Published on *University of Toronto Faculty Association* (https://www.utfa.org)

General Meeting

May 13, 2025

Dear UTFA Colleagues,

Last Thursday, May 8th, UTFA held a member-initiated General Meeting with a petitioners' motion on University Pension Plan (UPP) divestment from the manufacture of weapons used to commit or facilitate war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and elsewhere. The large turnout of our members and the intensity of the debate underscore that we have a membership that is vibrantly engaged.

The main motion passed by a 52% majority of nearly 1400 voters. *The full text of the motion and the full voting results are available below.*

We have now posted the motion on UTFA's website, shared it with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), and sent it to the Chief Executive Officer and Board Chair of the UPP. We will also be conveying the motion to the University Administration and other employee groups within the UPP. In the context of a broader effort to update and modernize the UTFA constitution, the Executive will also debrief on what we learned as political officers (and staff) from hosting a member-initiated general meeting, which UTFA has not previously held. We are already learning from our members' communications where our rules fell short, including the need to improve access to information and voting.

Given the diversity of our members' views, throughout this process the Executive prioritized ensuring that the General Meeting was consistent with UTFA's **Constitution** and was as accessible, transparent, and fair as possible within our rules-based association.

Stay tuned. Look for an email shortly inviting you to UTFA's workshops on tenure/continuing status/and continuing appointment review processes. And we will also be reaching out very soon as we enter another phase of bargaining with the Administration.

Sincerely,
The UTFA Executive

Voting: 1365

In Favour: 714 (52%)

Opposed: 585 (43%)

Abstentions: 66 (5%)

The Motion:

BE IT RESOLVED that, consistent with (a) UPP's current exclusion of direct and indirect investments in entities producing certain kinds of weapons prohibited by treaties to which Canada is a party, in all entities domiciled in Russia, and in entities causing or contributing to adverse social impacts that are sufficiently egregious (see **Investment Exclusion**, p. 8); and (b) UPP's statement that "**breaches of international law have no place in UPP's portfolio**", UTFA call on the UPP to

1. Announce and implement an immediate screen on any new investments in, and a rapid timeline for complete divestment, from all direct and indirect holdings in entities that manufacture or distribute arms, ammunition, implements or munitions of war, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect they may be used by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and elsewhere where they could be used to commit or facilitate

i. a serious violation of international humanitarian law,

ii. a serious violation of international human rights law,

iii. an act constituting an offence under international conventions or protocols relating to terrorism to which Canada is a party,

iv. an act constituting an offence under international conventions or protocols relating to transnational organized crime to which Canada is a party, or

v. serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children;

2. Announce and implement an immediate screen on any new investments in, and a rapid timeline for complete divestment from, all direct and indirect holdings in entities engaged in activities that support or sustain Israel's illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and those that support or sustain an illegal occupation of any other territory, including Russia's occupation of the Crimean peninsula; and

3. Incorporate these divestment commitments into its Investment Exclusion policy;

And it is further RESOLVED that UTFA

4. Direct its representative on the UPP Employee Sponsor Committee to advocate for this resolution within the UPP and provide regular updates to Council and Executive members on the status of its

implementation.

May 7, 2025

Notice and Agenda for May 8 Members' General Meeting on UPP Divestment

Dear UTFA Colleagues,

This email provides important information on the General Meeting and voting on UPP Divestment being held tomorrow, May 8, from 2-4 pm in the OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor Street W. There is also an online option with full participation and voting. We encourage you to register for the meeting if you have not yet done so; attend; participate and hear from others; and vote.

We've received many questions. UTFA's General Meeting FAQ addresses questions about governance processes, participation, and technology. The following are some of your most frequently asked questions on governance.

Q. Why is this meeting on the University Pension Plan (UPP) Divestment happening?

A. This General Meeting was called because fifty regular UTFA members in good standing requested it of the UTFA President by petition, which is their right under Article 10.2.i.v of the UTFA Constitution. To date, no position has been taken by UTFA, its Executive, or its Council. A main purpose of the petitioners' motion is to direct UTFA to take a position on this issue.

Q. Why is voting limited to only those members who attend the meeting, and for a short period of time?

A. This limit was set by the petitioners, who set the Agenda, as our Constitution allows.

Q. I have concerns about the meeting taking place/the scheduling of the meeting in May/the motion itself/the voting time period. What can I do?

A. This is an all-members' meeting, and in keeping with our Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order, members hold decision-making power at it. You should make your concerns known. Members are empowered to approve the motion as is, amend the motion, defeat it, refer it to a committee, or postpone it indefinitely. Some votes require a simple majority to pass, while others require a two-thirds majority. (See the Quick Reference Guide chart below.) Votes that require two-thirds majorities to pass include amending the agenda (because it has been preset, according to the Constitution), limiting debate, extending the meeting, or adjourning the meeting early. Approving, defeating, amending, or indefinitely postponing the motion requires a simple majority. All motions must be seconded.

Quick Reference Guide				
	Open for Discussion	**Can be amended**	**Vote count required to pass**	**May be reconsidered or rescinded**
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend Motion	Yes		Majority	Yes
Defeat a motion			Majority	Yes
Limit Debate		Yes	2/3rds	Yes
Close Discussion or Call the question			2/3rds	Yes
Refer to a committee	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Postpone to a later time	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Adjourn			2/3rds	

Please see the General Meeting FAQ for more answers to more of your questions.

We hope you will join us tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Terezia Zorić
UTFA President
On behalf of the UTFA Executive

FAQs for May 8, 2025 General Meeting

This FAQ Covers Process and Participation, Technology, and Safety and Accessibility. Please click on the links to move ahead to the relevant section.

Governance Process and Participation

Q. Why is this meeting on the University Pension Plan (UPP) Divestment happening?

A. This General Meeting was called because fifty regular UTFA members in good standing requested it of the UTFA President by petition, which is their right under Article 10.2.i.v of the UTFA Constitution. To date, no position has been taken by UTFA, its Executive, or its Council. A main purpose of the petitioners' motion is to direct UTFA to take a position on this issue.

Q. Why is voting limited to only those members who attend the meeting, and for a short period of time?

A. This limit was set by the petitioners, who created the Agenda, as our Constitution allows.

Q. I have concerns about the meeting taking place/the scheduling of the meeting in May/ the motion itself/the voting time period. What can I do?

A. This is an all-members' meeting, and in keeping with our Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order, members hold decision-making power at it. You should make your concerns known. Members are empowered to approve the motion as is, amend the motion, defeat it, refer it to a committee, or postpone it indefinitely. Some votes require a simple majority to pass, while others require a two-thirds majority. (See the Quick Reference Guide chart below.) Votes that require two-thirds majorities to pass include amending the agenda (because it has been preset, according to the Constitution), limiting debate, extending the meeting, or adjourning the meeting early. Approving, defeating, amending, or indefinitely postponing the motion requires a simple majority. All motions must be seconded.

Q. What rules govern the meeting?

A. Article 10.8 provides that Robert's Rules of Order will govern the conduct of our Association meetings (provided the Rules are not inconsistent with the Constitution or the Bylaws). Please also see the Quick Reference Guide above.

Q. How will the voting take place at the meeting for members who attend in person or online?

A. Whether you attend the meeting in person or online, your voting will take place electronically via Zoom poll at the meeting.

Q. Will my vote be anonymous?

A. Yes, your vote will be anonymous. We will screen share the result of the vote at the meeting.

Q. If I come late to the meeting can I still vote?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the position of the UTFA Executive or Council on the motion?

A. To date, no position has been taken by UTFA, its Executive, or its Council. A main purpose of the

petitioners' motion is to direct UTFA to take a position on this issue.

Q. When can I and others speak at the meeting?

A. Most motions will be open for debate, and you can put yourself on the speakers' list. Certain pressing issues can be raised at any time. Examples are points of order, points of information, or points of privilege. You can raise a point of order if the rules are not being followed. You can raise a point of information to ask a specific question to obtain information. You can raise a point of privilege if your participation in the meeting is being hindered or if you need to raise an equity concern related to your participation.

Q. How do members get added to the list to speak?

A. If you are attending in person, two microphones will be available where members will be asked to line up: they will be located at the front of the Auditorium, one line 'for the motion' and one 'against the motion.' A staff member will ensure that an additional microphone will be available to accommodate any accessibility requirements.

If you are attending online, you will be able to use the 'raise hand' function on Zoom and enter the queue to speak. You will be asked if you would like to speak 'for the motion' or 'against the motion' under consideration at that time. All members who wish to speak will have the opportunity to do so, time permitting, given that the vote is a timed item on the agenda. The Speaker will alternate between speakers who are 'for' and 'against' the current motion.

Technology

Q. I'm attending the General Meeting online. What do I need to know?

A. After you complete your online registration, you will receive a confirmation email with the Zoom link for the meeting. That email will be sent by faculty@utfa.org. Please check your "Other" folder in your UofT Outlook email account if you did not receive a confirmation email. Please ensure that you log in to Zoom with the same email address used to register, as the link will not work for a different email address. The link gives you access to the meeting, allows you to participate in the Zoom Poll (to cast your votes), and to be added to the speakers' list (for members attending virtually).

Q. Do I need to download the Zoom app to participate in the meeting?

A. Yes. To participate in the General Meeting – even if you are going to the meeting in person – you must have the Zoom app installed on your smartphone, tablet, or computer to participate fully. You will not be able to join the meeting from a smartphone browser or tablet browser.

The Zoom app is free to download and use. For Apple devices, please download from the App Store. For Android devices, please download it from Google Play.

For more details on technology, please click here to see our 'Zoom Cheat Sheet'.

Please note: You must be logged into your Zoom account with the email you used to register for the General Meeting.

Q. Why is this meeting being held on Zoom Webinar?

A. Due to the limitations of the Zoom platform, regular Zoom meetings can only accommodate up to 1000 members. Since over 1000 UTFA members registered for the meeting, Zoom Webinar became our only viable option.

Q. I'm attending the General Meeting in person. What do I need to bring with me?

A. You must bring a smartphone, tablet, or laptop with you. You may wish to bring a charger or an extra battery for your device. You will be required to show your email confirmation of registration in order to check in to the event. You will also need your device to vote via Zoom poll.

Whether you are attending in person or online, you are required to log into Zoom so you will be able to vote.

We will not be providing refreshments. You may wish to bring your own water bottle.

Q. I didn't know if I would be available to attend, but now I can. Am I able to register in person at OISE?

A. As long as you have a device that is connected to the internet, you will be able to register online for the in-person event. Once your email has been verified, you will be sent a Zoom link that will allow you to join the meeting and participate. There will be no devices available for use by attendees at the meeting.

Q. I'm sure I registered, but I didn't receive a link for the meeting. What do I do now?

A. We'd be happy to look into that for you. Please check your "Other" or junk folders in your UofT Outlook email account for the confirmation email. If you did not receive the confirmation email, please email faculty@utfa.org, and we will confirm your details and resend the link.

Q. If I forget to bring my electronic device to the in-person meeting, can I attend the meeting?

A. Yes, you can attend the meeting if you have a copy of the confirmation registration email; however, you won't be able to cast votes since voting will be done electronically.

Q. If I forget to bring my electronic device to the in-person meeting, can UTFA provide me with a device?

A. No, UTFA will not have any extra devices to provide to members.

Q. My device is running low on battery power. Can I plug into an outlet by my seat in the auditorium?

A. No. There are no electrical outlets in the seating area. Please ensure that your electronic device is fully charged or bring a portable charger with you.

Q. What happens if Zoom is experiencing a widespread outage?

A. In the unlikely event that Zoom goes down, UTFA will move the meeting to another meeting platform.

All registrants will be emailed a new registration link for the meeting platform, and the meeting will proceed as planned.

Safety and Accessibility

Q. Is the Auditorium at OISE accessible?

A. Yes, the Auditorium is accessible.

Q. Will there be breaks?

A. None are scheduled. If one is needed, members can make a motion for a short break.

Q. Will refreshments be served at the meeting?

A. No. A water bottle filling station is located on the OISE main floor for members to use with a water bottle they bring with them.

Q. What steps has UTFA taken to address safety and security issues around this General Meeting?

A. Only UTFA members in good standing will be permitted to enter and participate in the meeting.

UTFA takes the safety of its members very seriously, especially around issues about which members have strongly divergent opinions and personal investment. UTFA will not accept any behaviour or conduct that may be reasonably construed as harassing or violent.
All members are expected to listen to the person who is speaking and rightfully has the floor, focus on the issues and not personalities when speaking, avoid questioning motives, and be polite. Members who fail to meet these expectations may be asked to leave the meeting.

Source URL (modified on May 13 2025):https://www.utfa.org/content/general-meeting