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Report of the Chair of the Appointments Committee, 2014–2015

April 15, 2015

The Appointments Committee began its 2014 work at a time when the Special Joint Advisory Committee (SJAC) process was coming to an end. One of tasks of the Appointments Committee was to receive updates and to offer comments and support to the SJAC team. The committee congratulates everyone involved in the SJAC initiative for bringing those negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Two items were carried forward from last year. Members may recall that the committee wrote to the Administration in March 2014 expressing concern regarding “guideline creep.” Specifically, the committee noted disparity between the language of the University’s “Academic Administrative Procedures Manual” (2012) in regard to teaching stream appointments and the language of the “Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments” (2003), which is a “frozen policy.” Developments had appeared in the former that were not in the latter. Although the committee never received a direct response from the Administration, it was satisfied that its concerns were addressed in the final SJAC settlement. The creation of the new four-year/two-year contract in the teaching stream now mitigates significantly the committee’s concern that teaching-intensive appointments were becoming one-year, contractual appointments. The committee will need to monitor hiring into this new type of appointment.

The second carryover item is in regard to the University’s “Policy on the Appointment of Academic Administrators” (2003). The committee conducted a small study of the policy last year and together with information from our members determined that the greatest level of concern was with the process of administrative appointments at the decanal level. The committee is therefore preparing a survey to be sent to members in mid-spring that will attempt to assess the problem more extensively so that the committee can then address it appropriately.

Another survey by the Appointments Committee has been drafted and will have been sent out by the time the Annual General Meeting is held. It concerns the process of promotion to Full Professor. In 2012, the University of Toronto participated in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey. Among the results, the University discovered that in comparison to its peer institutions

there is consistently lower satisfaction among Associate Professors with regards to promotion to Full Professor at U of T. Since then, some members of UTFA have asked for assistance with the promotion process. The goal of the current survey is to gather data from Associate Professors in departments across the three campuses to understand: faculty interest in promotion; practices supporting promotion in the departments; and concerns with the University's "Policy and Procedures Governing Promotions" (1980). UTFA hopes to use the data to develop resources to assist our members better in preparing for promotion.

The chair of the Appointments Committee continues to serve on other UTFA committees whenever possible in order to contribute to appointments-related matters. These committees include: the Librarians Committee, the Teaching Stream Committee, and the Salary, Benefits and Pensions Committee.

Members of the Appointments Committee this year (with their constituencies) are: Mounir AbouHaidar (Cell and Systems Biology); David Bailey (Physics); Ettore Damiano (Economics); Peter Dungan (Rotman School of Management); Ronald Kluger (Chemistry); Linda Kohn (Biology – UTM); Hugh Laurence (Management – UTSC); Kenneth MacDonald (Geography – UTSC); Cynthia Messenger (Writing and Rhetoric); Margaret Procter (Retired); Harriet Sonne de Torrens (Library – UTM).

As chair, I want to thank the members of the Appointments Committee for their support and contributions to our work this year.

Michael Attridge
Chair, Appointments Committee

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