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Report of the Vice-President, University and External Affairs, 2021–2022

April 15, 2022

Representation of UTFA at the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

As Vice-President, University and External Affairs (UEA), I serve as UTFA's representative on the boards of both OCUFA and CAUT. This has been a challenging year for many institutions of higher learning across Canada, due to the negative impacts of failures in collegial university governance structures, including at the University of Toronto. The funding cuts to programs and the dismissals of faculty and librarians at Laurentian University remain in effect, and the provincial government has been unresponsive to calls to restore funding to Laurentian. Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of strikes and labour disruptions at universities across the country. The shrinking financial support for higher education by the provincial and federal governments, the predominance of the "business model" approach to budgeting, and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the complaints of increased workloads and stagnant or depressed salaries that are at the root of these labor actions.

Initiative on Supporting Scholars at Risk Internationally

The UEA Committee has begun the process of identifying existing programs and sources of financial support for scholars at risk internationally. While many programs are now emerging to support Ukrainian scholars and students at risk, the UEA Committee recognizes that there are scholars at risk across the world in many different countries. Communications are being sent out to identify existing programs and determine how UTFA members can become more aware of these programs to access them or contribute to them, or advocate within their own units or departments for more support for students and scholars at risk.

Relaunching of the UTFA Academic Citizenship Award

This past year, the UEA, Membership, and Executive Committees relaunched the UTFA Academic

Citizenship Award. Council affirmed the Committees' choice and we are excited to present the 2021 UTFA Academic Citizenship Award at this year's AGM.

UTFA Undergraduate and Graduate Student Awards

One of the most rewarding and immediately impactful part of my responsibilities as Vice-President, University and External Affairs, has been organizing, awarding, and presenting the UTFA undergraduate and graduate student awards. The members of the University and External Affairs Committee were able to select outstanding scholars in need of support for both the Al Miller Memorial Award and the UTFA Undergraduate Tuition Award. The names and details of the successful recipients will be posted on the UTFA website.

Participation on Other UTFA Committees and Bargaining and Negotiation Teams

As Vice-President, University and External Affairs, I chaired the UEA Committee, and was also a member of our UTFA bargaining team, the Sexual Violence policy negotiations, and the UTFA representative to the University of Toronto Employee Associations and Unions (UTEAU). I am also a member of the Hate Crimes Working Group established by UTEAU that aims to improve the response to hate crimes and violence occurring at the University of Toronto.

Acknowledgement of Member Contributions

I would like to thank Keith Adamson and Marta Horban for their assistance with relaunching the UTFA Academic Citizenship Award and Chris Penn for her general administrative support. Thank you to the members of the UEA Committee for their engagement and dedication to the tasks of the Committee, and special thanks to Terezia Zorić, who, despite her extremely busy schedule, was able to attend many of the UEA Committee meetings and contribute to the work of the Committee.

J. Roy Gillis
Vice-President, University and External Affairs

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