including demographics, access to resources, academic environment and the learning environment of sessional faculty in Ontario universities. We also noted demographic shifts that have occurred since Rajagopal’s (2002) national surveys of this population in the early 1990s, including gender balance, shifting categorizations, and changes in academic career aspirations. For example, while Rajagopal found that the majority of part-timers were men at all but one university our study found nearly sixty percent (59.5%) of the sample identify as female, with each university having more women than men in short-term contractual positions. Moreover, both categories of sessional faculty, classic and precarious, were comprised of a majority of women (62% and 64%, respectively). In addition, Rajagopal’s study found that those above 50 years of age were more likely to be classified as “contemporary”, whereas this study indicates that those over 50 to be more likely to fall into the “classic” category. The large number of precarious sessionals that we found to be under the age of 40 indicates a shift from the early 1990s (see Rajagopal, 2002).

Our categorizations of “classic” and “precarious” are deliberately designed to provide some measure of comparison to Rajagopal’s population. However, there are several changes to these categories that are worth some consideration. Notably, Rajagopal’s studies were national, not provincial, and there have been some categorical shifts to consider. For example, we have a somewhat different population in that Rajagopal focused on “part-timers” whereas we had a significant sample of sessionals who are working full-time equivalent workloads, or on limited-term non-permanent contracts. With incompatible definitions of “part-time” “limited-term” “short-term contract” and other terms offered at various universities, we opted to update the language to a broader “sessional” status. This appears to be the most easily recognizable term that captures the breadth of the non-permanent academic labour force without inviting competing definitions from a variety of institutions. In addition, we deliberately changed the title of one of the category from “contemporary” to “precarious” in order to emphasize a key characteristic of this population: reliance on unstable, precarious employment. While teaching remains a source of personal pride for the majority of precarious sessionals, this survey should serve to raise some interest in the academic work environment, specifically where 89% have “experienced considerable personal strain due to short term contractual employment.”

In Rajagopal's national surveys from 1990 to 1992, "classics" comprised 34.5% of part-timers, a third of whom wanted to enter the academy full-time. Our findings indicate that there is a reduction in the share of sessional faculty who can be classified as "classics" to roughly one-quarter of our sample. As with Rajagopal's sample, however, over a third indicated a preference to have a full-time career in academia. Those indicating that they would prefer to remain part-time either have a full-time career in another field, are retired, or are nearing retirement age. To reiterate, these classic faculty are not considered precarious because they do not rely on the income from sessional instruction, however, the respondents suggest that some of these individuals might prefer to work in the university environment over their current careers, and these may be termed "in waiting" for the opportunity to join academia on a full-time basis.

This survey also provides some insight as to the resources available for sessional faculty. Overall, we found that roughly one-third to one-half of sessionals receive access to most resources (copying services, sample syllabi, office space, and TAs) prior to the start of class, whereas there appears to be a number of sessionals who do not have access to these important resources. However, even when they obtain resources, sessionals note that there can be problems. For example, email accounts can be closed automatically at the conclusion of the contract even though there are still teaching tasks to be completed, or teaching assistants can add to the work rather than provide a benefit to the educational process.

Overall, our survey indicates that sessionals are dedicated instructors, the majority of whom appear to consider themselves better teachers than researchers, and have a preference for teaching overall, with less than 30% of precarious sessionals leaning toward research. Throughout both the survey comments and the follow-up interviews, there were consistent recommendations for teaching-stream positions, though much of the interview data will be analyzed for future publications.

9.2 Recommendations

Create formal channels of data collection

This is the most comprehensive study of sessional faculty employed by Ontario universities that has ever been published, but it provides little more than a snapshot view of this important population of university teachers. There is a need for the collection and public dissemination of data on sessional faculty. Universities need to play a lead role in studying and understanding the evolving nature of academic staffing and the implications of these changes for the quality of teaching and learning within these institutions. As public institutions, universities should report on the number of sessional faculty that are employed, just as they report on the number of tenure-stream faculty, as well as the share of all courses taught by sessional instructors. The publication of these data would allow us to have a much clearer understanding of institutional decisions on academic staffing, and important trends over time. We also believe that it is important that national (and provincial) data on sessional data be collected and made publicly available so that broader system trends can be observed and analyzed.

The dearth of data on sessional faculty is problematic in terms of understanding a growing part of the academic workforce and our learning environment. As Jones (2015) argues, writing evidence-based policy is particularly challenging without the advantage of data, yet data systems have increasingly eroded over the past decade. “Our national data systems for higher education, the backbone that supports the development of evidence-based policy, research, and informed public discussion of issues facing our universities and colleges, are embarrassingly inadequate” (p. 1). With budgetary cuts to data collection agencies, including Statistics Canada, the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and youth, the Survey of Intellectual Property Commercialization in the Higher Education Sector, and the 2012 discontinuation of the University and College Academic Staff System (UCASS), our data systems require support.

Improving the learning environment

1. Remuneration and job stability

Throughout this study, we found overwhelming evidence that sessional instructors are passionate, dedicated instructors. However, job instability, lack of health and dental coverage, and general lack of remuneration for actual hours worked are issues that surfaced most frequently when sessionals were asked about issues of quality and the learning environment. Most instructors are not simply working on short-term contracts for one or two years, but are a far less transient population than previously thought. Over half our sample has been working 3-8 years, with 15% working over 15 years. As such, treating this population as transient may be problematic. While instructors felt that they had a positive impact on the learning environment, many acknowledged that there was a looming risk of “burn out.” Most would prefer to move into a full-time position (76.4%), however, confidence in their ability to move into a full-time position was remarkably low, with only 13.1% believing they would find a full-time position within the next two years. Further, a majority felt that a tenure-track position was an unachievable goal, while just over 40% (mostly precarious instructors) would exit academia if they could find secure work in another field. These statistics do not suggest an overall satisfied workforce, and the pessimism reported by many of respondents throughout these results should not be taken lightly.

2. Class size and critical thinking

Many respondents indicated serious concerns with increasing undergraduate class sizes. The most common concern raised among respondents was the issue of providing critical thinking opportunities and student dialogue. Some literature suggests that class size may not be as important as other factors for critical thinking opportunities, however, sessional faculty raised this issue frequently in the open-comment sections of our survey.

3. Teaching & Learning Centres and Graduate-Level Pedagogical Training

Sessional faculty are dedicated instructors, many of whom teach on a long-term basis. These instructors are requesting more opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development activities,

frequently requesting access to teaching and learning centres to improve their instruction techniques and pedagogy. Further, there were a number of recommendations that graduate programs include more opportunities for students to learn about teaching and develop appropriate skills.

4. Remedial classes

Instructors were concerned with what was perceived to be an increasing need to conduct remedial work in many first year courses, where students are unfamiliar with essay structure or basic requirements for university-level classes. Many felt that offering remedial or preparatory courses, or perhaps better high school preparation in general, would free up classroom time from remedial work and raise expectations and thus learning outcomes.

5. Resources

Most instructors indicated a positive response overall to questions regarding available teaching resources at most institutions, however, there were concerns that gaps can affect the learning environment. Classroom designs that prevented certain types of teaching practices and a lack of private spaces for faculty to meet with students were the two most frequently identified issues related to resources.

9.3 Conclusions

Our findings suggest that most sessional faculty are highly dedicated instructors who are far less interested in tenure-track careers than in pursuing teaching as a full-time occupation. As a group, these instructors have a notable passion for teaching over research and are likely to be committed for many years, with the majority of our sample having 3-8 years of experience. Opposed to the idea that sessional faculty are either professionals in the community (<20% of our sample) or academics who could not “make it” on the tenure track, our research team has come to view sessional faculty as instructors who care passionately about the learning environment and their students. Only 28% of precarious faculty have a preference for research, correlating with the 29.6% who were pursuing a tenure-track position and the fact that the majority would prefer a full-time teaching-stream position. However, respondents reported high levels of pessimism about job prospects and general dissatisfaction – points that are of considerable concern given the increasing role of sessional faculty in university teaching. Concerns with the level of remuneration, including remuneration for curriculum development and post-contract hours were raised by many respondents, but the main source of frustration appears to be the instability of contracts and a lack of full-time permanent teaching positions.

Finally, perhaps the most important conclusion of the study is that there continues to be a need for the collection and dissemination of data on the employment of sessional faculty by Ontario universities. This study provides an important snapshot of key issues and trends, but the increasing role of sessional faculty in university teachers requires more research. The development of provincial and/or national data sets would allow policy-makers at both the institutional and system levels to more fully understand changing employment trends and their implications for the quality of higher education.

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