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Report of the Chair of the Appointments Committee, 2020–2021

July 10, 2021

As described in earlier sections on grievances and COVID-19 related issues, UTFA is currently addressing the heightened concerns that our members have on Student Course Evaluations/Student Evaluations of Teaching (SCEs/SETs). The Appointments Committee continues to review and advocate in relation to issues arising from SCEs/SETs. Our discussions with senior Administration have largely focused on the limitations of the current system of online evaluations—including systemic bias—and on the appropriate use of SCEs/SETs to inform reflection on and improvement of a faculty member's teaching.

UTFA has filed an Association grievance on SCEs/SETs, and the Appointments Committee is supporting this grievance process.

The Appointments Committee notes that Ryerson University must abide by a binding arbitration award that directs Ryerson's Administration to report the results of SETs as distributions without the calculation of averages. UTFA plans to further strengthen our work on SCEs/SETs by gathering information about similar best practices in place at other Ontario universities.

The Committee also considered the procedures for promotion to Full Professor in the Teaching and Tenure Streams. Our members have reported that they lack clarity in this area, with variation among divisions and departments. In addition, the relevant policy for the Teaching Stream is new, and UTFA members have limited experience of its procedures and outcomes.

The Appointments Committee also discussed the factors that encourage application for promotion, for individual faculty members and for the University. These factors include prestige in the profession, the presence of role models (such as women at the rank of Full Professor), and improved opportunities to take on significant administrative service. The committee also noted that the current policy on promotions states the expectation that most continuing faculty members will secure promotion over the course of their careers. Through UTFA, we intend to develop an escalated communications plan to advise our members on policies, guidelines, and practices in this area.

I am grateful to UTFA President Terezia Zorić and Chris Penn (UTFA staff) for their support and assistance.

Stephen Rupp
Chair, Appointments Committee

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