

WLUFA Contract Faculty Strike FAQ for Students

No one wants a strike at Laurier. Please rest assured that WLUFA, your professors' association, is working as hard as we can to avoid one. A strike deadline of November 21, 2022 has been set, but WLUFA and Laurier's administration are still negotiating and will be doing so right up to the deadline or until a settlement is reached. If a deal seems likely, the deadline can also be deferred or delayed.

We know talk of a strike causes students a lot of anxiety, so we've prepared a set of answers to frequently asked questions here.

Remember: Laurier's administration does not 'own' the university. Students, staff, faculty and librarians comprise the heart of Laurier.

Q: What are the issues?

We are working on three main issues this round of contract faculty bargaining: job security, compensation that is equitable and keeps pace with the rate of inflation, and benefits and pensions.

Q: How do these issues affect students?

The quality of your education is deeply connected to the working conditions of your professors. We work to protect and enhance our working conditions at Laurier but doing this protects and enhances your learning conditions.

- Have you ever had trouble contacting a professor whose class you wished to take, or who you wanted to ask for a letter of reference? Have you noticed that some of the classes you sign up for do not have a faculty member's name attached to them until the very last minute? Well over 50% of professors at Laurier are paid per course, work on short-term contracts, and have no job security, benefits or pensions. Many of these professors are barely scraping by because Laurier's administration is addicted to this cheap, just-in-time model of employment. Improving job security and compensation for contract faculty members are two major issues in this round of bargaining.
- Did you know that Laurier reported a very healthy financial situation until negotiations began in earnest? Pair this with their fiscally irresponsible rush to expand into Milton and their ever-expanding senior administration (19 positions at Laurier have 'president' in their titles) and suddenly Laurier appears to be in a financial crisis (manufactured). As a result, the University is imposing budget cuts on faculties, which will inevitably result in expanded class sizes, fewer course options and sections, job losses and strains on resources.
- Job security for contract faculty and fair compensation can only improve the quality of your education at Laurier.

Q: What is WLUFA fighting for?

WLUFA is alarmed that Laurier has abandoned its core mission of high-quality teaching and failed to reinvest in its front-line people. We are fighting for appropriate compensation, job security, and benefits and pensions for contract faculty.

Q: How will the strike affect me?

Classes taught by contract faculty will almost certainly be cancelled in the event of a strike. Your professors will not be coming on to campus for office hours and will likely not be available on email or on MyLS. Although WLUFAs regrets the very real disruption in your academic year that a strike may entail, all of this is done in the long-term interests of improving the quality of education at Laurier.

Q: What will it involve?

You will see picket lines at university main entrances. These picket lines will not prevent access to the university grounds. Please feel free to stop and chat with your contract faculty and their supporters on the picket lines. If you want, you can even join us!

Q: How long will it last?

The length of the possible strike will be determined by progress at the bargaining table. This necessarily involves both our Employer (Laurier administration) and WLUFAs.

Q: Who makes the decision about my exams and academic year?

All issues to do with academic accommodation for missed classes and exams will be determined by the administration.

Q: I'm a TA/RA/IA – will I still receive my pay?

Most likely, but please check with your union or department chair, for clarification.

Q: Is there anything I can do?

Tell the administration that you are concerned about the erosion of quality of education at Laurier, and support WLUFAs by sending an email to President Deborah MacLatchy: president@wlu.ca, Interim Provost & Vice-President: Academic Heidi Northwood: vpacademic@wlu.ca, Chief Human Resources and Equity Officer Pam Cant: pcant@wlu.ca, Vice-President, Student Affairs Ivan Joseph: joseph@wlu.ca, and Chair of the Board of Governors Paul Elliott through the University Secretary: alukin@wlu.ca.

You may also want to contact your student leaders. For undergraduate students: WLUSU President & CEO Shane Symington: supresident@wlu.ca 519.884.0710 x3409. For graduate students: GSA President & CEO Jeremy Wagner: jwagner@wlugsa.ca.

You can also be put in touch with other like-minded students who support Contract Faculty by emailing Michele Kramer (mkramer@wlu.ca).

Q: How can I stay updated on the status of contract negotiations?

Check out: <https://www.wlufa.ca/>

Twitter: @PrecariousWLU

Instagram: lauriercontractfaculty