

Annual Newsletter 2024-2025



UTFA Annual Newsletter | April 10, 2025

Together, we are the University of Toronto Faculty Association

UTFA is the only democratically accountable, collective body representative of faculty and librarians at the University of Toronto. Elected leaders of our Association represent and advance members' interests and negotiate and enforce workplace standards on behalf of the membership via bargaining, grievances, and other forms of advocacy.

Welcome & Report of the President

UTFA's Annual Newsletter brings with it the opportunity to celebrate our accomplishments as an Association and contemplate our future work. *This year has been marked by significant activity, and there is much to discuss.* A prominent theme in my Report this year is the relationship amongst structure, governance, and power – both with respect to the relationship between UTFA and the Administration and within UTFA itself.

In My Report

- > [What We Do](#)
- > [UTFA Negotiates Historic Breakthrough on Article 7 of the Memorandum of Agreement](#)
- > [A Vigorous Defence of our Members' Right to Procedural Fairness in Workplace Investigations](#)
- > [Amending the Memorandum of Agreement: Learning from our Experiences to Chart a Path Forward](#)
 - [The path forward](#)
- > [The Crisis in North American Higher Education](#)
- > [Freedom of Expression Under Threat](#)
- > [Strengthening our Association's Democratic Capacity and Collective Voice](#)
- > [Members' Campaign for University Pension Plan \(UPP\) Divestment](#)
- > [Acknowledgements](#)

What We Do

UTFA is the only democratically accountable, collective body representative of faculty and librarians at the University of Toronto.

As a bargaining agent for faculty members and academic librarians, UTFA engages in extensive consultations, obtains a bargaining mandate at UTFA Council, and negotiates salary, benefits, workload, and policy improvements with the senior University Administration on your behalf. The efforts of elected Negotiating Teams meaningfully impact working conditions, compensation, pensions, and benefits. For details on the most recent round of bargaining, see below the [Report of the Interim Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload](#).

UTFA's leadership and staff also assist individual members and groups with concerns about University policies and procedures, as well as the rights or protections they may have under the [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#), and prevailing legislation. For insights into the legal and advice support that is available, see the [Report of the Vice-President, Grievances](#).

UTFA also advocates for issues that affect members in the workplace, including academic freedom and collegial governance; human rights; fair and equitable workloads; job security; pay equity; academic integrity; procedural fairness; health and safety; appointments and promotions; compensation; workplace accommodation; and post-retirement benefits. This advocacy is evident throughout this Newsletter.

Some Notable Successes

UTFA Negotiates Historic Breakthrough on Article 7 of the Memorandum of Agreement

In late January 2025, UTFA's Salary, Benefits, and Workload Negotiating Team reached a historic agreement with the senior Administration to significantly improve the grievance and arbitration process in the [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#). Article 7 of the MoA, which had originally been envisioned as a collegial mechanism that would allow UTFA and its members to hold the Administration accountable, was in practice logistically cumbersome, uncollegial, unbalanced, and provided too many opportunities for the Administration to *delay, delay, and delay*.

Over the course of my presidency, with the support of our leadership, and working closely with Sherri Helwig, Vice-President, Grievances, UTFA persevered in pressing the senior Administration to acknowledge that [the grievance dispute resolution process in the MoA was broken](#).

Finally, this pressure produced the pivotal outcome that the Administration agreed to open and renegotiate Article 7, **yielding five key gains in the MoA's Grievance and Arbitration process for our members:**

1. **Significantly improved timelines and efficiencies:** [Article 7](#) now includes explicit timelines, and secured a modern, professional, and neutral mediation and arbitration process that fosters greater accountability, and is aligned with best practices across the academic sector.
2. **Chief and Deputy Chief Arbitrators:** A dedicated Chief Arbitrator (Eli Gedalof) and Deputy Chief Arbitrator (TBD) will now oversee Association grievances, supplemented by a pool of professional arbitrators for individual and group grievances. Importantly, these arbitrators will possess powers equivalent to those under the [Ontario Labour Relations Act](#), ensuring a more robust, procedurally fair, and legally sound process.
3. **Dedicated arbitration dates to clear the backlog and commitment to future hearings:** We secured the significant right to 66 pre-scheduled arbitration dates to address the existing backlog of grievances, alongside an additional right to schedule 48 days per year allocated for future hearings, which must normally be heard within no more than 9 months. The Chief Arbitrator will be available for 18 days, and the six arbitrators in the pool will each dedicate five days. Moreover, a provision has been secured granting the right to pause grievance timelines during July and August to accommodate time for research and vacation.
4. **Addressing conflicts of interest and bias:** A clear pathway has been established for grievances involving allegations of workplace harassment, violence, discrimination, bias, or conflict of interest on the part of the individual who would normally hear the grievance. Such cases can now be filed at the next step or heard by an alternate, impartial decision-maker.

5. **Accountability through written decisions:** The Administration is now obligated to provide written grievance decisions that include the reasons for their decision. This marks a significant improvement over the Administration's inappropriate past practice where written decisions could simply state "denied" without any explanation, hindering understanding and the ability to effectively address the underlying issues.

From now on, disputes between UTFA and the Administration will be heard by some of the best and most respected labour arbitrators in Canada. Equally significant, the Administration cannot drag out grievances for years but rather grievances will be heard and resolved as expeditiously as possible. Crucially, and likely in response to UTFA members' expressions of support for certification, the Administration has conceded in the new language that the arbitrators hearing UTFA's concerns will have the same powers that are conferred upon any labour arbitrator under the [Ontario Labour Relations Act](#). The UTFA Team also secured language that makes the new process sustainable: arbitrators will be added to the list, as needed, and with the assistance of the new Chief Arbitrator, if UTFA and the Administration cannot agree.

In sum, these improvements represent a fundamental and necessary strengthening of workplace protections and a commitment to a more just and equitable grievance process for all UTFA members. This historic breakthrough represents the shared accomplishment of the President, the Vice-President, Grievances, the Legal & Advice Team, UTFA administrative staff, and ultimately, the UTFA Salary, Benefits and Workload Negotiating Team.

A Vigorous Defence of our Members' Right to Procedural Fairness in Workplace Investigations

Since 2017, UTFA and the Administration have been negotiating ways to address concerns about procedural fairness in the growing number of workplace investigations involving our members. Specifically, UTFA has consistently raised serious concerns about the Administration's investigation processes and practices and the violations of our members' rights as complainants, respondents, and witnesses. In the fall of 2024, the Vice-President, Grievances, oversaw the filing of an [Association](#)

[grievance](#) regarding violations of our member's rights to procedural fairness in investigations that the Administration has been conducting into workplace harassment, human rights-based discrimination and harassment, incivility, and sexual violence.

These rights violations include the Administration failing to provide necessary information; failing to address undue delays in the investigation process; failing to conduct an impartial investigation; failing to appoint a reasonably competent investigator with relevant expertise; imposing unreasonable interim measures, including unreasonable and prejudicial restrictions on professional activities and/or attendance on campus; failing to engage in reasonable communication with either the respondents or the complainants; imposing unreasonable sanctions, including before completion of the investigation; failing to address and/or screen out vexatious complaints; and failing to safeguard the confidentiality of the parties. Protecting our members' right to procedurally fair processes is even more crucial considering [Ontario's controversial Bill 26](#). Under this Bill, when a University Administration makes a finding of sexual misconduct (a term that is poorly defined and broad enough to include a joke made in poor taste) and decides to terminate an employee (including our members), such a decision cannot be grieved (because Bill 26 forbids it) and effectively results in the termination of a member's academic career.

UTFA is therefore seeking to establish baseline protections for procedurally fair investigations. UTFA and the Administration have agreed to a facilitation process to establish a Sexual Violence Letter of Agreement that amends Article 7 of the [MoA](#). The goal of this agreement is to establish an Investigation Protocol that will apply to *all* workplace investigations that engage our members and better protect our members' rights. The facilitation process will be led by Eli Gedalof, and UTFA will submit its response to the University's proposal by June 12, 2025. If an agreement is not reached through facilitation, the matter will proceed to a fact-finding process which results in a report and recommendations for resolution. (The fact-finding process is described in paragraphs 29 to 39 of the [MoA](#)). By August 15, 2025, both parties will define their final positions regarding outstanding issues that may be published. If necessary, fact-finding meetings with Eli Gedalof will occur in October and/or November 2025. Stay tuned.

Amending the Memorandum of Agreement: Learning from our Experiences to Chart a Path Forward

Outside of a bilateral agreement between UTFA and the senior Administration, there is no mechanism to amend the [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#). Amendments to the MoA cannot be referred to independent arbitration, nor can UTFA currently launch job action to force concessions. Any amendment to the general framework governing the labour relations between UTFA and the Administration requires a voluntary agreement between the parties. Without the traditional levers to apply pressure, namely job action or interest arbitration, amending the MoA has always presented significant challenges.

Earlier this year, however, UTFA negotiated an overhaul of the grievance and arbitration procedure under the MoA, modernizing the process and ensuring timely independent adjudication for member complaints to be heard. As noted above, these amendments were the result of a concerted and unified effort from the President, the Vice-President, Grievances, the Legal & Advice Team, UTFA administrative staff, and ultimately, the UTFA Salary, Benefits and Workload Negotiating Team.

Negotiating improvements to our MoA with the Administration is not an automatic right. Rather, changes are dependent on the goodwill of the senior Administration to engage in good faith and meaningful negotiations with UTFA. The rights of faculty and librarians cannot be contingent on goodwill. We need to advance our advocacy for meaningful changes to the bargaining framework so that we can negotiate all terms and conditions of employment, a right other faculty associations have, and as provided under the [OLRA](#).

What path forward?

As I hope I have made clear [over the last several years](#), UTFA's leadership is committed to exploring improvements or alternatives to the [MoA](#).

Our legal experts who have worked with us over the last year to review the MoA and renegotiate Article 7 have observed that the efficacy and fairness of our current bargaining framework relies heavily on UTFA’s relentless commitment to improving the MoA while exploring alternatives, and the Administration’s willingness to share power, cooperate, and substantively engage with UTFA. *This willingness is too precarious, and not on a level playing field.* It is often in response to the threat of certification.

UTFA will be releasing a report prepared by our legal experts comparing the bargaining frameworks under the OLRA and the MoA, outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each approach for UTFA and its membership. The report will be circulated to the membership as a resource so that we can engage in dialogue and debate within the membership through panel discussions, town halls, smaller meetings, and focus groups.

The Crisis in North American Higher Education

It’s a time of crisis for universities across North America. In the United States, colleges and universities have been facing declining enrollments, fewer tenure opportunities, skyrocketing costs and, most recently, the decimation of research funding and unprecedented frontal attacks on academic freedom. The immediate impacts of these actions will reverberate through a generation of scholars, scientists, and researchers. Against the backdrop of the new reality in the U.S. is the Canadian federal election campaign, in which one party leader has openly declared that he would dictate the deallocation of research funding based on “woke ideologies” or other politically contested subject matter, using rhetoric that echoes many far-right, populist talking points.

Across Canada and closer to home, universities are closing programs, suspending enrolments, imposing hiring freezes, and laying off academic staff, including tenured faculty, due to inadequate funding and a cataclysmic drop in international student enrolments. These measures are often taken by university administrators absent any meaningful collegial governance, that is, without proper engagement with faculty associations or other institutional governing bodies. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is working with faculty associations to protect jobs, programs, and collegial

governance in the sector, and UTFA is working in partnership with CAUT and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) to advance these vital objectives.

Although the University of Toronto overall continues to experience a strong financial position, individual units are struggling financially due to the inequitable decentralized budget model. In this context, UTFA is striving to protect its members' rights in academic restructuring processes, and to ensure that appropriate collegial governance is undertaken so that faculty and librarians have meaningful opportunities to share in decision-making that affects them, their students and colleagues, and their programs and projects.

Freedom of Expression Under Threat

Over the last year, faculty members and librarians have faced unprecedented attacks on their freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and academic freedom. Our campus has been at the epicentre of the intersection among these rights, most notably in the context of the Superior Court's ruling finding that Charter rights are not engaged in the context of universities in Canada. We continue to disagree with this conclusion.

A concern of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), UTFA, and other faculty associations is the Court's failure to recognize that a university is substantively more than a collection of privately-owned physical spaces. This misconception undermines the rights of faculty and librarians to collegial governance, academic freedom, free expression, and freedom of association. Importantly, these rights and freedoms are foundational to the University of Toronto's own [Statement of Institutional Purpose](#), [Statement on Freedom of Speech](#), and UTFA's [Memorandum of Agreement](#) ("MoA") with Governing Council; UTFA remains committed to safeguarding them.

UTFA members continue to report public targeting, intimidation, and harassment. This is not acceptable. Websites intimidating individuals by publishing private photographs and personal information, while making wildly irresponsible accusations, are not consistent with a free and democratic society. UTFA continues to press the Administration to publicly condemn these intimidation campaigns, act against

individuals and groups who seek to stifle academic freedom, and support members facing harassment and discrimination.

Strengthening our Association's Democratic Capacity and Collective Voice

If the University of Toronto is to be governed in a collegial manner and faculty members and librarians are to have a meaningful voice in shaping the conditions of their work, we must have a vibrant and democratic Association that can powerfully represent our members' collective interests.

Every UTFA President with whom I have worked has identified as a priority the need to review and reform, where necessary, our internal governance structure such that it better aligns with best practices in our sector and our desire to become a more efficient, effective, and democratic Association. In the last several years, UTFA has made significant strides in renewing itself, recruiting new leadership, and broadening our direct engagement with faculty and librarians across our tri-campus University. The [Membership Committee's](#) mandate to coordinate outreach and communications to improve the connection between UTFA's membership and its leadership and to facilitate dialogue and action among members more broadly is vital work that will always remain a work-in-progress.

As a self-governing organization, UTFA values and will continue to expand member engagement and participation. In the year ahead, UTFA will be conducting more listening sessions with you and your colleagues to better understand the issues you are facing in your work as faculty and librarians. We are eager to provide members with the opportunity to participate in and help shape UTFA's future direction.

In this Newsletter, we've highlighted our continued efforts to further increase member participation through Town Halls, surveys, focus groups, expert panels, workshops, and other events. Additional information on membership outreach and engagement can be found in the [Report of the Chair of the Membership Committee](#), the [Report of the Chair of the Retired Members Committee](#), and the [Report of the Interim Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload](#).

To advance this priority of further democratizing UTFA's internal governance structure, the UTFA Executive has asked the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to undertake an Organizational and Governance Review that will consider all aspects of UTFA's governance structure in a way that is attentive to the complexities and nuances of the University of Toronto and of our Association. The Review will focus on clarifying the structure and roles of Executive members, Council, standing and ad hoc committees, election/campaign procedures, term lengths, conflict of interest guidelines, and the division of labour between Executive members and Association staff. We welcome the participation of all members, active and retired, in this Review, to help shape the future of the Association.

Towards this end, information will be collected through interviews (with open ended questions), held with current and past leaders of the Association, including Executive, Council, committee members, as well as UTFA staff to explore our organization's strengths, weaknesses, emerging issues, and potential changes for future success. To complement this evidence-informed process, CAUT will also be reviewing documentation regarding the current governance structure, including UTFA's constitution, by-laws, policies, protocols, and financial statements. All of this will be examined within the context of comparative faculty associations and those with "model" or "best practices" in membership engagement and democratic practices. More details will be shared as our Organizational and Governance Review unfolds!

Members' Campaign for University Pension Plan (UPP) Divestment

A group comprised of faculty and librarians, independent of UTFA's elected leadership, has organized a campaign for the University Pension Plan (UPP) to "divest from the manufacture of weapons used to commit or facilitate war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and elsewhere."

As a first step, the group seeks to pass a resolution requiring UTFA to direct its representative on the UPP Employee Sponsor Committee to advocate in favour of divestment. *For clarity, to date, no position*

has been taken by UTFA, its Executive or its Council. The purpose of this Motion is to direct UTFA to take a position on this issue.

Under paragraph [10.2 of UTFA's Constitution](#), 50 or more UTFA members can request that the UTFA President convene a General Meeting. We are in the process of organizing this meeting to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Constitution, while ensuring a meaningful and accessible deliberative environment.

Additional details will be provided as soon as they become available. As always, we are interested in hearing from you via faculty@utfa.org.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of UTFA, I extend congratulations to Professor Melanie Woodin on being named the 17th President of the University of Toronto. I look forward to working with the president-designate on our shared goals for our great University. I also want to recognize Professor Meric Gertler for his many years of service as the 16th President of the University and especially for engaging productively with our Association in support of making meaningful improvements to the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) that structures UTFA's and the Administration's relationship.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the most representative [UTFA Executive](#) in the Association's history. UTFA's leadership is drawn from STEM, the humanities, social sciences, and professional fields. The Executive is inclusive of the Tenure and Teaching streams, librarians, retirees, part-time and full-time colleagues. Diverse in our perspectives, skills, and backgrounds, we are united in our commitment to the well-being of our members and the University as a whole. Each dedicates their time, expertise, and energy to advancing our members' interests through service to the Association. I encourage you to read their [Reports](#). Thank you to Members-at-Large Girish Daswani, Kim MacKinnon, and Arjumand Siddiqi, who rise to the occasion for the Association when we need them most. I also want to thank the members of the Executive Committee who left office mid-term: Deborah Cowen (Chair, Equity Committee and Negotiating Team member), Ariel Katz (VP, Salary, Benefits, Pensions,

and Workload and co-lead Negotiator of the Negotiating Team), and Mariana Valverde (Chair, Retired Members Committee). I appreciate their many contributions.

Thanks, also, to all those who served our membership on [UTFA's Council](#) and its many [Committees](#). The members of the UTFA Negotiating Team I co-lead through the 2023-2025 round (whose members are identified in the [Report of the Interim VP, SBPW](#) below), deserve special recognition for their incredible resolve to bargain a better deal for our members. Finally, I work most closely with UTFA's Vice Presidents Sherri Helwig and Jun Nogami, and Membership Committee Chair Thom Dancer: a personal thank you for all the long hours you have logged!

Many thanks to UTFA's extraordinary office staff, who work remarkably hard behind the scenes to support its political leaders and ensure UTFA advances the interests of its members: Operations Director Claire Reyes, Administrative Assistant Marisa Mikroulis, and Information Technology Coordinator Gautam Jadhav. Many thanks to UTFA's legal and advice team: Crystal Doyle, Legal Assistant; Geoff Dunlop, UTFA Counsel; Tal Isaacson and Sophie McGibbon, UTFA Staff Representatives. A special thank you to Membership and Communications Coordinator Suzanne Wice for her help in editing this edition of our newsletter. I want to express my deep gratitude for the exceptional support from Jess Martin, the Executive Assistant to the President. Additionally, I commend the remarkable leadership and unflinching dedication of Nellie De Lorenzi, our Executive Director, who plays a vital role in advancing our Association and our collective mission.

I would like to express my gratitude to the UTFA membership for their ongoing support of the important work we do together. I have now been President for five years and one of the greatest pleasures of my role is meeting with UTFA members to discuss their workplace concerns and to advance our shared goals. I look forward to meeting with more of you in the year to come!

Our members are our strength.

Terezia Zorić

President

Reports of the UTFA Vice-Presidents & Treasurer

Report of the Interim Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload (Interim VP, SBPW)

SBPW Bargaining

UTFA's SBPW Negotiating Team and the senior Administration engaged in 24 separate bargaining sessions between November 2023 and September 2024. The parties mutually agreed to mediation and arbitration with Eli Gedalof, who also served as the arbitrator for the preceding round of negotiations that resulted in a sector-leading 10% salary increase over three years for our members. An arbitration hearing was held on March 21, 2025, after both parties had submitted their [respective briefs](#). We anticipate Arbitrator Gedalof's decision to be issued by June 30th.

Mediation yielded several notable outcomes, both within and beyond the conventional scope of bargaining.

1. A historic, comprehensive revision of Article 7 of our [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#), which governs the grievance and arbitration process, as outlined in the [Report of the President](#), was achieved.
2. Retirees' equal access to health benefits improvements and (conditional) [access to Microsoft 365 was preserved](#), as outlined in the [Report of the Chair of the Retired Members Committee](#).
3. A [Sexual Violence Policy Letter of Agreement \(LoA\)](#) was established, as detailed in the Report of the President.
4. An agreement in principle was reached regarding the self-direction of Librarian Research Days and Professional Development Days, with an increase in the number of days from 14 to 16, as outlined in the [Report of the Chair of the Librarians Committee](#).

Despite these accomplishments, the parties remain far apart on Salary, Benefits, and Workload issues.

UTFA's Proposals

UTFA's salary proposal comprises three distinct components. Firstly, we endeavoured to modernize faculty and librarian salaries by augmenting the salary floors (minimums) to more accurately reflect prevailing market rates. Secondly, we proposed a 6% across-the-board increase (ATB) effective July 1, 2023, followed by a 4.5% increase effective July 1, 2024, to be retroactively applied to all elements of salary, including stipends. Both increases are wholly justified by the need to narrow the inflation gap since the last salary award and to maintain UTFA members' top market status. Lastly, we sought to reverse the decline in the Administration's investments in the Progress Through the Ranks (PTR) pools, to have them reflect a higher percentage of our salary base.

The Negotiating Team successfully bargained a three-year agreement, where all matters pertaining to Benefits and Workload for the three years, and Salary for the initial two years of the agreement (i.e., 2023-2024 and 2024-2025), would be resolved through interest arbitration. Salary for the third year would be determined through bilaterals this summer, and if necessary, another interest arbitration scheduled for fall 2025. UTFA's rationale for pursuing a three-year agreement is that creating a break between rounds of actively bargaining with the Administration will provide us with time to engage more extensively with our members and formulate a stronger plan for the next round of negotiations.

On **health benefits**, we proposed a comprehensive range of enhancements that would provide meaningful increases for members at various stages of their lives. We remained steadfast in our position and successfully secured the preservation of equal access to health benefits for retirees.

The Negotiating Team consulted with the membership on several occasions throughout this round of bargaining to establish and maintain a firm understanding of members' priorities, beginning with the August 2023 UTFA Bargaining survey that underpinned the bargaining mandate approved by UTFA Council later that fall. This survey was followed by four virtual Bargaining Town Halls in the fall and winter, in-person members' meetings at each of the three campuses in the new year, and an in-depth presentation and discussion on bargaining at last year's Annual General Meeting. Our final Bargaining Update Town Halls for active and retired members, held in mid-January of this year, continued to be well-attended and enthusiastically received. Our final "flash" survey, sent out at the end of January as

we headed to the end of mediation and the beginning of arbitration, provided members with the opportunity to shape our priorities for gaining health benefits improvements.

The responses resulted in the following rankings, starting with the most strongly supported:

1. Issues of particular importance to our members (e.g., protecting equal access to health benefits for retirees, addressing mental health benefits).
2. Implementing improvements that consider members' evolving needs throughout their lifespan (e.g., accommodating early career/young family members' requirements, such as orthodontia, and addressing mid-career members' needs, such as eyeglasses, and ensuring the needs of older/retired members, such as major dental).
3. Enhancing benefits where UTFA members' coverage falls significantly below sector norms or the high cost of living in the GTA (e.g., hearing aids, dispensing fees, Long-Term Disability (LTD), and Life Insurance).
4. Implementing a transparent process for evaluating benefit plan provisions and entitlements (e.g., the GreenShield claim adjudication and appeal process) and ensuring the value of benefits by aligning reimbursement amounts with reasonable and customary charges by service providers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).
5. Ensuring equitable consideration of diverse family configurations and responsibilities within the membership regarding benefit coverage (e.g., accommodating single members without dependents, members with dependent children, spouses/partners, and elders, etc.).

There were several other non-health benefits that UTFA prioritized in this round that include housing, long-term disability, Professional Expense Reimbursement Allowance (PERA), childcare and workload.

Housing

UTFA's initial proposal sought to develop a joint, comprehensive, multi-year, faculty and librarian housing strategy to address affordability requirements, access to family-sized units, and ensure that funds are transparently and equitably distributed. Unfortunately, the Administration refused to engage

meaningfully with us on this proposal, despite acknowledging that housing is a top issue for UTFA members.

At the same time, the Administration has provided UTFA with scant data and little information on how the University Administration makes decisions with respect to housing, what criteria, if any, are assessed, or what financing supports are available to members. As a first step, UTFA's proposal deals with the Administration's lack of transparency so that UTFA can negotiate this crucial benefit on behalf of our members. UTFA seeks to add additional requirements to provide necessary information on the housing and loan programs, as well as language confirming UTFA's role in negotiating future changes to these benefits, as required under Article 6 of the MOA.

Long-Term Disability

UTFA proposed an increase to the maximum earnings covered under the long-term disability (LTD) plan. Our members have consistently expressed their inability to afford to take LTD leaves due to the insufficiency of LTD benefits. The current plan only covers 70% of a member's annual earnings up to \$150,000, which means that the benefit amount is capped at \$105,000. This cap has been in place since 2016. UTFA proposed increasing the maximum earnings covered under the plan to \$250,000, which would raise the maximum benefit amount to \$170,000. UTFA also proposed annual cost of living increases to protect against future erosion. If awarded by the arbitrator, this increase will ensure that our members can afford to access LTD when they need it.

Professional Expense Reimbursement Allowance (PERA)

UTFA proposed that our PERA amounts should rise annually with the rate of inflation due to rising costs, and to address the erosion of the value of PERA over time. Further, UTFA is seeking parity between the PERA amount for full-time members and part-time members whose FTE is at or above 50% because many part-time UTFA members with significant teaching or administrative responsibilities have similar, if not identical, professional expenses to full-time members where such costs are fixed. Lastly, UTFA proposed that we add tuition fees as an eligible PERA expense.

Childcare

UTFA proposed reasonable adjustments to the age eligibility, daily maximum, half day rate, annual maximum, and total maximum reimbursement amounts for the Child Care Benefit. Details follow:

1. The age eligibility to be increased to under the age of 12 (from under the age of 7) so that meaningful coverage can be provided to members with children in need of care support, accounting for the full spectrum of ages in which children are likely to require supervision.
2. Daily reimbursement of up to \$40 (from \$20) and half-day reimbursement of up to \$20 (from \$10)
3. Annual reimbursement per child up to \$4,000 (from \$2,000)
4. Administration reimburses members \$2 million per year (from \$1 million)

These adjustments are necessary in order that meaningful coverage is provided to members with children in need of childcare support, and it is imperative that the Administration support our members' family obligations so that they can fulfill their professional obligations.

Workload

Since 2011, when workload became a term and condition of employment that the Administration agreed could be negotiated and arbitrated, UTFA has received a mandate from its membership to make substantial workload improvements. As UTFA's Salary, Benefits, and Workload Negotiating Team argued in its most recent [interest arbitration brief](#), members have consistently affirmed that workload is a top priority and policy consideration. For a detailed analysis of Workload, refer to the [Report from the Vice-President, Grievances](#).

You can access the parties' arbitration briefs [here](#).

Joint Benefits Committee

The VP, SBPW co-chairs the [Joint Benefits Committee \(JBC\)](#) with the Administration which UTFA won in a previous round of bargaining. The JBC reviews and monitors claims experience to identify trends and patterns, and addresses any concerns raised by UTFA on behalf of members, or by the Administration. The JBC also reviews the annual plan financial statements and makes recommendations for renewal or premium adjustments.

UTFA is committed to amending the Group Benefits Plan to support the goals of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity (EDI). This amendment aims to address systemic issues and experiences of our marginalized members regarding benefit accessibility and coverage.

UTFA will insist that any benefit plan amendments meet the needs of our diverse membership. To ensure this, the JBC will seek feedback from our members regarding issues and experiences of accessing appropriate benefit coverage. Stay tuned for more details!

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the dedicated members of the SBPW Negotiating Team who have persisted through another long and arduous round of bargaining: Sherri Helwig, Raymond Kwong, James Mason (advisor), Arjumand Siddiqi, Harriet Sonne de Torrens, and Terezia Zorić (co-lead negotiator). I will note that Ariel Katz was VP, SBPW for most of this past round, ending his term in January 2025. I thank him for his work in this role, including all his work with bargaining. I also look forward to meeting with the [Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload Committee](#) in the coming weeks to review past work and discuss future plans.

I would especially like to thank UTFA President Terezia Zorić for her continued leadership and engagement, the crucial support provided by Executive Director Nellie De Lorenzi, legal support from UTFA Counsel Geoffrey Dunlop, and logistical support from Executive Assistant Jessica Martin. It has also been a pleasure to work with our external counsel at RavenLaw LLP: Wassim Garzouzi and Julia Williams.

Jun Nogami

Interim Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload

Report of UTFA’s Representative on the Employee Sponsor Committee (ESC) of the University Pension Plan (UPP) and Chair of UTFA’s Pension Committee

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to continue serving as the Chair of the UTFA Pension Committee and as the UTFA-appointed representative to the Employee Sponsor Committee (ESC) of the UPP Joint Sponsors. In both of those roles, I advocate for the interests of UTFA faculty members and librarians in the domain of pensions.

I serve on the Joint Sponsors along with five other employee-appointed representatives, including colleagues from Queen’s University, the University of Guelph, CUPE, and United Steelworkers. Together we form the Employee Sponsor Committee where I am currently co-chair. Six employer-appointed representatives from Queen’s, Guelph, and the University of Toronto make up the Employer Sponsor Committee.

One of the many roles of the Joint Sponsors is to set the terms for and potentially approve new entrants to the UPP. Increasing the number of participants in the plan can help enhance the financial stability and performance of UPP for all members. Effective January 1, 2025, we are delighted to have employees of Victoria University participating in the UPP. Employees of Wilfrid Laurier University recently completed consent bargaining to join the UPP, and conditional on meeting certain regulatory requirements, we anticipate they will commence participation in the plan on January 1, 2026. These

additions are significant markers of growth for the UPP, indicating that the plan is starting to realize the potential that was envisioned by all of those who worked so hard to create it.

Last June, the Joint Sponsors approved the filing of UPP's most recent actuarial valuation report, dated January 1, 2024, reflecting that the plan remains fully funded on a smoothed basis. We will review and consider whether to approve the 2025 valuation report when it becomes available in a few months. Over the coming year, we will be working on revising the UPP's Funding Policy to reflect the evolving complexities of the plan now that it has been operating for a few years. We will also be working on the Joint Sponsor's risk appetite, which helps balance possible fluctuations in the plan's assets with possible fluctuations in its liabilities. The UPP is also updating its organizational strategy, an exercise that involves the Joint Sponsors, the Board of Trustees, and the UPP executive team.

The UTFA Pension Committee advises the UTFA Council on all matters related to pensions. We have met three times since my last report, each time discussing pressing matters before the Joint Sponsors and discussing the topic of responsible investing as well, and we have conducted additional committee business by email. In the past year we have had various guests visit the committee to answer committee members' questions about responsible investing, including the UPP's CEO Barbara Zvan, the UPP's Senior Managing Director of Responsible Investing Brian Minns, and the member of UPP's Board of Trustees who was appointed by UTFA, Hugh Mackenzie. Additionally, several Pension Committee members and I participated in UTFA Council meetings earlier this year where responsible investing was on the agenda.

My work on behalf of UTFA members is significantly enhanced by the dedication and expertise of my fellow members of the [UTFA Pension Committee](#), and by the hard work and commitment of UTFA staff members Nellie De Lorenzi, Crystal Doyle, Geoff Dunlop, Claire Reyes, Sophie McGibbon, Tal Isaacson, and Marisa Mikroulis. I also thank everyone who serves on the UTFA [Executive Committee](#), and the UTFA Council for the work they do on behalf of members.

Lisa Kramer

Chair, Pension Committee

Report of the Vice-President, Grievances (VP-G)

Responding to Members' Concerns

At its heart, the purpose of the Legal and Advice portfolio is to advise UTFA members on matters related to their employment relationship with the University. Our team of staff representatives and internal and external counsel provides advice and support to members about a wide variety of issues every year, such as tenure/continuing status/continuing appointment/permanent status reviews, progress through the ranks (PTR), workload, health and safety, human rights, accommodation, and leaves of absence. We also take proactive measures to advocate for improvements, including via discussions at Joint Committee meetings with the senior Administration and participation in collective bargaining.

We encourage members with employment-related questions and concerns to contact advice@utfa.org for confidential advice and assistance. We can assist you on a confidential basis behind the scenes or we can assist you on a formal basis where UTFA can represent you with the Administration.

What were we up to this last year? Our Legal and Advice team experienced one of our busiest years ever! We saw a significant growth in member matters and a sharp increase in the filing of individual, group, and Association grievances. The dominant subjects of member matters this past year involved appointments (including promotion and rank changes), compensation and benefits (including PTR/merit evaluation concerns), workload, accommodations (including sick leave), and interpersonal/departmental issues. This breakdown is similar to what we have seen in recent years.

What is notably different this year is the marked increase in the number of members requesting support related to workplace investigations, and the appalling number of unreasonable practices and violations of members' right to procedural fairness that UTFA needed to respond to. These concerns ultimately required us to file an Association grievance to begin to bring the Administration into compliance with the University's legal obligations under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), the [MoA](#), and the Administration's own policies.

Over the last year, the Legal and Advice team also dealt with growing concerns raised related to academic freedom. These concerns included instances of the Administration inappropriately imposing pedagogical changes, unilaterally changing grades, refusing to approve research funding applications and research days/leaves based on the proposed research topic, and improperly chilling the political speech of faculty and librarians.

Workload, and the Importance of Workload Grievances

As is noted in the [Report of the Interim VP, SBPW](#) and in our [arbitration brief](#), UTFA has received a mandate from our membership to make significant workload improvements since 2011, when workload first became a term and condition of employment subject to negotiation and arbitration. Members have consistently prioritized workload as a top priority and policy consideration.

Our members have long-standing and serious concerns about their heavy and ever-expanding workloads, and they rightly expect UTFA's Team to negotiate meaningful workload improvements and protections, but the Administration adamantly refuses to negotiate workload improvements. UTFA then brings the issue to binding arbitration, and the arbitrator awards little or nothing related to workload and says that the parties should negotiate. And round and round it goes.

The key principles an interest arbitrator considers in issuing an award are replication, gradualism, and demonstrated need. *Replication* aims to replicate the settlement the parties would have reached if the dispute had reached its natural conclusion. The arbitrator considers comparators, bargaining history, and economic/market conditions. *Gradualism* reflects the reality that collective bargaining between parties occurs on a continuum and often achieves gradual change, rather than drastic change. *Demonstrated need* requires the party seeking a 'breakthrough' item to establish the need for a change that would not come about through gradualism, such as via grievances. Filing workload grievances when workload violations arise is one way in which UTFA can establish a pressing need for change.

In each prior negotiation cycle, the arbitrator has said that they do not see the "demonstrated need" necessary to award important workload changes and has pointed to a lack of workload-related

grievances that would illustrate this demonstrated need. Since September 2023 (the last time an arbitrator wrote this), UTFA and its members have filed 10 workload-related grievances alleging multiple violations of the [MoA](#) and the central workload policy ([WLPP](#)), including three alleging that the Administration was interfering with what is required to be the independent, collegial work of Unit Workload Committees. (In these cases, the Administration sometimes rewrote units' policies and failed to provide the required "written reasons" for the rejection of these policies; in some of these cases, they improperly denied teaching load changes to Teaching Stream faculty.) Of great concern to UTFA is that the Administration explicitly says this is far too few grievances to show demonstrated need. To increase UTFA's leverage to address workloads that many members have described as "crushing," the specific kind of evidence that will continue to be necessary to convince the arbitrator is *bona fide* individual and group grievances. A lot of them.

To that end, please reach out to advice@utfa.org with any questions or concerns as soon as you become aware of a workload issue. This could be when you receive your workload letter, when your unit's Workload Policy proposal is rejected, when the independence of Unit Workload Committees is interfered with, or when new expectations or changes in compensation for that work are communicated to you.

Balancing the three components of the academic appointment – teaching/research & scholarship/service for faculty, and professional practice/scholarship/service for librarians – is a major challenge for our members, given the heavy and competing workload demands placed upon them. This lack of balance too often leads to a decline in both work-life balance and educational quality. UTFA members regularly report that they are being pulled in multiple directions without clear boundaries regarding the balance of their competing workload responsibilities.

To address this issue in this round of bargaining, UTFA's Team proposed improved transparency around workload expectations via a clear articulation of the core duties of faculty members and librarians in unit workload policies and in individual workload assignments. Our simple and incremental proposal requires Unit Workload Committees to *state* the balance amongst the three principal components of a members activities: teaching, research, and service. This is not an onerous burden for Unit Workload Committees, as they are already required to *determine* this balance under the [Workload Policy and](#)

[Procedures for Faculty and Librarians \(WLPP\)](#). By seeing the balance clearly stated, members can better understand the relative weight of their workload assignments, the workload assignments of other members in their unit, and the workload assignments across cognate departments and faculties. This transparency will also help members to address their ongoing and longstanding concerns, such as excessive workloads, inequitable service or teaching loads, and overall unequal distributions of work.

Association Grievances

In any given year, UTFA would file very few Association grievances (complaints about breaches of the [MoA](#) or policies that relate to the Association or affect a large number of UTFA members). This academic year (2024-2025), however, a record number of 10 new [Association \(policy\) grievances](#) were filed, about a range of important issues for which UTFA needed to take a principled stand. The issues included serious violations of procedural fairness in workplace investigations (see the [Report of the President](#)) and discriminatory exclusions of Teaching Stream faculty from certain positions and memberships (see the [Report of the Chair of the Teaching Stream Committee](#)).

In one case, an Association grievance became necessary after the Administration took over a year to only partially address salary calculation errors for part-time members who took research and study leave after having varying full-time equivalent (FTE) percentages in the years leading up to the leave. UTFA was concerned that this important issue was not being treated with the seriousness and sense of urgency it deserved, especially as **it impacts vulnerable members and results in some of the University's lowest-paid faculty being paid even less**. This grievance has been referred to an arbitrator for resolution.

While we strive to resolve grievances collegially with the Administration, a record number of grievances (such as the ones mentioned above) have also been referred to a third-party arbitrator this year because they could not be resolved any other way.

“Know Your Rights” Communications

While the Legal & Advice team is available to provide advice and support (especially, but not only, when members are facing consequential difficulties), the Grievance Committee is working hard to develop outreach and educational materials so that members have a better understanding of their rights before needing to reach out to advice@utfa.org. The Committee is set to launch the first in a series of “Know Your Rights” communiques. We are launching the series with a focus on what a member can do when they are called to a meeting with an Administrator to discuss a concern. This issue was chosen as the priority for the first communication in response to a pattern of troubling meetings called by the Administration that could have a chilling effect on our members’ academic freedom.

The second “Know Your Rights” document will focus on issues related to requesting workplace accommodations due to a medical condition or disability, followed soon after by one focused on Progress Through the Ranks (PTR), the part of salary increases that is related to merit. A longer-term goal is to develop workload-related resources, including materials that can support the independent work of Unit Workload Committees. Workload remains a significant challenge for many UTFA members, and because the Administration continues to block UTFA’s every attempt to address workload problems university-wide during bargaining, we must instead ensure members fully appreciate the power that they hold and can wield at the unit level.

Acknowledgements

The work of the Legal & Advice portfolio has been supported by our in-house L&A team Geoff Dunlop, Sophie McGibbon, and Tal Isaacson, under the guidance of Executive Director Nellie De Lorenzi and with the assistance of Crystal Doyle and Marisa Mikroulis. It is also supported by external counsel at RavenLaw LLP (coordinated by Julia Williams) and Goldblatt Partners LLP (coordinated by Emma Phillips), and the members of the [Grievance Committee](#).

I am particularly grateful to Terezia Zorić, Nellie De Lorenzi, and Jess Martin, with whom I work most closely each day and without whom the essential work of this portfolio would not be possible.

Sherri Helwig

Vice-President, Grievances

Report of the Vice-President, University and External Affairs (VP, UEA)

The [University and External Affairs \(UEA\) Committee](#) has taken up three main areas of work over the last year: academic freedom, governance, and building solidarity.

Academic Freedom

Defending our members' academic freedom has been a central focus for the entire UTFA Executive, with some aspects directly related to the UEA portfolio. We collaborated with the coalition of University of Toronto Employee Associations and Unions (UTEAU) to issue a statement last November with our concerns about the "[User Guide to U of T Policies on Protests](#)." The User Guide was issued by the Vice-Provost, Students in August 2024 and remains in effect, although UTFA continues to challenge it in ongoing conversations with senior Administration.

A key question for me as VP, UEA has been the relationship between academic freedom and [Bill 166](#). The Bill received Royal Assent in May 2024 and requires all "publicly-assisted" universities to enact policies regarding student mental health; racism and hate; and the disclosure of ancillary fees and costs of learning materials. Of particular concern is a provision in the Bill that allows the Ministry to issue directives to universities that specify the topics and procedures to be included in the policies the Bill requires. This provision represents a significant intervention into university governance. The first directives were issued in fall 2024, giving universities until January 31, 2025, to respond and included a requirement that universities establish anonymous mechanisms to report allegations of racism or hate. Senior Administration have acknowledged in Joint Committee meetings with UTFA leadership that they cannot rely upon anonymous complaints except in the most extraordinary circumstances. However, they are required by the Bill to report the frequency and general content of all complaints they receive each year, including anonymous ones.

We have also raised questions with senior Administration about the relationship between [Bill 166](#) and an earlier Administration proposal for a "Guide to Law and Policy Regarding Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli

Discrimination.” In Joint Committee meetings, Deb Cowen, Council representative for Constituency 102, argued that the term “Anti-Israeli Discrimination” has no basis in scholarship, jurisprudence, or the Ontario Human Rights Code. In a recent Joint Committee meeting, senior Administrators confirmed that they have dropped that term, in part because of the responses they received during the consultation process for their proposal.

Our collective work at UTFA has also directly contributed to discussions about Bill 166 at the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA). As a member of OCUFA’s Board of Directors for the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, I was asked to present on Bill 166 and its provisions regarding racism and hate at the May 2024 Board meeting. I was also part of a group of Board members who forwarded a motion at the fall 2024 Board meeting to strike a working group on academic freedom in relation to Bill 166. The working group includes Elizabeth Hanson (Queens University Faculty Association) and Alison Braley-Rattai (Brock University Faculty Association) and is supported by OCUFA staff members Jenny Ahn, Kimiko Inouye, and Bador Alagraa. Kimiko and I presented the committee’s first report at the winter 2025 Board meeting, detailing various strategies the OCUFA Executive has agreed to pursue to support member faculty associations in defending academic freedom in light of Bill 166.

UTFA Governance

The UTFA Executive has sustained a conversation for several years now about deepening membership engagement and promoting greater democratic participation in our organization. The UEA Committee initiated work this year on one part of this process, namely reviewing how various Executive Committees in the Canadian university sector are elected. We surveyed the bylaws of select faculty associations (i.e., Ontario’s U15 FAs, other non-certified FAs, and the GTA FAs) and some other Canadian U15 FAs to understand how they constitute their respective Executive Committees. The analysis revealed that in almost all cases, the Executive Committee is directly elected by the membership (whether at an AGM or by direct vote), as opposed to UTFA’s process by which the Executive is elected by Council, and only the President is elected by the membership as a whole. However, there were several stipulations that varied across FAs. For example, a few FAs have more

specific rules for electing Executive members for Equity and Indigenous affairs, allowing equity-deserving and Indigenous members more input into who is allowed to stand for these positions. As well, there was considerable variation in the size of other Executives and, while most FAs have a version of a Council, not all do. In these cases, their directly elected Executive reports to general membership meetings. This work has since been rolled into a larger governance study that the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has been commissioned to conduct. For more details see the [Report of the President](#).

Building Solidarity

Perhaps the most important part of the UEA portfolio is building solidarity with other labour organizations on campus and with other faculty associations. The UTFA Executive signed onto a letter in late March supporting Units 2, 3 & 7 of CUPE 3902 in their campaign for a fair deal with the University and [called on our members to participate in an e-action](#) to support their campaign. The UTFA Executive also [issued a statement](#) in support of our colleagues at the York University Faculty Association as they organize to stop planned enrolment suspensions in 19 academic programs as of this fall. The statement was also sent directly to senior administration at York University and members of their Board of Governors. As well, we [issued an appeal](#) last July to support the [Palestinian Students and Scholars at Risk Program](#) at U of T and continue to encourage UTFA members to contact PSSAR if they are able to support a Palestinian colleague or graduate student.

In Thanks

The work of the UEA portfolio would not be possible without the expertise and support of UTFA staff, including Marisa Mikroulis, Claire Reyes, Jessica Martin and Nellie De Lorenzi. I am grateful for their contributions.

Jeff Bale

Vice-President, University and External Affairs

Report of the Treasurer

UTFA continues to be in a strong, stable financial position, ensuring that we have the resources available to meet the needs of our members and to weather any unexpected circumstances, including the ongoing economic uncertainty coming out of the United States.

I urge members to review our [audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024](#). We ended the 2023-2024 fiscal year in a strong position. UTFA had \$5.6 million in assets, including over \$900,000 in current assets and just under \$4.7 million in our investment accounts. We ran an unexpectedly strong surplus in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, given the meaningful increase in compensation received by members and substantially lower staffing costs than anticipated as a result of several unfilled staffing positions.

In the current fiscal year, we remain in a sound fiscal position with a modest operating deficit. This is a result of both filling vacant staffing positions and substantial increases in costs associated with the grievance and arbitration process, and bargaining. The Association's fiscal prudence means that we are readily able to absorb these unexpected, one-time grievance costs. Our investment accounts remain in a strong position, even with the financial turmoil we're currently experiencing because of U.S. policies. As of the end of the day on April 4th, even after the substantial tariff induced declines in the market, our investment account sits at over \$4.8 million.

Looking to next year, with the retirement of our long-time auditor Donna Mehta, we will be looking for approval to move forward with Durante Colasanti LLP as our new auditor. They come highly recommended with a fair fee structure.

I look forward to further opportunities to engage with the [Financial Advisory Committee](#).

Rob Gillezeau

Treasurer

Reports from UTFA's Standing Committees

Report of the Chair of the Appointments Committee

This Committee provides advice on all matters related to the University's appointment policies and related matters. This includes policies, procedures, and guidelines for hiring, promotion, tenure, and dismissal.

One of the principal responsibilities of the Appointments Committee is facilitating an annual workshop on Tenure and Promotion. This year's workshop will be held on May 29, 2025, and will provide an overview of all relevant University policies and review procedures, as well as useful tips on compiling a successful dossier. UTFA's workshops are always lively, well-attended, and highly informative; they are also an excellent opportunity to build community and collectively envision a more equitable University.

[Don't forget to register.](#)

A key concern of our Committee, and UTFA more generally, is the ever-growing use of precarious, part-time employment of faculty members at the University of Toronto. As a result, UTFA formed a [Part-Time & Contractually Limited Term Appointments \(PT-CLTA\) Ad-hoc Committee](#), chaired by Kim MacKinnon, UTFA Member-at-Large. The Ad-hoc Committee is gathering data on the terms and conditions of employment of precarious faculty in the sector, and the issues that our part-time and CLTA colleagues are experiencing at the University so that we can collectively advocate and bargain with the Administration for improvements in our colleagues' terms and conditions of employment. To that end, the Ad-hoc Committee is drafting a survey for part-time and CLTA members. Members are also encouraged to attend [the Information Session for Faculty with Part-Time & CLTA Appointments](#), scheduled for June 5, 2025.

Recently, Girish Daswani, UTFA Member-at-Large, and I presented to the UTFA Council on the professional and ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace. We have been having informal discussions with colleagues from across the University about AI and the rollout of surveillance technologies. We are all in agreement that AI is here to stay and, when used thoughtfully, can accelerate

and improve research. Our concern lies with the uncritical adoption of AI technologies and their impact on our intellectual property rights, pedagogy, and academic freedom. The collective expertise of the UTFA membership is needed to proactively address the issues of privacy, transparency, and accountability with the University Administration.

Many thanks to the members of the [Appointments Committee](#), the [Ad-hoc Committee](#), Terezia Zorić and the rest of [the UTFA Executive](#), Nellie De Lorenzi, and UTFA Staff for their hard work and support.

Max Mishler

Chair, Appointments Committee

Report of the Interim Chair of the Equity Committee

This Committee provides advice on all matters pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion and assists UTFA in developing approaches to pay equity, employment and compensation equity, harassment, personal safety, and accommodation.

It has been my pleasure to serve as interim Equity Chair, for the 2025 Spring term, having previously served for several years as Chair of the Membership Committee. The Equity Committee's mandate is very broad, particularly if it endeavors to provide advice to the Association on equity, diversity and inclusion that is inclusive of indigeneity, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. The Committee also develops programs, research, and outreach in response to members' campaigns and interests, and reviews the Administration's measures and initiatives, offering feedback and educating the UTFA Executive Committee and Council. My task this term is to ensure that equity is threaded through all the portfolios at UTFA.

The Equity Committee met in October 2024 to discuss threats to academic freedom and equity

implications under the direction of the former Equity Chair, Deb Cowen, who stepped down from the role in late January 2025. In early March 2025, the Committee met to discuss the [UTFA Disability Survey](#) that was released to members on March 31st; restructuring and new budget models across Ontario universities (with Sherri Helwig, Vice-President, Grievances); the solicitation for feedback on policies relating to disability, discrimination and harassment, from the University's HR department; and, Indigenous identity substantiation (with Rob Gillezeau, Treasurer and Girish Daswani, Member-at-Large). The work of our Committee will be shared with UTFA Council, who will continue the practice of apprising constituents of new policies and practices, and listening to constituents' experiences of the same. In May, I will attend the CAUT forum for equity officers in Ottawa, giving UTFA the latest updates on academic union leadership strategy on equity, and learning more about equity challenges and successes from other campuses across Canada.

Thank you to the UTFA staff, the [Executive Committee](#), and members of the [Equity Committee](#) for their support of this important work.

Judith Taylor

Interim Chair, Equity Committee

Report of the Chair of the Librarians Committee

This Committee provides advice on all matters related to the concerns of academic librarians and the profession at U of T.

Listening to our colleagues was the theme for the Librarian's Committee this year. With the new [Policies for Librarians](#) being in effect for a little over a year, we wanted to hear how its implementation has been working out for our broader membership. We hosted three drop-in sessions: one at UTSC, one at St. George, and one at UTM, with the purpose of hearing from librarians. We also conducted a survey within our Committee to understand the issues our constituency may be facing.

In our March 12, 2025, meeting, we learned about some of the knowledge gaps on issues that academic librarians have identified. We heard from UTFA Vice-President Sherri Helwig about the Grievance process and Chair of the UTFA Pension Committee, Lisa Kramer, about our pensions. Our constituents have noted concerns about artificial intelligence (AI), UPP divestment, navigating benefits, and workload.

Through Salary, Benefits, and Workload bargaining we obtained an agreement in principle that Librarian Research Days and Professional Development Days are self-directed and we increased the number of days allotted from 14 to 16. Further, as librarians we can now request more than those allotted days should we require more time to fulfill our research agendas—rather than making requests on an exceptional basis. On a more personal note, I served as an advisor on the Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload Negotiating Team for the first time this past year, and appreciated both the opportunity to learn a great deal and to contribute to such an important and complex process.

My thanks to UTFA’s Staff, [the UTFA Executive](#), and members of the [Librarians Committee](#) for all their considerable support.

James Mason

Chair, Librarians Committee

Report of the Chair of the Membership Committee

This Committee provides advice on all matters related to promoting membership engagement with and participation in UTFA.

In 2024-25, the [Membership Committee](#) focused on efforts to increase engagement and outreach to the members. The Committee is spearheading four initiatives on this front.

1. Implementing an organization and mobilization plan to increase the capacity of members to respond and advocate on workplace issues that cannot be adequately addressed under the current [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#) with the Administration. The plan involves a roll out of more flash surveys on emerging general issues, listening sessions by Executive members and Council representatives, increased social media presence, and more one-on-one engagement with members by members. With the expertise and guidance of Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association (OCUFA) educators, we are pushing to create strong social networks within and across units that will be able to play a key role in future bargaining and advocacy. Please get in touch at faculty@utfa.org if you are interested in becoming more involved in this important work.

2. Creating more social and educational events to bring members from across the campuses together.
 - a. Though the AGM needed to be held online, we have restarted the tradition of having an in-person social event after.
 - b. A subcommittee organized a very successful event on personal banking and investment options for UTFA members concerned about climate change. They were also able to secure special [packages](#) and [offers](#) from two local credit unions for members interested in changing their personal banking. My deep thanks to Hulya Arik, Deb Cowen, and Paul Downes for making this excellent event possible.

3. Working with the [UTFA Executive](#) and [UTFA Council](#) to identify and share best practices in (two-way) member communications. This will include consideration of how to hold more meetings open to the whole membership. An ad hoc committee will be formed to think about the logistical and technical elements of conducting special-topic, and perhaps other, open meetings with the goal of bringing recommendations forward.

4. Producing summaries of UTFA's monthly Council meetings (and other important updates) and encouraging Council representatives to share them with their constituents. These updates are now posted on the [UTFA website](#) for ease of reference—and your feedback on them is encouraged via faculty@utfa.org.

Academic Citizenship Award

Congratulations to Tara Moriarty, the recipient of this year's [UTFA Academic Citizenship Award](#). The award honours “initiatives undertaken by members of UTFA who have made a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship between the University and public life—whether by encouraging the positive engagement of academics in key social issues, or by working to extend democratic and accountable practices within the University itself, or by making an outstanding contribution to the well-being of their community.” It is one of the great pleasures of our work each year to be able to bestow this award.

My thanks to the UTFA Staff, especially Nellie De Lorenzi, Jess Martin, Suzanne Wice, Claire Reyes and Marisa Mikroulis, for their invaluable assistance. My thanks as well to Terezia Zorić, UTFA President, and everyone who served on the [Executive](#) for their help, edits, and support.

Thom Dancer

Chair, Membership Committee

Report of the Chair of the Retired Members Committee

This Committee provides advice on all matters related to the concerns of retired members of the faculty and academic librarians.

The Retired Members Committee (RMC) represents approximately seven hundred retired faculty and librarians at the University of Toronto. All newly retired faculty and librarians are automatically members of UTFA.

Much work was done in the fall of 2024 on improving retiree access to Microsoft 365. In November, the UTFA Salary, Benefits, and Workload Negotiating Team, on which I have served as the retiree

representative, and the University Administration reached a [Letter of Understanding \(LOU\)](#) on retiree access to Microsoft 365. In brief, retirees who are actively engaged continue to have full access. Those who retire between July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2029, but are not actively engaged, will be eligible to purchase a personal perpetual licence for a Microsoft Office suite and receive full reimbursement. The criteria and process for the active engagement designation are described in the LOU. This bilateral agreement was [jointly announced in January 2025 by UTFA and the Administration](#).

We appreciate Mariana Valverde chairing the RMC from July to November 2024. I have taken on this role on an interim basis from November 2024 to June 2025. A meeting of the RMC was held in December to plan for a town hall meeting for retirees, and to discuss speakers and topics of interest for the annual retiree reception in May 2025. The issue of the University Pension Plan divesting from certain types of investment was also discussed.

We held a town hall for retired members on January 21, 2025, that was very well attended (76 retirees), and where there was lively participation by the attendees. I provided retirees with an update of the [Microsoft 365 agreement](#), and UTFA President Terezia Zorić provided updates on other key bargaining items. Such events inform and help set bargaining priorities.

An ad hoc Committee to nominate the speaker for the annual reception, consisting of Judith Poë, Kent Weaver, Terezia Zorić and myself, met in February 2025 to work on a shortlist, and the event will be held on May 22nd, and will feature Dr. Michelle Silver, Professor and Chair, Department of Health and Society, University of Toronto Scarborough. More details about the event will follow soon. [Register now!](#)

In Memoriam

The Retired Members Committee has learned since the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the death of the following retirees: Harvey Dyck, Yoshio Masui, Ruth Pierson, Peter Rosenthal, Mary Violette Seeman, Kenneth Selby, John Stevenson, Marla Miller, and John Winder.

Many thanks to the [members of the Committee](#).

Raymond Kwong

Chair, Retired Members Committee

Report of the Chair of the Teaching Stream Committee

This Committee advises the Council on all matters of particular importance to faculty in the Teaching Stream, including workload, time for research and scholarship, and related equity issues.

During this last year, UTFA has continued to address a wide range of issues related to the rights of the Teaching Stream faculty members at the University of Toronto. Only a small sample of issues and concerns, mainly focusing on academic freedom, are outlined here. Note that much of the work described was done in collaboration with UTFA Vice-President, Grievances, Sherri Helwig.

Challenging the Administration's Exclusion of Teaching Stream Faculty from Senior Roles

Rather than promote equitable opportunities for all faculty, regardless of stream, to participate as full academic citizens based on merit, in the past year the University's senior administrators have been entrenching and even extending the grounds for exclusion and discrimination against Teaching Stream faculty. Firstly, the Administration unilaterally decided to phase out the practice of allowing some Teaching Stream faculty to have full membership in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and began restricting all faculty in the Teaching Stream to Associate membership at best. UTFA grieved this, arguing that this exclusion is arbitrary and discriminatory, as it is based solely on the fact that we are in the Teaching Stream, not because of our qualifications, abilities, or what the best fit would be for the graduate students. UTFA views these kinds of exclusions as artificial constraints on our work and violations of our academic freedom. The Administration denied the grievance and UTFA has referred the matter to arbitration.

Secondly, the Administration is also excluding Teaching Stream faculty from serving in certain academic leadership positions (e.g., chairs of departments and directors of centres and institutes). UTFA is grieving this exclusion as well and has referred the matter to arbitration under the amended grievance and arbitration process detailed in the [Report of the President](#).

A Notable Success

Previously, UTFA filed a grievance regarding violations of equal academic freedom rights and discrimination protection, and restrictions on our right to conduct self-directed research. The issue, in brief: the Administration imposed improper criteria on Teaching Stream faculty and librarians in the [My Research Applications & Agreements \(MRA\)](#) system and in related processes and documents, and subjected research funding applications from Teaching Stream faculty and librarians to additional and inappropriate scrutiny.

Last year, we shared with members that we were “cautiously optimistic” that we would be able to resolve the grievance. Though there was some delay by the Administration, we are now delighted to report that the inequities have now been removed and grant applications and research agreements submitted via the MRA portal by Teaching Stream faculty are now required to be subject to the same approval factors as those of Tenure Stream faculty, with no additional conditions. If you experience something different, please contact UTFA at advice@utfa.org.

We value your participation!

Thank you to all the [Committee members](#) for their dedication throughout the year. Five member meetings were scheduled this year, with four of these open to all Teaching Stream faculty. We encourage you to attend these open meetings so we can collectively establish our priorities for the Committee. Please be in touch with your feedback — we look forward to your engagement on all the issues. There is more work to be done and we’re up to the task!

The annual Promotion and Continuing Status Review Workshop for Teaching Stream Faculty will be held on June 24, 2025, and all interested are [encouraged to attend](#).

Special thanks also to Terezia Zorić, Sherri Helwig, Kim MacKinnon and the amazing UTFA staff – Nellie De Lorenzi, Jessica Martin, Marisa Mikroulis and Claire Reyes – for all their support and guidance this year!

Susan J. Wagner

Chair, Teaching Stream Committee

Upcoming Events

Annual Retiree Reception | May 22, 2025

This event is brought to you by the Retired Members Committee, an UTFA committee dedicated to advocating for issues that are relevant to retired U of T faculty and librarians.

Our featured keynote speaker will be Dr. Michelle Silver, Professor and Chair, Department of Health and Society, University of Toronto Scarborough. More details about the event will follow soon.

[Registration is now open](#)

Tenure Stream Promotion Workshop | May 29, 2025

UTFA Host: Max Mishler, Chair, Appointments Committee

Co-presented by UTFA and Emma Phillips, Partner at Goldblatt Partners

Open to all Tenure Stream members of the Association.

Invitations will be sent out via email, and additional information will be posted on the UTFA website.

[Register for this valuable workshop today](#)

Information Session for Faculty with Part-Time & CLTA Appointments | June 5, 2025

UTFA Hosts: Kim MacKinnon, Chair, Part-Time & Contractually Limited Term Appointments (PT-CLTA) Ad-hoc Committee, and Member-at-Large & Susan J. Wagner, Chair, Teaching Stream Committee

Open to Part-Time and CLTA faculty members of the Association.

Invitations will be sent out via email, and additional information will be posted on the UTFA website.

[Register for this Information Session](#)

Promotion/Continuing Status Review for Teaching Stream Faculty Teaching Stream Workshop | June 24, 2025

UTFA Hosts: Susan J. Wagner, Chair, Teaching Stream Committee, Kim MacKinnon, Chair, Part-Time & Contractually Limited Term Appointments (PT-CLTA) Ad-hoc Committee, and Member-at-Large & Sherri Helwig, Vice-President, Grievances

Co-presented by UTFA, Megan Burnett of CTSI, and Danielle Sandhu, Counsel at Goldblatt Partners

Open to Teaching Stream members of the Association

Invitations will be sent out via email, and additional information will be posted on the UTFA website.

[Register for this Workshop](#)

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Girish Daswani | Member-at-Large

Kim MacKinnon | Member-at-Large

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