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Report of the Chair of the Librarians Committee, 2023–2024

April 19, 2024

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

by Harriet Sonne de Torrens

On January 1, 2024 the new policies for librarians at the University of Toronto came into effect. Three one-hour Q & A sessions, highlighting the new language and gains, were held on February 6, 8, and 12 for UTL librarians. On Friday, February 15, H. Sonne de Torrens presented a brief overview of the UTFA gains to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA). Professional academic librarians in the University of Toronto Library System are recognized “as full partners in the research and teaching goals” at the University of Toronto (2011, UTFA Council motion). UTFA librarians have three areas of responsibilities, professional practice, service, and scholarship. It is vital, therefore, that U of T librarians are recognized in all policies that impact our terms and conditions of work as full academic partners with UTFA faculty.

Librarians have actively contributed to UTFA on multiple levels, participating on the UTFA Executive and UTFA Council (Whitney Kemble, James Mason, Kathleen Scheaffer) and in the following working groups: pay-equity grievance (2023) (Whitney Kemble, H. Sonne de Torrens), Policies for Librarians (modernizing 1978 policy, chief negotiator, Kathleen Scheaffer, Whitney Kemble, Dan D’Agostino, H. Sonne de Torrens), Academic Continuity Policy (H. Sonne de Torrens), Systemic Bias Working Group (led by Whitney Kemble, Kyla Everall), St Michael’s Negotiating Team (H. Sonne de Torrens), the Salary, Benefits and Workload negotiating team (H. Sonne de Torrens) and on the committees in Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto (RALUT).

As a result of the negotiations of a working group with U of T Administration, Librarian ranks I-IV are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators and have access to the My Research Applications & Agreements (MRA) system upon appointment to the UTL system via the ESS platform. MRA submissions from librarians are automatically escalated to the Office of the Chief Librarian, Dean’s Office (St. George), or Principal’s Office (UTM and UTSC) for approval.

In addition to the UTFA Librarians Committee librarians participated in the following UTFA committees: Appointments Committee (Whitney Kemble), Membership Committee (Kathleen Scheaffer), Nominating Committee (James Mason), Pension Committee (James Mason), Retired Members Committee (Kent Weaver, Elinor Fillion, Suzanne Meyers Sawa), Salary, Benefits, Workload and Pension Committee (H. Sonne de Torrens) Barriers to Research Working Group (MRA, Whitney Kemble, H. Sonne de Torrens), and Teaching Stream Committee. Three members of the UTFA Librarians' Committee sit on the Provostial Advisory Committee on the University of Toronto Library System: Meaghan Valant (UTM), Kathryn Barrett (UTSC) and Alexia Loumankis (St George).

With Gratitude

I would like to thank all UTFA members who have served on this year's Librarians Committee, members of the UTFA Executive, Council, staff, lawyers, and colleagues in the various negotiating committees who have consistently supported the rights of academic librarianship at the University of Toronto. A special thanks to Terezia Zorić, Sherri Helwig, and Ariel Katz for their on-going committed support. We are always seeking more membership involvement – contact us if you are interested in participating in UTFA!

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