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

April 10, 2017

A number of developments relevant to equity, diversity, and inclusiveness have occurred at the University of Toronto since my December 2016 report.

An important policy development has been the publication of the final version of the University of Toronto's Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. The Policy was approved by U of T's Governing Council in December 2016 with an effective date of January 1, 2017. UTFA's concerns, many of which are not addressed in this policy document, centred on due process, training, and preparation of the staff administering the policy, and the exclusion of legitimate academic activities from the domain of the policy. The U of T administration is currently soliciting feedback about the nature and extent of educational efforts to be launched to implement and educate about this policy. Additionally, UTFA's Statement on Recent Social Media Attacks on Students decried the harassment and discrimination experienced by some students based on their gender identity and/or gender expression, and called for the University to include gender identity and/or gender expression as a prohibited grounds in their new policy.

UTFA has also moved ahead with its efforts to create more knowledge about Indigenous education among its members. Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo, Director of Aboriginal Student Services at U of T, spoke to UTFA Council in February 2017 about the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report. In support of our Indigenous students at U of T, UTFA donated $10,000 to First Nations House. As well, UTFA has supported the efforts of other groups in responding to the negative consequences associated with the US government's travel ban, and has been an advocate for academic freedom in the international forum. Specifically, UTFA co-sponsored the Emergency Town Hall held in February 2017, entitled Bordering Injustice, which discussed the hardships created and implications for international students at U of T and elsewhere by the travel ban instituted by executive order by President Donald Trump. UTFA also organized and hosted a panel discussion entitled Defending Academic Freedom: An International Perspective that featured a panel discussion, with Professors Homa Hoodfar (Concordia) and Payam Akhavan (McGill), of the increasing political interference and targeted harassment and imprisonment of academics and the lack of respect for the principle of academic

freedom.

UTFA has also made advances in examining pay equity issues at the University of Toronto. A new ad hoc steering committee has been formed to investigate the gender salary gap. This group, in consultation with experts, will examine current data concerning the distribution of salary by gender, taking into account relevant variables. This committee will produce an update to UTFA's last report on the gender salary gap, published in June 2010.

Roy Gillis
Chair, Equity Committee

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