

UTFA Annual General Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, April 25, 2024

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Zoom Webinar

AGENDA

H. Russell called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

H. Russell introduced himself as the Speaker for UTFA Council and that he is the moderator for the AGM.

1. Acknowledgment of Traditional Land

A. Siddiqi read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Land.

2. Review of the Agenda

H. Russell welcomed the members and guest speakers to the AGM. He confirmed that quorum was reached; noted that in accordance with the Constitution, the agenda was approved by UTFA Council at the April 17 meeting; and outlined the protocols for using Zoom Webinar.

3. Minutes of the 2022-2023 AGM

As there were no changes to the 2022-2023 AGM minutes, they were approved as distributed.

4. Welcome and President's Remarks (Terezia Zorić)

H. Russell introduced T. Zorić, UTFA President.

T. Zorić welcomed the members and thanked them for attending. She observed that more than 400 members were in attendance, despite heavy workloads and other significant commitments at the end of the semester.

T. Zorić said she would focus her comments on bargaining, providing an update on the current and upcoming salary, benefits, and workload negotiations, and emphasizing the need for significant reform of our bargaining framework with the Administration.

T. Zorić reviewed a selection of notable wins for UTFA, including:

- **Salaries Across the Board (ATB) increased by 10% over 3 years.** While this amount is significant, the University has billions in net assets and hundreds of millions in reserves to address any contingencies. Therefore, it is in a strong financial position to offer fair compensation and benefits to all UTFA members and U of T staff.
- **Benefits gains.** UTFA resisted concessions on benefits, made significant improvements, and maintained equal access to health benefits for active and retired members. Recent gains in mental health in particular have been of enormous value to members and their families.
- **Data disclosure win.** Arbitrator Gedalof found that the Administration must provide UTFA with the necessary documents needed to bargain improvements for our members; however, the Administration regularly continues to withhold information, arguing that the information is either not necessary for bargaining or not available in the form requested.
- **Modernization of the Policies for Librarians was achieved** after six years under the facilitation and fact-finding process found in the [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#).
- **Successful resistance of the Administration's unilateral amendment of the Graduate Supervision Guidelines** due to member outreach, and the exercising of our (limited) rights under the MoA. Our voices were heard, and the Administration paused the implementation of the Guidelines.

T. Zorić noted that while these wins are impressive, the work required to achieve them is unsustainably difficult, complex, and time-consuming, and therefore, addressing the limitations of the [MoA](#) is a top goal for UTFA.

T. Zorić called the members' attention to the [UTFA Annual Newsletter](#) to better understand the ongoing work of the Association.

T. Zorić expressed gratitude to all who invested time and energy into the two presidential election campaigns, including the super-majority of members who elected her for a third term as UTFA President. She noted that the high voter turnout speaks to UTFA's vitality.

T. Zorić concluded by stating that while we are diverse in our perspectives, skills, and backgrounds, our work as an Association requires us to be united in our commitment to the well-being of our members and the University as a whole.

5. The State of Play of Academic Labour Activism: Certification and other responses to current challenges by faculty in research-intensive universities

UTFA in conversation with panelists from Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), McGill University, Michigan State University; moderated by Wassim Garzouzi, Part-time Professor of Law, University of Ottawa and Queen's University; Partner, RavenLaw LLP.

T. Zorić introduced W. Garzouzi, Partner, RavenLaw LLP, Past President of the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers, and a member of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association Board. He is a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa, teaching advanced labour law in both French and English, and teaches collective agreement arbitration at Queen's University. T. Zorić thanked him for agreeing to moderate this session.

W. Garzouzi introduced the panelists:

- David Robinson, Executive Director, **Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)**
- Evan Fox-Decent, Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1), **McGill University & President, Association of McGill Professors of Law/Association McGillienne de professeur.e.s de droit**
- Andaluna Borcila, Associate Professor of Comparative Culture and Politics at James Madison College and Jane Bunnell, Professor of Voice, College of Music, **Michigan State University**

The panel members were asked the following questions and provided their responses:

1. What are the general working conditions and related challenges facing faculty, librarians, and other academics at research-intensive universities?
2. How are faculty, librarians and other academics responding to those challenges?
3. What have been the main issues driving faculty activism, including interest in certifying as a union?
4. What efforts did faculty members and other academics pursue in the past to address these issues (e.g., intervening in the faculty senate, petitions around specific issues, etc.)?
5. What is it about certifying as a union you hope will be different in addressing these issues? How have you gone about organizing this work?
6. What advice would you give to UTFA as we think about different options for changing our relationship with our University's Administration?

W. Garzouzi thanked the panelists for their participation.

J. Bale expressed his gratitude to the panelists. He announced that the next Macpherson Lecture will now take place in Fall 2024, featuring guest lecturer Donna Murch. Professor Murch is an Associate Professor of History at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and serves as the president of the New Brunswick chapter of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT.

6. Highlights from the Bargaining Table and UTFA's plan regarding the Memorandum of Agreement (Terezia Zorić and Ariel Katz)

H. Russell introduced T. Zorić, UTFA President, and A. Katz, Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload.

T. Zorić updated the members on the current round of bargaining and encouraged the members to read the [Report of the Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload](#) in the AGM Newsletter.

T. Zorić spoke on the following topics:

- Five Priority Areas of the Bargaining Mandate: Compensation, Benefits, Workload, Members' Rights, and Bargaining & Dispute Resolution
- Bargaining Timeline and Overview
- Progress Through The Ranks (PTR) Update for July 1, 2024 payment.
- University Housing Strategy & Administration Response to UTFA
- New Faculty & Librarian Housing Loan Program, announced on April 12, 2024
- MS Office Access for Retirees — UTFA is seeking feedback from retirees as we negotiate with the Administration.

T. Zorić reviewed the mandate and priorities that UTFA Council approved ahead of the current round of bargaining. She noted that since bargaining commenced in the Fall of 2023, we have had 15 bargaining days with the Administration, the last being April 11, 2024. She reported that progress is very slow or even non-existent on some key issues, such as workload, as the Administration denies there is a systemic problem with overwork. She noted there have been some recent breakthroughs in PTR, housing, and retiree access to software.

T. Zorić reported that the Negotiating Team has been much more assertive about our rights, especially regarding access to information and articulating our expectation of substantive, good-faith negotiations. She thanked the Negotiating Team members for their hard work and tenacity at the bargaining table.

A. Katz expressed gratitude to the members for their attendance. He provided a brief history of the [MoA](#) and outlined UTFA's concerns regarding it, noting that [its deficiencies are detailed in last year's Annual Newsletter](#). He presented UTFA's plan for reforming the MoA, which could involve negotiating changes to the current agreement, seeking voluntary recognition, or

pursuing certification. He emphasized the importance of keeping all UTFA members fully informed and engaged in any decisions about the next steps. This approach is crucial to ensure that we make the right decision, and any chosen solution will only succeed if it reflects our collective beliefs and needs.

7. Reports of the 2022-2023 UTFA Officers and Chairs of Committees

H. Russell said the reports are published in the AGM Newsletter and will not be read at the meeting. However, the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Committee Chairs are available to answer questions. The audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, are linked in the AGM Newsletter, as well as the ratified Policies for Librarians.

UTFA Officers and Chairs of Committees answered members' questions. Some questions dealt with access to Microsoft 365 for retired members, workload for part-time teaching stream and other precarious members, and the government's ability to censor what is said by UTFA members about Israel and Palestine.

8. Timed Item 3:35 pm: Apportionment (Jeff Bale/Kim MacKinnon/Jun Nogami)

J. Bale expressed his gratitude for presenting this report alongside J. Nogami and K. MacKinnon. He reported significant consultation leading up to the final Apportionment report and recommendations of the Apportionment Committee. All UTFA members received an email with a similar version of these slides presented, a table of the proposed changes to their section (if any), and were invited to offer their feedback. The report was endorsed unanimously by the UTFA Executive on February 23, 2024, and approved unanimously by the UTFA Council on March 26, 2024.

K. MacKinnon explained the Apportionment requirements as outlined in the UTFA Constitution and reviewed the members of the Apportionment Committee.

J. Nogami reviewed the main criteria for determining apportionment distribution, the recommended changes from the Apportionment Committee, the consultation process with members, and the Committee's suggestions to the UTFA Executive and Council for future consideration.

Council Motion: Consistent with Article IV, 4.3, (iv), of the UTFA Constitution:

Council recommends that the Members present at the Annual General Meeting of April 25, 2024 enact the recommendations outlined in the Apportionment Committee's report, as presented. **Carried with abstentions.**

9. UTFA Academic Citizenship Awards (Deb Cowen)

D. Cowen, Chair of the Membership Committee, announced the winner of the [Academic Citizenship Award](#), Dr. Nisrim Elamin.

D. Cowen congratulated N. Elamin on her award, noting that her work has raised global awareness of the war on Sudanese civilians. She has facilitated aid for Sudanese people and connected this crisis to other struggles in diaspora communities. D. Cowen announced that a celebration will take place at the Faculty Club in June.

N. Elamin was invited to address the members.

N. Elamin thanked D. Cowen for the kind retelling of her work and thanked those who nominated her for the award.

10. Presentation of UTFA Student Award Recipients (Jeff Bale)

J. Bale said that the University and External Affairs Committee holds responsibility for adjudicating student awards given by UTFA: the UTFA Tuition Bursary Award and the Al Miller Award.

The UTFA Tuition Bursary Award is given to an undergraduate student based on demonstrated financial need and expectation of academic success.

J. Bale announced that Nicolas Pham, a 3rd-year PharmD student, was this year's recipient and congratulated the recipient.

The Al Miller Memorial Award is given to Doctoral or Master's (Research Stream) students who demonstrate leadership related to, or made a significant contribution to graduate student life, and have demonstrated financial need. He noted that each recipient receives \$5,000.

J. Bale announced that Reza Massoum, a fourth-year PhD student at the University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies, and Noah Adams, who is completing a PhD in Adult Education and Community Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, were the two award recipients. He congratulated both students.

11. Other business and questions from the floor

H. Russell moderated questions from the floor.

T. Zorić thanked H. Russell for acting as the Speaker for the meeting and UTFA Council this year. She thanked the members for their support through another challenging but productive year. We are UTFA, and our members are our strength.

T. Zorić also thanked her colleagues on the Executive and Council for their work, support, and contributions throughout the year and in preparation for this event. She extended a special thanks to UTFA's administrative staff, especially UTFA Executive Director Nellie De Lorenzi, for all of the planning and technical work they have done behind the scenes to make sure this event ran smoothly.

T. Zorić encouraged the members to send any questions to advice@utfa.org and noted that the meeting slides will be shared with all attendees following the meeting.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Jessica Martin
Executive Assistant to the President