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Update on Administration Threats to UTFA Members

May 27, 2024

Dear colleagues,

On May 24, 2024, the Administration issued a trespass notice publicly threatening UTFA members with mass discipline, including termination. We are sending this update after conferring with legal representatives to ensure our members have the information they need to navigate this complex and unprecedented situation.

Over the weekend, we called an emergency meeting of UTFA Council (our University-wide body representative of active and retired faculty and librarians) to deliberate on this situation. UTFA Council overwhelmingly approved a statement condemning the threatened discipline/termination of faculty and librarians and urging UTFA to "vigorously defend our members' academic freedom, freedom of assembly, and human rights."

UTFA is guided by its core values and will continue to support and advocate for ***all*** its members. This includes challenging any unjust discipline or restrictions the Administration imposes on our members for exercising their rights and/or the Administration's failure to properly investigate allegations of harassment, discrimination, and hate speech to ensure a discrimination-free workplace.

As the current situation evolves, UTFA members should be aware of the following:

- Based on the language in the trespass notice of May 24th, University of Toronto faculty and librarians face a genuine risk to their employment for non-compliance with the trespass notice and any engagement with the encampment at King's College Circle. Faculty and librarians with precarious appointments (e.g. pre-tenure, pre-continuing status, pre-permanent status, part-time, or CLTA) are especially vulnerable.
- UTFA does not agree that the Administration can discipline our members for participating in peaceful protest and reserves the right to challenge unjust discipline and any use of force against our members.
- Members who wish to mitigate their individual risk may comply with the direction issued by the

Administration on May 24, 2024, and consult with UTFA regarding recourse for addressing any restraint on free expression and academic freedom.

- UTFA is committed to a University that is inclusive of all and free of antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, and all forms of racism and discrimination. UTFA will continue to denounce all forms of discrimination, harassment, and hate speech and we, once again, strongly urge the Administration to properly investigate any allegations of discrimination, harassment, and hate speech. As we stated in our letter to President Gertler, "Hate is never acceptable and has no place on campus."
- Members whose allegations of discrimination, harassment, and hate speech have not been properly investigated by the Administration may consult UTFA for further advice.

UTFA stands by its April 30, 2024 letter to President Gertler, to which the Administration never replied. UTFA recognizes the diversity of perspectives held by our members on the political demands of the encampment protesters. Nonetheless, our Association is united by our shared commitment to due process and our opposition to the Administration's threats to summarily terminate the employment of faculty and librarians.

UTFA urges the Administration to respond to UTFA's April 30, 2024, letter and affirm the Administration's support for academic freedom, freedom of expression, human rights, due process, and the right to peaceful protest. Specifically, we ask the Administration to confirm that no UTFA member shall be threatened with discipline for exercising their fundamental rights.

Members requiring direct assistance from UTFA should contact faculty@utfa.org or advice@utfa.org.

Sincerely,

UTFA Executive

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