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UTFA Achieves Major Gains for UofT Librarians: Implementing New Policies for Librarians (PfL)

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6. UTFA Achieves Major Gains for UofT Librarians: Implementing New Policies for Librarians (PfL)

After more than half a decade of negotiations, it is official: UTFA has successfully updated the 1978 Policies for Librarians. The new policies were ratified by the UTFA Council and the University of Toronto Governing Council and came into effect on January 1, 2024. This is a major development within the history of academic librarianship at the University of Toronto. We urge UTFA members to examine these new policies and read the Executive Summary. Read more below, or in this article from The Varsity.

Below are a few highlights of the major achievements in the PfL:

1. Policies for Librarians (PfL):

UTFA successfully advocated for the removal of the former Financial Exigency Clause, which discussed the dismissal of librarians. This clause (Article 47) was added to the policies by the University Administration (Governing Council) after the PfL were approved by UTFA and U of T's Academic Affairs Committee. As a result of this unilateral action, UTFA never signed the former Policies for Librarians, which led to them becoming known as the 'unsigned policy.'

New language in the PfL recognizes the integral role of librarians in advancing the University's mission and in collegial processes, enshrining a commitment to consistency in practice across all units and campuses.

The PfL introduces language that enshrines a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion as guiding principles for recruitment, hiring, appointment, and promotion of UofT Librarians.

The introduction of an appeal process for the denial of promotion of Librarians to the rank of Librarian II.

The right to grieve denials of promotion to the ranks of Librarian III or IV under the MoA.

Enhanced termination and severance pay for CLTAs (Contractually Limited Term Appointments) where non-renewal occurs for reasons other than dismissal for cause.

2. Memorandum of Agreement, Article 4: Research and Study Leave.

Librarians have had research leaves since 1978. Now, librarians are included in the MoA. This is a significant acknowledgement of librarians' academic role in our community and internationally.

3. LOU on Secondments for Librarians

This five-year LOU formalizes opportunities for permanent status librarians to gain professional and academic growth by negotiating limited term secondments "to develop or contribute particular expertise for projects or to temporarily replace a librarian while, at the same time, providing an opportunity for career development." CLTA vacancies may also provide opportunities for secondments.

4. Memorandum of Settlement

Lastly, the following policies have been agreed upon to decrease precarity for librarians continually employed as CLTAs in Scholars Portal, the Consortium of the Ontario Council of University Libraries, https://ocul.on.ca/scholars-portal. Librarians who work in Scholars Portal are hired and employed by the University of Toronto Library system.

i). Letter of Understanding (LOU) on Scholars Portal CLTA Librarians.

This LOU decreases the precarity of librarians continually employed continually as CLTA in Scholars Portal.

ii). LOU on Research or Study Leave for Scholars Portal Librarians.

This LOU CLTAs in Scholars Portal to apply for research and study leave in accordance with the terms and conditions for librarian research or study leave as set out in Article 4 of the MoA.

The enhanced clarity and consistency within and across policies, greater transparency and collegial processes benefits not only UTFA members but our University as a whole. The new policies formalize core academic principles, acknowledge librarians' academic role in the community and introduce equitable working terms comparable to colleagues on the national level.

To ensure our librarian colleagues know how the PFL changes will impact them, UTFA is holding **Q&A Sessions** this month and an educational and celebratory event in Spring 2024. There will be a presentation, plenty of time for questions and answers, and big cheers!

The excellent collective work and the ongoing support of many UTFA members, past and current members of the UTFA Council, Executive, Librarians Committee, the PfL negotiating team, and the consistent engagement of UofT librarians, have demonstrated the power of communal solidarity. This, in

addition to the wise counsel from Jeff McKeil from CAUT and legal counsel, Emma Phillips and Danielle Sandhu from Goldblatt Partners, provided us with strong support to gain major improvements for UTFA members.

UTFA extends a THANK YOU to all involved!

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