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UTFA is Grieving the Administration's Repeated Violations of the Workload Policy (WLPP)

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Workload has been among the top concerns of UTFA members for some time. Last month, UTFA filed an Association Grievance to begin to address, to the extent possible, some of the significant policy issues that affect our members' workload.

It is UTFA's position that the policy we have – the Workload Policy and Procedures For Faculty and Librarians ["WLPP"] – is not fit for purpose. Indeed, the results of this policy's implementation have fallen far short of its stated governing principles, which include a "fair, reasonable, and equitable distribution of workload," a "transparent process of workload allocation," and a "[w]orkload allocation that will comprehensively take into account the full scope of activities and expectations of a member of a unit." [Article 1.2] **We will continue to exercise our right to negotiate a replacement for this policy, or at least significant improvements to this one. However, due to the Administration's repeated failure over numerous years to comply with the terms of the existing policy, UTFA had no choice but to insist that the protections that are available to us be upheld.**

Some of the violations of the workload policy outlined in the Association Grievance are:

- **Lack of transparency:** Most Unit Workload Policies do not provide enough detail to ensure that workload assignments are "based on decisions made in accordance with criteria that are known to members within that unit" as they are required to be and, as a result, there is no "transparent process of workload allocation." [1.2] Instead of meaningfully addressing the factors that affect the weighting of assigned work, these policies often define workload norms only in broad, general terms (if at all).|

Several factors that affect teaching load (such as class size, amount of TA support, and graduate supervision, for example) are listed in Article 4.2 of the WLPP, but most Unit Workload Policies fail to explain how these will be factored into annual workload assignments. While some units' policies count each graduate supervision as a portion of a course or clarify the way large and small classes are to be distributed among the faculty, others simply mention these factors as potential considerations without providing any particulars, and others are entirely silent. Without relevant information explaining how these criteria are to be considered, **workload allocations can be (and often are) opaque, variable, and inconsistent: they do not live up to the principle that "comparable work will be weighed in the same manner" [1.2] because the work simply is not and cannot be meaningfully compared.** As a result, some workload problems have proven difficult or impossible to resolve – especially (but not only) for those members holding precarious positions or with less power.

- **Failure to examine and address faculty and librarian workload discrepancies between the three campuses:** The WLPP provides for the creation of a Tri-Campus Joint Committee [11.1] to discuss workload issues across the university and address workload discrepancies it may find between St. George, UTM, and UTSC. UTFA requested in writing that the Administration agree to a timeline for meetings and provide a list of Administration representatives for this Committee, but the Administration failed to take any action.

- **Failure to respect collegial governance:** Unit Workload Policies are required to "be developed and revised collegially at the unit level" [2.11; see also 1.2], but some committees were rushed and restricted to a single meeting, while others were inappropriately barred from including particular issues in their proposals or even discussing them as a committee. Some committees were required to wait three years before working on a new proposal despite wording in the WLPP that states, "Unit Workload Policies shall be reviewed at least every three years by the unit" (emphasis added). [2.16] At least one department was expected to move forward with a policy that included several undisclosed changes improperly made by the Administration, in violation of Articles 1.2, 2.11, 2.14, and 2.18.

- **Failure to share reasons for policy proposal rejections with UTFA:** The Administration is required to share with UTFA copies of all Unit Workload Policy proposals that have been rejected by the relevant Dean or Provost, along with written reasons for the rejection. The Administration has failed to do so (sharing nothing at all with UTFA), in violation of Article 2.18. As a result, UTFA has no way to ensure that the reasons for the rejections are appropriate and cannot properly guard against unreasonable decisions by the Administration.

- **Regularly and repeatedly missed deadlines:** While Article 2.14 requires Deans and Provosts to review and approve local revisions to Unit Workload Policies (or send written reasons for their rejection) within 15 calendar days, this deadline is regularly and repeatedly missed. Instead of 15 days, some revisions have taken several months to be reviewed, and others are still waiting to be approved or rejected years after they were submitted.

Of the 119 Unit Workload Policies UTFA received this past fall (after several years of pressing the

Administration for updated copies that are required to be shared each year [2.16]), UTFA determined that more than two-thirds of these policies were overdue for review, and almost two-thirds of those were significantly overdue (by three years or more). Others were missing entirely. These late and missing policies directly and sometimes substantially affect our members' workloads, as well as UTFA's ability to enforce the WLPP and support its members with workload-related concerns.

If you weren't able to attend any of UTFA's bargaining-related Town Halls this academic year, you may not be aware that UTFA persistently proposes meaningful changes to the workload policy in bargaining, mediation, and arbitration… and the Administration invariably refuses all of UTFA's workload policy proposals, round after round. In addition to continuing to bring forward workload proposals at the bargaining table and share workload concerns in other appropriate venues such as Joint Committee meetings (between UTFA leadership and the senior Administration), UTFA is exercising the limited rights we have under the MoA by filing this grievance.

Of course, there is no way for one Association Grievance to address all of our members' significant workload challenges. If you (individually, or as a part of a group of colleagues) have questions or concerns about your workload or your Unit Workload Policy – or would like someone from UTFA to visit and speak to your unit about workload – please don't hesitate to write to advice@utfa.org.

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