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Report of the Chair of the Teaching Stream Committee, 2024-2025

April 8, 2025

This Committee advises the Council on all matters of particular importance to faculty in the Teaching Stream, including workload, time for research and scholarship, and related equity issues.

During this last year, UTFA has continued to address a wide range of issues related to the rights of the Teaching Stream faculty members at the University of Toronto. Only a small sample of issues and concerns, mainly focusing on academic freedom, are outlined here. Note that much of the work described was done in collaboration with UTFA Vice-President, Grievances, Sherri Helwig.

Challenging the Administration's Exclusion of Teaching Stream Faculty from Senior Roles

Rather than promote equitable opportunities for all faculty, regardless of stream, to participate as full academic citizens based on merit, in the past year the University's senior administrators have been entrenching and even extending the grounds for exclusion and discrimination against Teaching Stream faculty. Firstly, the Administration unilaterally decided to phase out the practice of allowing some Teaching Stream faculty to have full membership in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and began restricting all faculty in the Teaching Stream to Associate membership at best. UTFA grieved this, arguing that this exclusion is arbitrary and discriminatory, as it is based solely on the fact that we are in the Teaching Stream, not because of our qualifications, abilities, or what the best fit would be for the graduate students. UTFA views these kinds of exclusions as artificial constraints on our work and violations of our academic freedom. The Administration denied the grievance and UTFA has referred the matter to arbitration.

Secondly, the Administration is also excluding Teaching Stream faculty from serving in certain academic leadership positions (e.g., chairs of departments and directors of centres and institutes). UTFA is grieving this exclusion as well and has referred the matter to arbitration under the amended grievance and arbitration process detailed in the Report of the President.

A Notable Success

Previously, UTFA filed a grievance regarding violations of equal academic freedom rights and discrimination protection, and restrictions on our right to conduct self-directed research. The issue, in brief: the Administration imposed improper criteria on Teaching Stream faculty and librarians in the My Research Applications & Agreements (MRA) system and in related processes and documents, and subjected research funding applications from Teaching Stream faculty and librarians to additional and inappropriate scrutiny.

Last year, we shared with members that we were "cautiously optimistic" that we would be able to resolve the grievance. Though there was some delay by the Administration, we are now delighted to report that the inequities have now been removed and grant applications and research agreements submitted via the MRA portal by Teaching Stream faculty are now required to be subject to the same approval factors as those of Tenure Stream faculty, with no additional conditions**.** If you experience something different, please contact UTFA at advice@utfa.org.

We value your participation!

Thank you to all the Committee members for their dedication throughout the year. Five member meetings were scheduled this year, with four of these open to all Teaching Stream faculty. We encourage you to attend these open meetings so we can collectively establish our priorities for the Committee. Please be in touch with your feedback –- we look forward to your engagement on all the issues. There is more work to be done and we're up to the task!

The annual Promotion and Continuing Status Review Workshop for Teaching Stream Faculty will be held on June 24, 2025, and all interested are encouraged to attend.

Special thanks also to Terezia Zorić, Sherri Helwig, Kim MacKinnon and the amazing UTFA staff – Nellie De Lorenzi, Jessica Martin, Marisa Mikroulis and Claire Reyes – for all their support and guidance this year!

Susan J. Wagner

Chair, Teaching Stream Committee

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