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Join the Film Sponsor Team for IN SEARCH OF PROFESSOR PRECARIOUS

“If this is allowed to continue unchecked, if we don’t in the moment privilege the working conditions of our precarious faculty, then we’ll all soon be precarious faculty.”--JP Hornick, Co-ordinator of School of Labour, George Brown College and Chief Steward, OPSEU Local 556

In Search of Professor Precarious, in-progress documentary film by Gerry Potter
Shooting Format: 4K video Length: 72 minute feature/45 minute broadcast
Dissemination Aim: Campus screenings across Canada via faculty associations, union locals and student unions; Film Festivals; later, internet distribution and possible television screening
Planned Finish Date: Sept.1, 2019.

The Making of Professor P: After teaching for 27 years as contract faculty at 3 different Alberta post-secondary institutions and being actively involved with faculty associations, including a bargaining team, I realized that we desperately need to raise public awareness of the crisis created by the exploitation of precarious contract faculty in higher education. For two years, mostly at my own expense, I’ve traveled across Canada researching this exploitation and interviewing faculty, activists, experts and union and association leaders. Now I am working on a feature-length documentary about the issue.



“I love the work, love my students and my co-workers. What’s frustrating, though, is not knowing if I’m going to be working again, if I’m going to be doing this another six years, if it’s ever going to turn full-time, whether or not I’ll have benefits.” --Anna, Contract faculty

The Issues of Precarity: In Canada the shift of higher education teaching from mostly permanent, tenure-track jobs to a majority of low-paying, exploitive precarious contracts has recently accelerated to over 60% of those teaching. The results are impoverished, stressed contract faculty, overworked permanent faculty, and shallower learning outcomes for students. True academic freedom, not the false kind championed by the political right, has plummeted as more faculty live in fear of losing their meagre contracts. The situation has also undermined the bargaining positions of both precarious and permanent faculty, which in turn has allowed governments to starve higher education and permitted administrations to devote too much of their scant resources to swelling administrative costs and showy new buildings.

Benefits for Unions and Faculty Associations: Through the emotional, immersive and intellectual experience of this film story, general audiences will experience the urgent need to see an end to the exploitation of contract faculty. In turn, faculty viewers, contract or permanent, will both feel and understand the need to join and support unions and associations, and to maintain solidarity in this struggle. ***In Search of Professor Precarious*** will bring to life precarious contract faculty’s currently large and growing proportion within the teaching workforce, the challenges for all faculty because of this situation, and the negative effects of precaritization on colleges, universities, students and society. It will show the role of precaritization in undermining workers’ and unions’ power and rights and exacerbating the growing economic inequality in North America. The film will illustrate the crucial importance of union and association organizing and collective bargaining for all workers and of solidarity across specializations, job categories and industries. It will show the fundamental value of the right to strike and of exercising that right when genuinely necessary. Viewers will also see that there are different models for contracts in higher education, including such creative approaches as the “Vancouver Model” negotiated by Vancouver Community College Faculty Association, which will be of real use to faculty across Canada.

FACTS:

- **60% of the teaching workforce in Canadian higher ed is precarious contract**
- **Over half of precarious faculty are women, and a disproportionate number are people of colour**
- **Contract faculty have the same qualifications as most permanent faculty, yet teach the same courses for a fraction of the pay**
- **Most Canadian contract faculty have no benefits, no pension, no sick leave, no research funding, no true academic freedom, no voice in curriculum or governance, no job stability, and yet have been teaching for many years**
- **President’s salary, U of Toronto: \$1,045,582/yr, U of Alberta \$846,000/yr**
- **Average Contract faculty annual pay: \$19,500/yr**

Four Main Characters and Stories: The film will feature clips from many interviews and events, but will focus on the stories of four major characters.



Jen (l) has been struggling on contract faculty pay for 8 years as she raises her two children, co-writes a widely used textbook, strains to complete her PhD in Shoreline Biology, and wonders what kind of employment and life lie ahead.

Sandra, (r) a lively contract professor in massage therapy who, after 22 years teaching, is fighting a pay cut amounting to nearly a quarter of her wages.

Marco (r) contract English professor and musician, is struggling to help his faculty association understand the needs and issues of precarious contract faculty and the crucial nature of these issues.

Pam (l) a professional dancer and choreographer, wonders after nearly 30 years of teaching how she'll get by without a pension. She's a leading activist, fighting for contract faculty equality and was a strike leader in the huge Ontario College Strike of 2017.



"The post-secondary sector can be seen as something of a bellwether sector, revealing trends that are taking place in the broader labour market."--The Walrus

“Now that I’m reaching the end of my working life, I’m realizing that I will NOT have a pension, unlike my full-time colleagues who teach the same courses, have the same qualifications, whom I’ve been running in parallel with for nearly 30 years, and whose lives are going to be very different from mine.”--Pam, Contract Faculty

Filmmaker Gerry Potter’s experience: I taught as contract faculty in universities for 27 years, was on a contract bargaining team and was very active in 3 different faculty associations. I’ve made 7 films professionally, written for ACCESS Television Network and the National Film Board, and directed over 40 professional theatre productions. I have an MFA in Directing, am Programming Chair of the Documentary Organization of Canada, Alberta Chapter, was inducted into Edmonton’s Cultural Hall of Fame in 1995 and awarded the MZD Progressive Artist Award in 2017.

Private Sampler from Professor Precarious footage: <https://vimeo.com/315541075>

Password: precarious

Samples of past work: Creative Connections: <https://vimeo.com/244293805>

The BEST Story: <https://vimeo.com/247223062>

BECOME A SPONSOR of *In Search of Professor Precarious*:

Gold Sponsor: of \$10,000 or more gets to host a public or private screening of the film and may request attendance of filmmaker at this screening for Q&A. They will also receive a Gold Sponsor screen credit, a single full onscreen logo display for 3 seconds or more, 10 Blu-Ray copies and permission to distribute film within Canada to members. They will be acknowledged and logo will appear on all promotional material.

Silver Sponsor: of \$5000 or more receives a Silver Sponsor screen credit, screen logo display, acknowledgement and logo on all promotional materials, 5 Blu-Ray copies, and permission to screen the film and distribute to members in Canada.

Bronze Sponsor of \$1000 or more receives a Bronze Sponsor screen credit, 2 Blu-ray copies and permission to distribute the film to members in Canada.

Contributors of \$100 or more receive a Special Thanks screen credit, gratitude, and a DVD

Supporters of \$25 or more get a screen credit and gratitude

“We’re not just statistics: we’re people with real lives and people who depend on us.”--Sandra, Contract Faculty