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

April 15, 2015

The mandate of UTFA's Equity Committee is to advise UTFA Council on all matters pertaining to equity and diversity – including gender, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and ability – and to assist the Association in developing policy and approaches to related issues, including pay and employment equity, sexual and other forms of harassment, personal safety, and accessibility. If you have a concern related to equity or diversity or wish to become involved on the Committee, please contact me at zoric@utfa.org.

The work of the Equity Committee typically overlaps with the work of other UTFA committees, producing fruitful collaborations. This past year was no exception, as members of the Equity Committee continued to work on redressing inequitable faculty and librarian workloads. Members met with UTFA's General Counsel, Alison Warrian, and Cynthia Messenger, UTFA's Vice-President, Grievances, to review problems arising from the University's Workload Policy (WLPP) and to identify solutions that could be pursued through association grievances and / or collective bargaining. Committee members helped to draft equity-focused language in support of bargaining (bargaining survey questions, proposals for contract language, etc.) that was submitted to the Vice-President, Salary, Benefits and Pensions, Paul Downes. The bargaining survey results, in turn, revealed major differences in the work-related experiences and levels of satisfaction of UTFA's diverse membership. For example, women members, racialized members, disabled members, teaching stream members, and UTSC members all report significantly less satisfaction with their working conditions and with the implementation of the Workload Policy than UTFA's membership as a whole. Clearly there is much work still to be done in relation to achieving the WLPP's expressed goal of a "fair, reasonable and equitable distribution of workload" for all members across all three campuses.

Current and ongoing work of the committee includes advocacy in relation to sexual violence prevention on campus – an issue that drew significant attention in national media and among policy makers this past year. There is an urgent need to improve the quality of and access to services on campus for members of the University community who experience incidents of sexual violence. In concert with representatives from the Graduate Students' Union and UTFA Executive, and with the particular support of the chair of

the Membership Committee, Judith Taylor, and the Vice-President, University and External Affairs, Linda Kohn, members of the Committee are advocating that Governing Council's Advisory Committee on Sexual Violence Prevention draw upon the relevant expertise of all affected groups and produce meaningful results in a timely fashion. Beyond the work of this committee, UTFA asserts its right to exercise meaningful voice in relation to sexual violence policy development at U of T. As part of a growing collective of campus groups committed to addressing sexual violence, at the end of March UTFA co-sponsored "Sexual Assault on Campus: Activism and Accountability at U of T and Beyond," an event that brought together students, faculty, and community organizations.

The committee looks forward to working closely in the coming months with UTFA's Appointments and Grievance Committees, chaired by Michael Attridge and Cynthia Messenger, respectively. Our plan is to bring together part-time faculty, faculty working as contractually limited term appointments (CLTAs), and others to talk about common concerns, precarious and contract work, insecurity in academic employment, and other issues that were among those highlighted in the recent strike by our sessional and TA colleagues who are members of CUPE 3902. The historical and political context of these issues was discussed at the OCUFA 50th anniversary conference, "Faculty Associations in the 21st Century: Learning from the past – Shaping the future", where the creation of inclusive organizations and faculty activism across the globe were at the centre of the agenda. I was honoured to deliver the closing plenary, "Major Issues for Faculty Associations and Possible Ways Forward." I thank UTFA President Scott Prudham for that opportunity.

Finally, I want to thank several people: Kathy Bickmore, Claude Evans, Mary Alice Guttman, Cynthia Messenger, Judith Taylor, and Katharine Rankin; my fellow Executive Committee colleagues; and all of the UTFA staff.

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Chair, Equity Committee

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