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Report of the Vice-President, University and External Affairs, 2016–2017

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This year I have been a liaison between UTFA and the following groups: the University of Toronto Employee Associations and Unions (UTEAU); student groups such as UTMSU, APUS, SCSU, and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS); the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA); and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). As VP University and External Affairs, I serve on the University of St. Michael's College Leadership Committee.

For UTFA, I chair the University and External Affairs Committee and sit on other committees, especially Salaries, Benefits, Pensions and Workload, Membership, and Grievances, as well as steering committees on Pensions and on Salary Equity. I also serve on the Bargaining Team. Beyond UTFA, I represent UTM on Academic Board and on the Planning and Budget Committee of Governing Council.

In September I organized a meeting of UTEAU at UTFA. Groups attending included USW Local 1998; CUPE Locals 1230, 3902, 3907, and 2484; and OPSEU, IBEW, IUPAT, UNITE HERE 75, and APUS. Contracting out, upcoming bargaining, and pensions dominated the agenda. With USW 1998, I helped to organize a December meeting of UTEAU at USW. A subsequent UTEAU meeting was held at CUPE on March 1 (UTFA represented by Ken MacDonald). The Next Generation Committee of USW 1998 proposed new actions in support of renewable energy and support of LEAP objectives at U of T. A significant issue continues to be contracting out of unionized University of Toronto workers, e.g., caretakers and food workers, who have then been faced with concerns about job continuity and lower wages under their new employer, Compass. Also on the UTEAU agenda have been childcare at St. George, labour conditions and fair wages for student workers, and the new Queen's Park university funding formula.

I attended meetings of both the OCUFA Board of Directors and the CAUT Council and participated in CAUT's Parliament Hill Day, meeting with Adam Vaughan, MP, Spadina–Fort York. UTFA's contribution to the CAUT Academic Freedom Fund was well appreciated; we were not the only faculty association/union making a substantial contribution.

My work in cooperation with students has focused on student fees and student debt. On November 2, 2016, for the Day of Action organized by CFS, I represented OCUFA, UTFA, and UTM. I presented at the press conference and was the only faculty member to address the student rally at Queen's Park. On February 16, 2017, I was on the "Fight the Fees" panel for The List's monthly meeting along with Alessandro Delfanti, Assistant Professor of Culture and New Media at U of T; Leigh-Ann Naidoo, School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (via Skype); Rajean Hoilett, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of CFS–Ontario; Kyle McLoughlin, MA student, Concordia University; and Sitharsana Srithas, VP External, SCSU, which, similar to UTMSU, represents a significant proportion of first generation, racialized students, as well as a significant cohort of international students paying higher differential fees.

On March 1, 2017, I represented UTFA at Queen's Park Advocacy Day, an OCUFA-coordinated event. With me in the GTA caucus were Richard Wellen, President of the York University Faculty Association, and Ron Babin, Chair Grievance of the Ryerson University Faculty Association. Our issues were faculty renewal—replacement of retiring full-time, tenured research faculty with same (not contract faculty); university governance; and establishment of an independent, impartial statistics data base for the higher education sector. We met with MPPs Cheri DiNovo, NDP, Parkdale–High Park; Gila Martow, PC, Thornhill; Yvan Baker, L, Etobicoke Centre; Peter Tabuns, NDP, Toronto–Danforth; and the assistants of Han Dong, L, Trinity–Spadina.

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