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UTFA year-end update

December 23, 2020

As this strange and difficult year comes to a close, I'm writing to offer a brief reflection on the work our Association has been doing.

Since March, the pandemic has affected every aspect of our working lives. A series of UTFA member surveys have documented how the rapid shift to remote work has exacerbated the widespread problem of excessive workloads and pre-pandemic systemic inequities. On very short notice and under challenging circumstances, faculty and librarians on all 3 campuses have more than risen to the occasion—routinely sacrificing care for themselves in order to fulfill their commitments to their students, their scholarly and professional communities, and the broader purposes of the University as a whole.

Although U of T senior administrators have frequently acknowledged that UTFA members "have been working very hard" and "have gone above and beyond to ensure that the University of Toronto continues to fulfill its academic mission," such appreciative ***words*** have frequently been undermined by the Administration's ***actions*** impacting faculty and librarians. UTFA has never been busier than it has been this year in defending the interests of our members. Some highlights of our advocacy include efforts to:

- work in coalition with campus groups to minimize the health and safety risks posed by COVID-19, legionella, and asbestos;
- streamline the accommodation process for members who have caregiving responsibilities and/or are at high risk of COVID-19;
- increase (and make more consistent across University departments) TA and technical support for online teaching and learning;
- rein in excessive workloads;
- enhance job security for part-time and other precarious members;
- increase PERA funds in recognition of the increased costs associated with working from home;
- increase mental health supports; and,
- oppose the Administration's refusal to pay the PTR increments UTFA members earned in the academic year ending June 30, 2020.

Although UTFA has experienced some significant successes, particularly in relation to addressing urgent health and safety concerns, much work remains to be done in 2021. Notably, Jun Nogami (UTFA's VP, Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload) and I are looking forward to meeting you directly (via departmental or unit-based meetings) in the coming months. **Your UTFA Council representative will be sharing details of how to participate in our "UTFA Bargaining Update" sessions starting in January.**

Until then, and on behalf of the entire UTFA Executive and staff, I wish you a healthy, happy, and restful holiday season!

Sincerely,

Terezia Zorić
President

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