

## UTFA Annual General Meeting

### Minutes

Thursday, April 10, 2025

**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

### Zoom Webinar

S. Wagner called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

S. Wagner introduced herself as the Speaker for UTFA Council and stated that she is the moderator for the AGM.

1. Acknowledgment of Traditional Land

J. Mason read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Land.

2. Review of the Agenda

S. Wagner welcomed the members and guests to the AGM. She confirmed that quorum was reached; noted that in accordance with the Constitution, the agenda was approved by UTFA Council at the March 20 meeting; and outlined the protocols for using Zoom Webinar. She explained that there would be specific sections of the agenda dedicated to members' questions. She requested that members keep their comments concise and stated that she would allow approximately two minutes per person to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to ask questions.

3. Minutes of the 2023-2024 AGM

As there were no changes to the 2023-2024 AGM minutes, they were approved as distributed.

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

S. Wagner introduced T. Zorić, UTFA President.

T. Zorić welcomed the members and thanked them for attending, stating that we had more than 500 registrations, despite heavy workloads and other significant commitments at the end of the semester.

T. Zorić noted that while the AGM celebrates UTFA's achievements over the past year, it also highlights the increasing number of issues that require the Association's attention, which include the following:

- **A historic agreement with the senior Administration to significantly improve the grievance and arbitration process in the Memorandum of Agreement.** These improvements represent a fundamental strengthening of workplace protections and a more just and equitable grievance process for UTFA members.
- **UTFA and the Administration have agreed to a structured facilitation process to establish baseline protections of our members' right to procedurally fair workplace investigations.** Mediator Eli Gedalof will assist the parties with this process.
- **The crisis facing universities in North America is profound and evolving.** In the US, the Trump administration continues to undermine higher education, eliminate research funding, and threaten academic freedom. Many now feel unsafe crossing the border. In Canada, universities are closing programs, halting enrolments, enforcing hiring freezes, and laying off tenured faculty due to insufficient government funding and a sharp decline in international student numbers. Organizations like CAUT and OCUFA are striving to protect jobs and academic integrity, with UTFA collaborating to support these efforts.
- **Individual units are facing financial struggles due to the inequitable decentralized budgeting model.** This is despite the University of Toronto maintaining a strong financial position. This is a central theme of our keynote presentation.
- **Attacks on faculty and librarian freedoms of assembly, expression, and academic freedom.** UTFA continues to press the Administration to publicly condemn intimidation campaigns and act against individuals and groups who seek to stifle academic freedom. We focus on academic freedom and members' rights later in the meeting.
- **General Meeting of the UTFA membership.** Fifty regular members of the UTFA have requested another General Meeting this year. They have included a motion on the agenda regarding UPP (University Pension Plan) Divestment. According to paragraph 10.2 of the UTFA's Constitution, a group of 50 or more regular members can ask the UTFA President to convene a General Meeting where they have the right to set the agenda. The Executive is currently organizing this meeting, and we will provide the membership with more details soon.
- **Improvements or alternatives to the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).** UTFA's leadership is dedicated to studying the advantages and disadvantages of the MoA and educating the membership on our findings.
- **Organizational and Governance Review.** To further democratize UTFA's internal governance, the UTFA Executive has requested a Review from CAUT. We invite all members, both active and retired, to participate in the survey associated with this Review, and help shape the future of our Association.
- **Member engagement and participation.** As a self-governing organization, UTFA is dedicated to increasing member engagement. Significant strides have been made to further increase member participation through Town Halls, focus groups, expert panels, workshops,

surveys, and other events. Members were encouraged to complete the disability survey if they had not already done so.

- **Democratic renewal.** In the coming year, our leadership will hold additional listening sessions in direct meetings with members to better understand the challenges faced by faculty and librarians, ensuring that the Association's work reflects members' needs and priorities.

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

5. Sorting Fact from Fiction: Their Budget Decisions and Impacts on Your Work at U of T (Moderator: Thom Dancer, with Jun Nogami & Rob Gillezeau, and Arjumand Siddiqi, Girish Daswani, Kim MacKinnon, and Susan Wagner)

S. Wagner introduced T. Dancer, the Chair of the Membership Committee, and thanked him for agreeing to moderate the session.

T. Dancer introduced panelists Jun Nogami, Interim Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload and Rob Gillezeau, UTFA Treasurer, to provide information regarding the University of Toronto's budget and its implications for the UTFA membership.

J. Nogami provided the members with information about the University's current financial situation, highlighting that the University of Toronto (U of T) is in a different position compared to other universities. In 2023, U of T's profits exceeded \$550 million, surpassing those of the next-highest university by over \$300 million. Additionally, U of T's 2024 profits were reported at \$507 million.

R. Gillezeau reported that the University of Toronto is currently operating with a surplus of one billion dollars. He noted that the institution has maintained strong financial health over the past decade due to effective financial management, positioning it remarkably well relative to its peers. While acknowledging that financial tightening is a reality, he noted that the University's budget often understates net income, suggesting we have already reached the lowest point. He concluded that there is ample room in the budget for UTFA and other campus unions to negotiate fair compensation.

J. Nogami confirmed that the U of T can afford significant compensation increases, noting that the U of T's 2023-2024 Budget Report asserted that a 1% increase in total compensation to all employee groups would cost the University \$19 million per year. He noted that with a \$507 million profit that year, it would take more than a sudden 26.7% increase in total compensation to all employee groups to put the University in the red. He also noted that the U of T is the first university in Canada to fully move away from the traditional budget model.

J. Nogami concluded that the University of Toronto is in a strong financial position with a budget that aligns with its priorities. Salary increases are assigned to faculties, and future funding will be based on specific metrics. However, the Administration continues to make budget decisions without adequate collegial governance or consultation.

T. Dancer thanked J. Nogami and R. Gillezeau for their presentation and invited the following Executive Committee members to comment on how the new budget model and academic restructuring have impacted their academic departments:

- Arjumand Siddiqi, Member-at-Large
- Susan Wagner, Chair, Teaching Stream Committee
- Girish Daswani, Member-at-Large
- Kim MacKinnon, Chair, Part-Time Faculty & Contractually Limited Term Appointments (PT-CLTA) Ad-hoc Committee; Member-at-Large

The panelists answered questions from the members on the impacts of the new budget model on faculty salaries; the need for budget transparency; hiring freezes at UTSC; and U of T's budget surplus and public statements about its healthy financial position.

T. Dancer thanked the panelists and outlined the next steps to the members, urging those interested or with questions to contact [faculty@utfa.org](mailto:faculty@utfa.org).

6. Highlights from the Bargaining Table and UTFA's ongoing work on the Memorandum of Agreement (Terezia Zorić and Jun Nogami)

S. Wagner introduced T. Zorić, UTFA President, and J. Nogami, Interim Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload.

T. Zorić provided an update to the members regarding the current round of bargaining and encouraged the members to read the Report from the Interim Vice-President on Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload included in the AGM Newsletter.

She reviewed the bargaining timeline with the members, noting that negotiating a three-year agreement took almost two years. This process included 24 bargaining sessions and 5.5 days of mediation.

T. Zorić expressed her gratitude to the members of the Negotiating Team for their hard work and tenacity at the bargaining table.

J. Nogami updated the members on items to be decided during mediation and arbitration, including:

- Across the Board (ATB) Salary Increase

- Health Benefits
- Other Items: Salary Floors, PTR/Merit, Childcare, Profession Expense Reimbursement Allowance (PERA), Housing, and Workload

T. Zorić reviewed the following UTFa gains to date:

- Overhaul of Article 7 of our Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), which governs the grievance and arbitration process
- Preserved retirees' equal access to health benefits improvements and (conditional) access to Microsoft Office 365
- A structured process to 'negotiate' baseline protections of members' rights and procedural fairness in Workplace Investigations via a Sexual Violence Policy Letter of Agreement
- An agreement in principle regarding the self-direction of Librarian Research Days and Professional Development Days, with an increase in the number of days from 14 to 16
- Only members excluded from the Association can carry out academic/faculty labour relations activities, e.g., representing the Admin in grievances.

J. Nogami discussed UTFa's experience with reforming the MoA and its ongoing exploration of improvements or alternatives. He clarified that UTFa does not automatically have the right to amend the MoA; changes require a voluntary agreement from both parties. Currently, UTFa cannot refer amendments to arbitration or initiate job action to secure concessions.

The revisions to Article 7 resulted from UTFa's persistent efforts, which pressured the Administration to enhance the MoA. J. Nogami emphasized that members' rights should not rely on goodwill and highlighted the necessity of a bargaining framework that ensures the right to negotiate all employment terms and conditions.

J. Nogami concluded by explaining that UTFa will share what it learns from legal and faculty association experts, comparing the advantages and disadvantages of bargaining frameworks under the OLRA and the MoA. A Report will be circulated to the membership as a resource to facilitate dialogue and debate.

J. Nogami and T. Zorić responded to members' questions about bargaining and UTFa's plan for the MoA. They encouraged members with further inquiries to contact [advice@utfa.org](mailto:advice@utfa.org).

## 7. Academic Freedom: Know Your Rights! (Sherri Helwig and Jeff Bale)

S. Wagner introduced J. Bale and S. Helwig.

J. Bale discussed academic freedom with the members, outlining the four key pillars defined by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP): freedom to research and publish, freedom to teach, and the freedoms of intra-mural and extra-mural expression. While these pillars inform the concept, their applicability can be limited, especially concerning issues like

defamation and discrimination. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) argues that academic freedom should not be restricted by disciplinary boundaries. Additionally, in Canada, academic freedom is a negotiated right within collective agreements and is not guaranteed by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

J. Bale highlighted that the UTFA's Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) outlines academic freedom in Article 5, emphasizing the right to express opinions without institutional constraints. The no-discrimination clause in Article 9 prohibits discrimination related to academic freedom. He urged members to review the MoA and his report in the Annual Newsletter, especially in light of current challenges to academic freedom, as understanding these protections will strengthen the Association.

S. Helwig reported a sharp increase in the number of UTFA members contacting the Legal & Advice portfolio this year, with notable increases in concerns about workload, workplace investigations, and academic freedom violations by the Administration.

S. Helwig explained that in addition to the advice and support provided by the Legal & Advice team, UTFA is preparing to launch a series of "Know Your Rights" communiques. The first in the series will inform UTFA members of their rights when they are called into meetings with Deans regarding social media posts that improperly attempt to subvert academic freedom and chill UTFA members' free speech.

#### 8. Reports of the 2024-2025 UTFA Officers and Chairs of Committees

S. Wagner 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, 2024, are linked in the [Annual Newsletter](#).

UTFA Officers and Chairs of Committees answered members' questions. Some questions addressed inequalities affecting teaching stream faculty, information on health and safety rights, access to pension calculators, and UPP divestment.

#### 9. Presentation of the UTFA Tuition Bursary Award Recipients (Jeff Bale)

J. Bale said that the University and External Affairs Committee is responsible for adjudicating the UTFA Tuition Bursary Award, which is given to undergraduate students based on demonstrated financial need and the expectation of academic success.

J. Bale announced that Athavan Balakumar, a second-year electrical engineering student, and Yousef Ayoub, a third-year Italian Specialist student, were this year's recipients. J. Bale congratulated the recipients.

#### 10. Presentation of the UTFA Academic Citizenship Award (Thom Dancer)

T. Dancer, Chair of the Membership Committee, announced the winner of the [Academic Citizenship Award](#), Dr. Tara Moriarty.

T. Dancer congratulated T. Moriarty on her award, noting that her initiative on COVID-19 Resources Canada exemplifies the kind of work recognized by UTFA's Academic Citizenship Award. Bringing academic research to the front lines of public health and infectious disease, T. Moriarty's initiative provides research-led forecasts and responses for the community to make informed decisions about the continually changing conditions of Canada's COVID-19 pandemic. T. Dancer announced that a celebration will take place at the Faculty Club at a later date.

T. Moriarty was invited to address the members.

T. Moriarty thanked T. Dancer and everyone who nominated her for the award, highlighting how the pandemic emphasized the importance of community and the need to ensure academics are accessible to communities.

T. Dancer thanked T. Moriarty and said that UTFA was proud to present her with this award.

#### 11. Other business and questions from the floor

S. Wagner moderated questions from the floor, instructing members to use the raise hand function.

T. Zorić thanked S. Wagner for acting as the Speaker for the meeting and UTFA Council this year. She expressed her gratitude to the members for their support and hard work and encouraged them to read the [Annual Newsletter](#), which highlights the Association's important work.

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 special thanks to UTFA's administrative staff, especially UTFA Executive Director Nellie De Lorenzi, for all the behind-the-scenes planning and technical work that ensured the event ran smoothly.

T. Zorić encouraged the members to send any questions to [advice@utfa.org](mailto:advice@utfa.org) and noted that the presentation slides will be shared with all attendees following the meeting.

## 12. Adjournment

S. Wagner thanked the members for their participation.

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Jessica Martin  
Executive Assistant to the President