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Report of the Chair of the Appointments Committee, 2016–2017

April 10, 2017

The Appointments Committee advises UTFA Council and Executive on matters related to the University's many policies and procedures on appointments. This includes procedures for hiring, promotion, tenure, and termination, encompassing all librarian and faculty ranks—full-time and part-time—including tenure stream, teaching stream, contractually limited, visiting adjunct appointments, and emeriti/ae.

The priority of the Committee this year has been the University's part-time policy (Policy and Procedures on Employment Conditions of Part-time Academic Staff). Last revised in 1994, the policy is out-of-date and no longer believed to reflect adequately the terms and conditions that our more than 350 part-time members require. The central issue for many is a lack of the proper job protection that is necessary to secure academic freedom, which is fundamental to building a strong postsecondary education system. Faculty and librarians will recall that precarity is a growing problem across the many employment sectors in Ontario, including the academic sector. For universities, it potentially impacts the quality of higher education, which is why it is a priority to UTFA. The Association surveyed part-time members in early March this year asking questions about workload, research and study leave, PERA, etc., in addition to job security. As I write, the results have not yet been studied. However, the intention is to conclude consultations with members and table a revised policy for the upcoming round of negotiations with the Administration.

In addition, members of the Committee have been busy this year responding to individuals and groups of members on questions related to appointments policy, especially the University's Policy and Procedures Governing Promotions (1980) and its Policy on the Appointment of Academic Administrators (2003). In recent years UTFA has conducted member surveys on these policies and identified a number of areas of concern. In the former, there is a lack of clarity among our members on the criteria to go forward for promotion to full professor; in the latter, there is a lack of confidence in the selection process at the decanal level, stemming from a lack of transparency and meaningful collegial input. The Association will need to look more closely at the results of these surveys in the years to come and consider ways of negotiating clearer language with the Administration.

I continue to serve on other UTFA committees when possible in order to contribute to appointments-related matters. I also serve on the Executive of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), of which UTFA is a member.

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

Michael Attridge
Chair, Appointments Committee

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