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Arbitration Hearing Update: Administration Pursues Its Offensive Real Wage Cut and Reduced Benefits

May 25, 2026

UTFA Pushes for Fair Increases to Salary and Benefits; Administration Pursues Its Offensive Real Wage Cut and Reduced Benefits

We write further to Friday's Arbitration Newsflash to give you an update on the Arbitration hearing held on Saturday, May 23, 2026.

At the hearing, UTFA's position was clear: UTFA members' salary and benefits **must** keep up with and exceed inflation, **must** be top of market, and **must** keep pace with members' growing and evolving needs.

We asked Arbitrator Jasbir Parmar to award an across-the-board (ATB) increase of **4.9%**, which would ensure that we catch up to inflationary losses, keep pace with current inflation, and remain truly top of the Canadian university market. We also asked for necessary updates to PTR, health benefits, and the Child Care Benefit, all of which have had their value eroded in recent years. Throughout our submissions, we asked the Arbitrator to pay particular attention to the realities of those UTFA members who are most precarious and who are the lowest paid, including part-time faculty, librarians, and CLTAs.

The Administration's position was also clear: UTFA members should take a **significant pay cut**. It maintained its insulting position that your ATB increase should be **1.5%**, which is less than current inflation, less than other faculty associations have received, would do nothing to catch up for past inflation, and which would guarantee that University of Toronto faculty and librarians would no longer be compensated at the top of the market.

One of the Administration's core messages appeared to be that, since tenured Full Professors at the University of Toronto constitute the single largest rank cohort within the UTFA membership, this group should set the priorities for UTFA bargaining. It also stated explicitly that UTFA is asking for benefits improvements for no better reason than that 'UTFA wants what it wants'! It claimed that our mental

health, hearing, vision, childcare and other benefits proposals came without any demonstrated need, disregarding the mental health crisis in which we are living, the inadequate level of hearing aid coverage that our members require to do their work, and the erosion of the value of the Child Care Benefit (which has stagnated at the same level for 20 years), among many other things. Perhaps most outrageously, the Administration continued to push for reductions to our benefits, even though UTFA does **not** agree to concessions and will **never** do so.

It argued, without evidence, that UTFA members would never strike to secure better wages and working conditions for our lowest-paid and most precarious peers, and therefore that the Arbitrator should refuse the **cost-neutral** proposal to distribute 1% of the ATB increase as a fixed flat amount, so that the lower half of our members would receive a slightly higher percentage increase. It should be noted that the parties have agreed to similar distributions of the ATB on many occasions in prior agreements.

While the Administration has historically asked arbitrators to look at the other U15 institutions, this year, when its data showed University of British Columbia and Queen's salaries are higher for certain professorial ranks, it pivoted, arguing that it is now not appropriate to compare our salaries with those at UBC, and remaining silent on those at Queen's. Throughout its submissions, the Administration relied on a cherry-picked, skewed, and selective segment of a proprietary dataset. The information, indefensively, provided **no data** on part-time faculty, CLTAs, or librarians, as if these members do not matter to the Administration. Even this manipulated data, however, showed that we have fallen behind UBC and Queen's in several professorial ranks.

We are preparing additional written submissions to address the Administration's faulty data, which it disclosed only at the 11th hour, after we had written to the Arbitrator and alerted our membership. After those submissions, we will await Arbitrator Parmar's decision, which should be released before the end of June.

Please stay tuned for updates!

Sincerely,

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