

Update on the Unit 3 Precarious Academic Work Survey (The “PAW” Survey)

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By:

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LOCAL 3902

Overview

- **Background and Context for Conducting a Survey on Precarious Academic Work**
- **The Survey:**
 - Timeline & Current State of Development
 - **Details:**
 - Target Population
 - Methodology
 - Content & Question Format
- **Thoughts for Future Research**
- **Appendix with links to crucial reports on precarious employment in Canada**

The Context for a Survey on Precarious Work

- Though Canada's labour market continues to tighten, numerous reports consistently note that precarious employment (PE) is a growing problem:
 - <https://pepso.ca/>
- In fact, PE is becoming increasingly prevalent across a wider array of industries and occupations:
 - <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/no-safe-harbour>
- Also, growing evidence that PE has longer-term negative impacts on the individual, the economy, and society:
 - Poorer mental and physical health (on average)
 - Prolonged underutilization of human potential → stunted skills development and truncated lifetime income → reduced economic growth
 - A sense of “delayed adulthood” (e.g. feeling unable to make major decisions like buying a house or car, having children or starting a family)

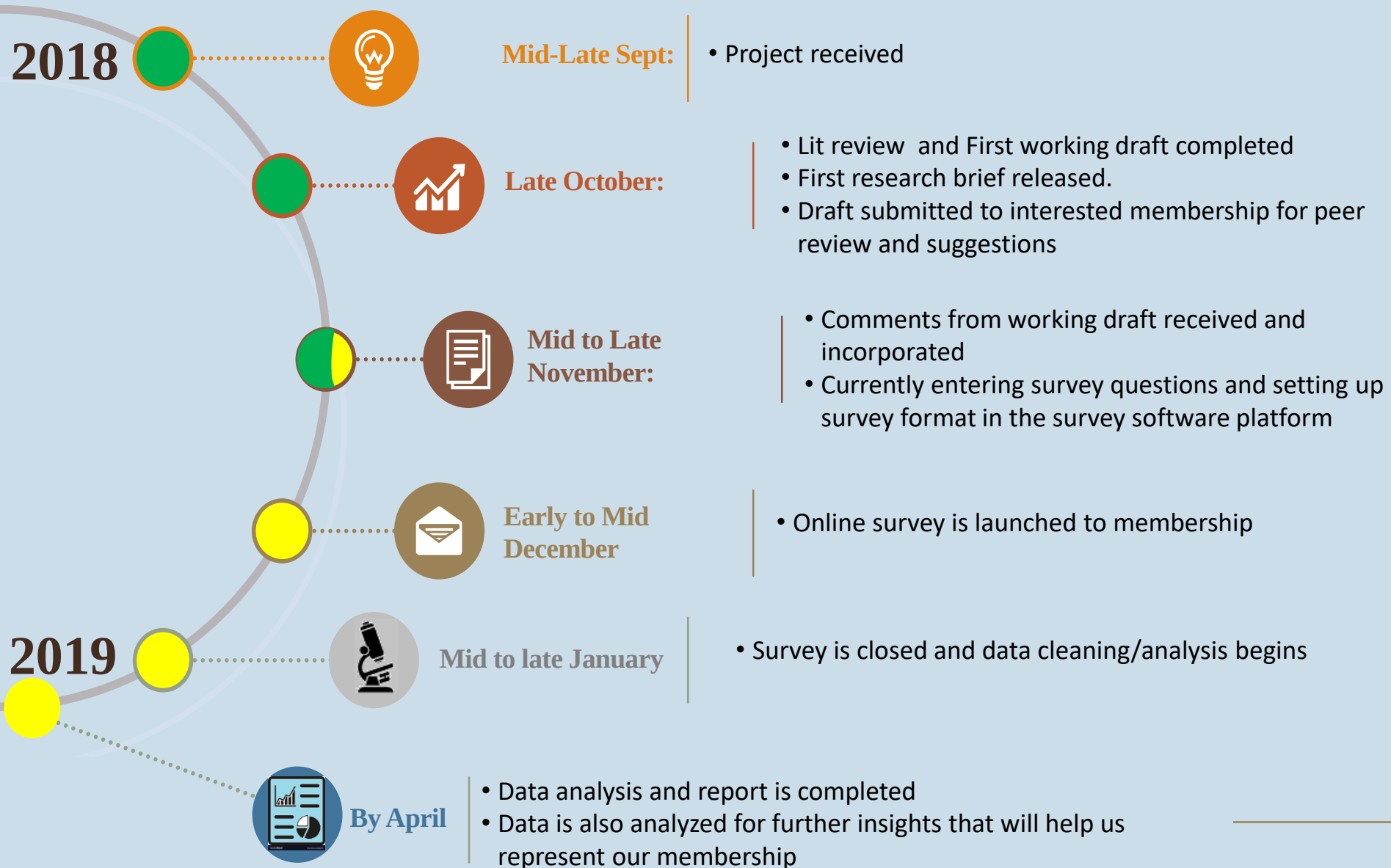
The Context for a Survey on Precarious Academic Work

- In the past 5 years or so, there has been an increasing awareness of the growth of contract academic work among Canada's post-secondary institutions
 - https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf
 - https://cupe.ca/sites/cupe/files/report_townhalls_2017_05_18.pdf
 - <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/contract-u>
- In 2016-17 More than half of all faculty appointments in Canada were contract appointments (Prasma & Shaker 2018)
- Consistent with the private sector, Canada's post-secondary institutions also seem to be using PE arrangements in academia to support a business model centred on flexibility and short-term gains.
- This is particularly concerning given the above average time and money that academic workers invest in their skill development.

The Context for a Survey on Precarious Academic Work at U of T

- PE is an especially important issue we need to better understand for the sake of U of T's contract academic workers:
 - U of T is located in one of Canada's most expensive cities
 - Much ambiguity, and many conflicting narratives surrounding the situation of part-time academic staff, and what they want out of their work
 - U of T is consistently ranked among one of Canada's top employers by external metrics:
 - <http://www.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/news/canadas-top-employers-2018/>
 - **But** we need to know whether U of T's contract academic staff have reason to share this view
- Unit 3 contract academic staff comprise a substantial portion of CUPE 3902's membership; we need a better profile of the experiences and struggles they face on the growing problem of PE in academia.
 - As a "model employer" and one of Canada's leading universities, it will be interesting to see how the findings from this survey compare against the findings in the national CAUT survey

Survey Timeline & Current State of Development



Survey Details: Target Population

- All persons who are members of Unit 3, and all those who may not be members, but are covered by the Unit 3 collective agreement
 - Estimated size of target population as of September 2018: $N \approx 1500$
- Includes those in the following contract academic positions across U of T's three campuses:
 - Sessional Lecturers (Level 1 to 3)
 - Sessional Instructional Assistants
 - Writing Instructors (Levels 1 and 2)
 - Other Music Professionals - defined in the Unit 3 CA as those providing:
 - Applied Lessons
 - Movement Coaching
 - Recital Adjudicators
 - Accompanists (non-teaching)
 - Those holding any combination of the above positions

Survey Details: Methods

- **Method of Observation:** Online survey of the entire Unit 3 membership (N ≈ 1500)
 - Participation by invite only. Solicited through an email containing information about the survey, and a link to access the questionnaire online.
 - The most efficient & cost effective means of maximizing our reach of the target population – given current budget and time constraints.
- **Sampling Frame:** The most recent version of CUPE's database of Unit 3 member contact info.

Survey Details: Methods

- **Target Response Rate:** 100% (let's aim high!) but realistically...
 - Survey response rates of 50% or more are considered outstanding
 - Online survey response rates of 20% or more are considered outstanding
- **The Technology**
 - **Limesurvey:** an open source survey platform that allows researchers to store collected data securely on their own servers
- **And for the “Stats Geeks” Out There:**
- Since the size of our target population is relatively close to being known....
 - We can use this information to adjust the standard errors in our survey results downward
 - Thus reducing our error in estimating how reflective the sample results are to the actual characteristics of our population (Unit 3 members).

Survey Details: Content

- The content of the survey, and the particular wording of the questions were partly modified from the 2017-2018 CAUT questionnaire on precarious academic employment in Canada
 - The CAUT survey has already been through a rigorous vetting & validation process
- **The Survey has 5 Main Dimensions:**
 - **Part A: Screening Questions**
 - **Part B: Working Conditions & Workload**
 - **Part C: Feelings about a More Permanent Career Path at U of T**
 - **Part D: Pay & Benefits**
 - **Part E: Demographics: including information relevant to equality seeking groups**
- Approximately 36 to 50 questions: depending on applicable answer choices

Survey Details: Question Format

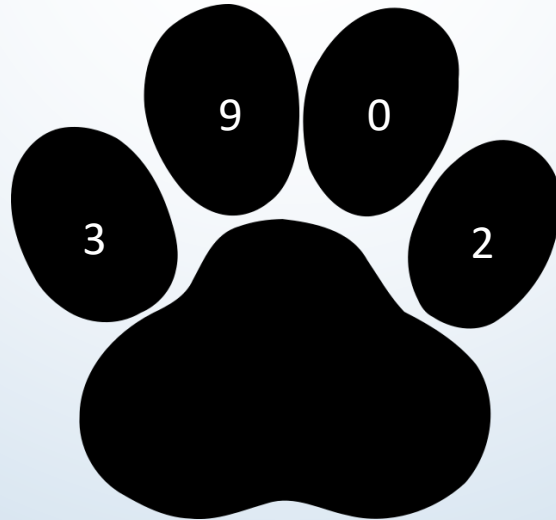
- The survey employs the following question formats:

Type	Example																																									
Forced choice single response:	<p>How many other jobs, in addition to your Unit 3 position(s), did you hold between September 2017 and the present? If applicable, include any self-employment.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>a) 1</td></tr> <tr><td>b) 2</td></tr> <tr><td>c) 3</td></tr> <tr><td>d) more than 3</td></tr> </table>	a) 1	b) 2	c) 3	d) more than 3																																					
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Multiple answer:	<p>Do you identify as: (select all that apply)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>a) Male</td></tr> <tr><td>b) Female</td></tr> <tr><td>c) Transgender</td></tr> <tr><td>d) Non-binary or third gender</td></tr> <tr><td>e) LGBTQ2S</td></tr> <tr><td>f) Prefer not to say</td></tr> </table>	a) Male	b) Female	c) Transgender	d) Non-binary or third gender	e) LGBTQ2S	f) Prefer not to say																																			
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Likert-scale type questions:	<p>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = not likely at all and 5 = very likely, how likely do you think you will secure a more permanent full-time job within the next 2 years at U of T that is related to your current position?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3 =not sure</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3 =not sure	4	5																																				
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Some fill in the blanks:	<p>You indicated that sometime between September 2017 and the present, you worked [A4=a to d] jobs in addition to your Unit 3 position(s). How many hours per week did you usually work at these/this other job(s)? [provide positive integer from 1 – 168]</p>																																									
Matrix-type questions:	<p>Please indicate which benefits you had through a spouse, family member or other job sometime between September 2017 and the present. Select all that apply. [matrix question]</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Benefit</th> <th colspan="3">Personal coverage from other job</th> <th colspan="3">Coverage as a dependent through spouse or family member</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Don't Know</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Don't Know</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Health Insurance</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dental Plan</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Spending Account</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Benefit(s)</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Benefit	Personal coverage from other job			Coverage as a dependent through spouse or family member			Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Health Insurance		•			•		Dental Plan		•		•			Health Spending Account		•			•		Other Benefit(s)		•			•	
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- The end of the survey will also contain free space for leaving comments and suggestions

Thank You

Any questions about the
CUPE 3902 “PAW” Survey?



A list of crucial reports on precarious employment in Canada:

General Reports on Precarious Employment in Canada

- <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/document.doc?id=63>
- <https://surveys.mcmaster.ca/limesurvey/index.php/971177?lang=en>
- https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/pepso/documents/2013_itsmorethanpoverty_report.pdf
- <https://pepso.ca/documents/kpmg-uw-report-precarious-employment-may-2014.pdf>
- <https://pepso.ca/documents/precarity-penalty.pdf>
- <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/file/website-miscellaneous-document-part/Workforce-Security-Business-Case-Framework-.pdf>
- https://www.unitedwaygt.org/file/PEPSO-GLB_2018-06-18-dl.pdf
- <https://www.economics.mcmaster.ca/pepso/documents/the-generation-effect-full-report.pdf>
- <http://www.lco-cdo.org/en/older-adultsfinal-report>
- <http://www.lco-cdo.org/en/disabilities-final-report>
- <https://www.lco-cdo.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/vulnerable-workers-final-report.pdf>
- <http://workersactioncentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/StillWorkingOnTheEdge-Exec-Summary-web.pdf>
- https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Ontario%20Office/2015/06/Higher_Standard.pdf
- <http://inquiryandaction.com/working-so-hard-and-still-so-poor/>
- <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/independent-work-choice-necessity-and-the-gig-economy>
- <http://www.peterborough.ca/Assets/City+Assets/Social+Services/Documents/DataShare/Presentations/Precarious+Employment+Research+Initiative+Presentation.pdf>

List of crucial reports on precarious employment in Canada:

General Reports on Precarious Employment in Canada: Continued

- <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sharingeconomy>
- <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/demanding-fair-share>
- <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/no-safe-harbour>
- https://cupe.ca/sites/cupe/files/survey_eng_final.pdf
- https://www.whsc.on.ca/Files/Other/2017-4-6_E-lert_OFL-Precarious-Work-Final-Report
- <https://cupe.ca/employment-increasingly-precarious-public-libraries-survey-finds>
- <https://librarianship.ca/news/cupe-precarious-employment-p2/>

Specific Reports on Precarious Employment in Canada's Post-Secondary Sector

https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/higher-education-college-adjunct-professor-salary/404461/?utm_source=atfb

<https://ocufa.on.ca/conferences/confronting-precarious-academic-work/>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/2016-OCUFA-Study-PRESENTATION-Feb-8-2015.pdf>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-2016-Panel-1-Field.pdf>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-2016-Panel-1-Birdsell-Bauer.pdf>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-2016-Panel-1-May.pdf>

List of crucial reports on precarious employment in Canada:

Specific Reports on Precarious Employment in Canada's Post-Secondary Sector: Continued

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-2016-Panel-2-White.pdf>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-2016-Panel-2-May.pdf>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-Panel-3-Jones.pdf>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/OCUFA-Conference-Panel-3-Black.pdf>

https://cupe.ca/sites/cupe/files/report_townhalls_2017_05_18.pdf

<http://cou.on.ca/reports/2018-faculty-at-work/>

<https://ocufa.on.ca/assets/2018-02-15-OCUFA-Faculty-at-Work-response.pdf>

<https://thewalrus.ca/why-everyone-is-wrong-about-the-censorship-fight-at-universities/>

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/no-temporary-solution>

https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/contract-u>

Also see the October research brief on CUPE 3902's Precarity Working Group webpage