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Substantial Win: Teaching Stream Eligibility for Academic Administration Positions

November 26, 2025

UTFA is pleased to announce that it has secured an agreement with the senior University Administration that recognizes that **Teaching Stream faculty are eligible for appointments to academic administrator positions, including (but not limited to) Chairs of departments and the Directors of academic centres and institutes.**

In one way, this is a narrow achievement: it simply means that Teaching Stream faculty members' qualifications will be assessed alongside those of other eligible candidates. However, **this agreement is nonetheless significant because, for the first time at the University of Toronto, the Administration has been required to affirm that Teaching Stream faculty members have the right to *have* their qualifications assessed alongside other eligible candidates.** This agreement *should* conclude the Administration's previous practice of barring Teaching Stream faculty from applying or even being considered for many of these positions, which UTFA asserted in a set of grievances was improper, arbitrary, and discriminatory.

The wording in an initial mediated agreement reached on May 5, 2025, stated that:

The parties agree that Teaching Stream faculty are eligible for appointments to academic administrator positions covered by the PAAA pursuant to and in accordance with the terms and conditions for appointment in the PAAA.

[Note: The PAAA is the Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators, and the positions covered by it include Chairs (of departments), Directors (of centres and institutes), Assistant Principals, Vice-Principals, Principals, Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, Vice-Deans, and Deans.]

Then, after UTFA alleged that the University Administration violated the May 2025 agreement soon after signing it, the parties returned to the mediator for a resolution. A new agreement came into effect November 4, 2025, and included this statement:

Following mediated discussions with mediator-arbitrator Gedalof, the parties confirm their agreement that there are no academic administrator positions covered by the Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators for which teaching stream faculty are not eligible. Faculty members are appointed to positions covered by the Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators pursuant to and in accordance with the terms and conditions for appointment in that Policy. For clarity, the parties agree that tenure is not listed as a qualification in the Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators under the heading "Qualifications, Duties and Responsibilities" for any position under the Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators.

UTFA encourages all members to inform us immediately if the Administration appears to be breaching this new agreement, in word or in action. If you hear an Administrator say that Teaching Stream faculty cannot apply or will not be considered for a position for which it is now explicitly agreed they are eligible, or if you are serving on a hiring committee that is excluding a candidate *because* they are in the Teaching Stream, or if you yourself are a Teaching Stream faculty member and have reason to believe you are being treated as ineligible for an administrative position *because* you are in the Teaching Stream, please reach out to UTFA right away at advice@utfa.org. Your communication with UTFA and the advice you receive will be confidential.

Special thanks to the individual member who came forward and collaborated with UTFA to grieve this long-standing issue. When this member encountered a barrier that they believed to be unfair, they recognized that the exclusion was indicative of a broader attempt to undermine and deny the existing rights of Teaching Stream faculty. **Their successful challenge demonstrates what can be achieved when members stand up, and stand together, to enforce their rights.**

This accomplishment comes on the heels of several other relatively recent successes advocating for the rights of Teaching Stream faculty. For example: UTFA successfully reversed inequities the Administration had built into the MRA (My Research Applications & Agreements) system which UTFA argued violated equal academic freedom rights and discrimination protections and restricted the rights of Teaching Stream faculty and librarians to conduct self-directed research; UTFA ensured that services offered by the Faculty Relocation Office are appropriately extended to Teaching Stream faculty and librarians; and UTFA challenged and helped to overturn improper denials of Teaching Stream-focused proposals (among others) in Unit Workload Policies.

This new agreement related to academic administration positions is an important victory for both Teaching Stream faculty at the University of Toronto and the Association as a whole, as it demonstrates UFTA's unwavering commitment to asserting existing Association and member rights and ensuring that the Administration respects and upholds the policies they negotiate with us. Please join us as we celebrate this significant achievement.

Sincerely,

Sherri Helwig
Vice-President, Grievances

Terezia Zorić
President

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