

CAUT Organizational and Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking Exercise

CAUT Governance Review: A Multi-step Process

Process Steps	Timelines
CAUT Benchmarking Report - Part 1	Completed
Interviews	October to early November 2025
Survey to the membership	November 2025
CAUT Report (themes identified and recommendations made) - Part 2	December 2025
Redrafting of the UTFA Constitution and By-laws - Guiding Principles and Redrafting language with ongoing consultation	Throughout 2026
General Membership Meeting	December 2026



CAUT Governance Review

Purpose:

- Explore how UTFA's structures, processes, and policies are or could be better aligned with the Association's strategic objectives and the expectations of its members.
- Explore how UTFA's governance structures might ensure greater membership engagement, democracy, accountability, and responsiveness.
- Explore how the structure could be more in line with a that of a certified Faculty Association.
- Explore how to bring greater clarity and accountabilities of the roles of Executive Officers and staff and a better distribution of roles and responsibilities.



CAUT Governance Review

Benchmarking Analysis

- Comparison of UTFA's governance structure with that of other U15 (the most research intensive universities') academic staff associations in Canada as well as Toronto Metropolitan University and Carleton University

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Size:

- UTFA is the third largest academic staff association in Canada, next to the Alberta (AASUA) and UBCFA
- However, unlike AASUA and the UBCFA, UTFA does not include contract academic staff in its membership

Certified Union:

- Most FAs are certified except for McGill (MAUT), Waterloo (FAUW), and McMaster (MUFA)

Mil Rate:

- UTFA's mil rate is .75% of wages – 5th lowest in the comparator group
- Rates for certified unions are generally higher except for UBCFA and TFA who have interest arbitration (i.e. no right to strike)

Staffing Complement:

- Most FAs have an ED with varying duties
- UTFA has same staff complement as UBCFA and Alberta but slightly fewer professional staff



CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

FA Governance in Canada

- FAs governed by their Constitution and Bylaws
- FAs exhibit peculiar and complex governance structures
- FAs operate in an increasingly demanding and complex political and economic environment → “corporatization” or “neoliberalism,”
 - Reduced government funding
 - Rising tuition fees
 - Focus on commercialization of university research
 - Increased managerial control
 - Increase in precarious contracts
- Challenges FAs face are political → require deeper political organizing
- Requires FA structure and practices to encourage greater member engagement by being democratic, transparent, inclusive, and responsive

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Power and Authority of the Membership:

- Most democratic based organizations are governed under the authority of *the membership*
- Powers ascribed to UTFA's membership are not clearly articulated in UTFA's Constitution → creates confusion about the roles and powers of different governing bodies

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Council:

- Under the constitution and by-laws, UTFA's Council is given the power to:
 - Establish and carry out UTFA's policies and objectives
 - Ratify agreements made between UTFA and the University of Toronto administration
 - Appoint members of the Executive (excluding the President who is directly elected by the membership), committees, and negotiating teams
 - Recommend by-law changes for adoption by the membership
 - Approve the annual budget of the Association

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Council cont'd:

In other Faculty Associations, many of these responsibilities are the purview of different governance bodies.

- Executive Officers are commonly elected by the membership and not appointed by Council
- Appointment of members to Committees and Negotiating Team fall under the authority of the Executive
- Not all FAs have a Council/Board like UTFA and in many FAs the Council/Board is advisory and consultative in nature
- FAs with a Council/Board like UTFA arguably have too many positions on it → not good governance practice → difficult to manage, difficult to fill all positions, difficulty in getting quorum, time consuming → does not facilitate effective and timely decision making



CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Executive Committee—Conflicting Lines of Accountability

- UTFA's Executive Committee is responsible for “carrying out the responsibilities of the Association, as formulated by Council” and can make recommendations to Council.
- The by-laws further specify that members of the Executive Committee are accountable to the President and to Council.
- Only UTFA President is elected by the membership and accountable to the membership
- Remaining Executive members are elected/appointed by Council and accountable to Council
- Conflict → Executive Officers cannot be accountable to both the membership and Council where they may have conflicting positions
 - *Conflict would not exist if all positions were elected by the same body*
 - APUO – same structure as UTFA but all positions are elected by the membership

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Explicit powers given to the Executive in the by-laws are not as clear or as detailed as other Faculty Associations

- A clear delineation of powers and responsibilities is *good governance practice* and is particularly important in associations with multiple governing bodies like UTFA.
- Without clear delineations of lines of authority there is a risk that jurisdictional conflicts may emerge.
- A lack of clarity about authority can also create challenges when urgent decisions need to be taken.

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Officers

- Most associations have as a minimum five positions designated as “officers”: president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and past president (see Appendix 2)
- Officers are delegated greater responsibilities to manage the day-to-day affairs of the Association including authorizing expenditures, directing staff, and approving official communications
- Many FAs struggle to clearly distinguish the roles of each officer and their specific margins of authority

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Officers cont'd

Number of Officer positions:

- There are 5 officers within UTFA: President; Vice-President (Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload); Vice-President (Grievances); Vice-President (University and External Affairs); and Treasurer
- Most associations in the comparator group have between 5 and 6 officers, although there are some notable outliers
- It is generally not considered to be good governance practice to have more than 4 or 5 officers

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Officers cont'd

VP Roles

- UTFA has 3 vice-president positions who are officers: Vice-President Salaries, Benefits, Pensions and Workload; Vice-President Grievances; and Vice-President University and External Affairs.
- Most associations in the comparator group *do not* have more than one vice-president position.
- UTFA by-laws provide very detailed terms of reference for the officers of the Association.



CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Officers cont'd

President's Role

- Article 3 of the by-law assigns the President the authority to act as the official representative and spokesperson of UTFA, to be principal signing authority, to manage staff, chair Executive Committee meetings, and serve ex officio on all UTFA committees.
- This is the standard scope of presidential duties common in all associations.

CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Officers cont'd

VP, Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload

- Responsibilities “consist only of matters relating to negotiations or agreements with the University of Toronto Administration” and include chairing the Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload Committee, recommending members to serve on the negotiating team, and normally serves as the chief negotiator.

VP, Grievances

- Oversees case files, and represents UTFA at the Joint Committee with the university administration.
- In other associations the equivalent position would be the grievance officer.

VP, SBPW and VP, Grievances are not uniformly designated as officers.



CAUT Governance Review: Initial Benchmarking

Officers cont'd

VP, University and External Affairs

- Charged with maintaining UTFA's relationship with CAUT, OCUFA, and other faculty associations, chairing the University and External Affairs Committee, representing UTFA's positions to government officials and advocacy groups, and serving as UTFA's delegate to CAUT Council and the OCUFA Board
- Many of these responsibilities seem to overlap with the duties of the President and in particular the role of being official representative and spokesperson.
- Relatively rare for associations to appoint someone other than the president as the official delegate to CAUT Council

Of the comparator associations included in this review, only the McGill Association of University Teachers and the Toronto Metropolitan Faculty Association have a designated position of Vice-President (External) that also serves as the delegate to CAUT Council.



CAUT Governance Review - CAUT Recommendations

- Consider clarifying the role and authority of the membership in the constitution and by-laws.
 - Is there a need to be more explicit about what decisions must be taken by the entire membership, and what is explicitly delegated by the membership to other bodies?
- Consider whether the membership should be given the power to elect all the officers of the association as is most common in other associations.
- Consider the appropriate mandate and authority of UTFA Council – decision-making board, advisory body, or a stewards' council
- Consider what should be the specific powers of the Executive Committee and to what body should the Executive Committee be accountable
- Consider the roles and responsibilities of the 3 VP positions, in particular the VP, UEA



CAUT Benchmarking Report

CAUT's benchmarking report is available for review [here](#).