

March 19, 2024 (5 pm to 6 pm) UTFA Presidential Forum Transcript

Notes:

- **The Association is not responsible for the accuracy of this transcript. This transcript is not verbatim due to technological limitations of the transcript function on Zoom, and is accurate to the best of the Association's ability with corrections for spelling and clarity seeking to reflect what was said at the March 19th Presidential Forum.**
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Moderator's Opening Comments:

So welcome everyone to the first of two presidential forums for the UTFA presidential elections this year. I'm Hamish Russell.

I'm a teaching stream professor in the Department of Philosophy. I also serve as speaker, which means that I chair the meetings of council and membership meetings. And so in that capacity, I've been asked to moderate these forums today.

Full disclosure, my partner is also an employee of UTFA. She works on grievances and other member matters.

Hmm.

So look at the aim of these forums is to give you and anyone who might be watching this after the fact since it is recorded a chance to hear from your two candidates in the UTFA presidential election and to pose some questions to them. Some questions have been sent to us in advance and we will draw from those. We will also take some questions submitted via the question function here in the Zoom Webinar during the course of the forum.

The format's gonna be as follows. The candidates are gonna have ten minutes for opening statements, right, at which time they'll be able to present their platforms and their aims and their pitch to you. So ten minutes each for that. Then we'll move into questions. We'll have three questions that are taken from the ones submitted in advance for today's forum and we will have three different questions for tomorrow's forum, right. That part will change. And all the questions will be directed to both candidates, right. I'll ask the question and invite one to answer. I'll repeat the question to the other one to answer. That does mean that if you are wanting to submit a question, we really do encourage you to formulate a question suited as a question to both candidates, rather than to one rather than the other.

Okay, candidates will have three minutes to answer each question, right. So we'll either get through four questions or through five in total depending on the length of the answers.

And then to close, candidates will have three minutes for closing statements. Okay. I'll just note that I'm not going to be doing anything to sort of urge the candidates to fully answer the question or to get back on track, right. I'll give them the time they have to answer each question, but then what they use that time for is up to them. They want to circle back to earlier points, that's within their prerogative. Alright.

That's the plan. I hope that's all clear. I want to waste as little time as possible.

So let's just get right into it for this. I'm going to invite our first candidate, Terezia Zorić.

All right, well one of the candidates to begin with their own statement, and then I'll reverse the order tomorrow. So today, Renan will go second. Okay, so Terezia, whenever you're ready. Click again, you have 10 min.

Professor Terezia Zorić's Opening Comments:

Thanks, Hamish. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm here today proud to have served two terms as your president and to have led up the teams who have accomplished so much in that time.

Like many of you, I came to UofT excited to contribute in important ways to my field of study to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students and the broader communities we serve. Well, I'm keen to return to focus on research and teaching. This moment demands the knowledge, skills, and experience that I've cultivated in this role. I'm therefore seeking a final term as your president.

I didn't start with the goal of deep involvement in a faculty association. I was drawn to UTFA after witnessing troubling institutional policies and practices that were hampering colleagues ability to thrive and to do the work we love. Some of the obstacles we face, like housing unaffordability, are part of wider social trends, whereas others like growing precarity and ever-expanding workloads largely result from choices made by our administration.

We can take action together to address challenges of both kinds. I came to see that an effective UTFA can reduce obstacles to faculty and librarians thriving and make our university stronger. I began to devote myself to the work of UTFA. First elected as a committee chair, then elected as a VP, and then elected as president for the last four years.

I would never have sought the top job before learning the ropes. This election asks you to choose between two candidates, but in fact you're choosing between two teams.

Presidential leadership matters, but relies on the cooperation of many talented colleagues, and the team that I've assembled is remarkable. We are more capable and effective than anything UTFA has seen before. In fact, the reason why I'm willing to run for a final term as president, a job that's a lot of work, is because I don't stand alone, but as part of an extraordinary collaborative team. My team is drawn from every corner of our tricampus. Just look at my website or the UTFA Council website. We come from STEM, the humanities, social sciences and professional fields. We are tenure, teaching stream faculty, librarians, retirees, part-time and full-time members. We're diverse in our perspective, skills, and backgrounds, and we're experienced and effective in getting the job done. Together with care, pride. Enjoy. It's easy to promise, but much harder to deliver.

So what have we accomplished? In short, a lot. And the promises we kept and the goals we've achieved are the best guide to what we will accomplish next. My platform, which you can find on my website provides more details about my accomplishments and the goals I speak about here. Read carefully to see who is offering a positive vision.

We bargained for increased compensation and we achieved sector leading success with our 10% across the board salary increase as I hope you noticed in your November paycheck.

For the current round, we started with a basic principle that increases should at the very least keep pace with inflation. Last round, the administration's final offer was only 4.75% over 3 years. Less than half of our win in arbitration.

It is essential to have a strong negotiating team when dealing with these economic issues. Equally important, we effectively defended equal benefits for retirees. A fundamental principle for UTFA and something in everyone's interest because we will all be retirees one day. We had to fight against the admin's attempt to create a 2 tier system with lower benefits for retirees. We fought and we won and we will win again. This round, we maintain that same clear commitment. Protect equal health care benefits for retirees and added more.

Last year, the administration deprived retirees of access to Microsoft 365 without reasonable explanation or discussion and UTFA's firm contestation of that move is now yielding concrete results in bargaining.

Now we want to build upon our recent gains in mental health and other benefits improvements. The admin offered far less than UTFA ultimately achieved for you in the last round.

That win took a lot of work because of the usual access to data fights. This round with required disclosure from the administration, we will be able to submit stronger proposals, and we've already tabled significant improvements in librarian research days and in childcare benefits. With respect to the latter, we are proposing to the admin an increase to the age of eligibility, a doubling of per diems and the per child maximums, and the doubling of overall investment in the plan.

And while we pursue our goals, we have prevented any repeat of the admin's withholding of PTR increases as a bargaining tactic.

Another historic achievement we won is the PfL. We stood with librarians to achieve. Finally, after 6 years of work, a new framework for their relationship with the university. Our promises go beyond negotiations. We have and are expanding and further democratizing like this membership outreach by town halls, campus visits, surveys, focus groups, award ceremonies, panel discussions, and vibrant AGMs.

We defend academic freedom, collegial governance, and non-discrimination as core values. We've worked with UTFA's Expert Pension Committee to ensure that our pension plan invests ethically, and responsibly, especially but not only with the issue of climate change in view.

We have work in progress towards several other goals and priorities including expert evidence-based advocacy for safe and healthy workplaces.

Ongoing association grievances on pay equity and salary discrimination. My ongoing work with CAUT and OCUFA, which are federal and provincial advocacy organizations, and with President Gertler lobbying the federal and provincial governments on more graduate student funding and support for basic research, including removing obstacles placed in the way of self directed research.

And we finally succeeded after years of persistence in getting the administration to work cooperatively with us to address housing. Housing affordability is a top priority, and it's something that can't be solved overnight. But as we said previously, we are having serious collaborative discussions with the administration around this issue and we are optimistic that these will bear more fruit in the near term. Stay tuned.

In contrast, the admin is rebuffing our efforts to negotiate workload relief and transparency around workload allocation. So while we persist there, we're defending related rights through grievances, supporting individual members with advice, and developing resources for unit workflow committees. We've been outspoken about the need to have full-time faculty positions remain the norm at UofT, and that the trend

toward their replacement with more precarious part-time positions must be reversed. However, this is a key area where our MoU really lets us down, making our work that much harder.

We must improve workload and job security. Protections nonetheless for UTFA part time and CLTA members and have a path to permanency.

The above achievements are steps forward in an ongoing march rather than arrival at a final destination.

But one important change will greatly smooth our track, namely finding some way of moving beyond the constraints of our current memorandum. The MoA makes it much more difficult to pursue the preceding goals effectively. Too often the administration faces no enforceable legal obligations to provide UTFA the information it needs in a timely way, or to consult with us on matters of fundamental importance or even to bargain in good faith. Our negotiating teams need the right to bargain a full set of members issues with an efficient modern mediation arbitration framework. This must include enforceable timelines and access to an expedited arbitration process to resolve this.

Our leadership will work with the membership, seasoned negotiators from other faculty associations and with scholars and experts to explore alternatives to our dysfunctional memorandum and we cannot exclude certification.

Okay.

From thoughtful consideration. Let me end on a high note. I'm profoundly grateful for the outpouring of support from my UTFA colleagues. Many have written moving comments on my website and many have sent me messages of support and appreciation. It warms my heart that the hard work and the achievements of this team are recognized and appreciated. And even more, that the working lives of our members have been improved through our efforts. This is what makes the job worthwhile, and fuels our teamwork to come. Join us and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

Moderator:

Thank you. Professor Zorić. I'll now invite Professor Levine to make his opening statements.

Professor Renan Levine's Opening Comments:

Good evening. Thank you for joining this forum. For many of our members, this will be your only chance to hear from me before voting begins.

As yet, your leadership shortened the campaign this year, two days before voting, two business days before voting begins which is hardly enough time to reach out to the nearly 4,000 members that we look for. And so one might wonder, why was the campaign this year shown to only two business days? What does the incumbent not want the membership to hear about before they vote? Is the awful leadership concerned that you will hear about the toxic atmosphere that went to mass staff turnover from the organization, including the exit of seven or eight attorneys. All of the ones with years of experience and several others who came to UTFA and regretted their decision in six months and left. Perhaps that the leadership does not want you to ask how UTFA's lack of experienced in-house attorneys is affecting how UTFA spends your money, or how that will affect our ability to negotiate with the administration.

Maybe the leadership doesn't want you to know about how they struggle to differentiate between harassment and academic freedom. About two separate Ontario Human Rights Tribunal Cases, or questions about undeclared conflicts of interest, including how the VP in charge of bargaining is also an attorney for a company suing members over their efforts to copyright their own class materials.

Or perhaps they do not want to hear or want you to hear my ideas about how there is little reason to have a president serve for more than two consecutive terms. For this is only the second time in the last 35 odd years. It is possible to thrive with new ideas, new energy and a new approach.

So I'm honored to be part of the conversation tonight about our faculty association, where it is, where it has been, and where we can take it forward.

The same thing you'll hear two contrasting visions. My vision is one that is shared by faculty from across the three campuses, including many people who have long been active in UTFA, including some who have served UTFA at its highest executive levels. As well as members who have never been involved in UTFA politics before. My vision for our association will lead us away from divisive conflict to focus on core issues that matter most to our members, and a fresh pragmatic approach. What I mean when I say fresh pragmatic is that as president I will change the way UTFA has done business.

I will make sure UTFA stands up for our members' interest at the negotiating table, and I will also make sure that UTFA is there to work collaboratively with Simcoe Hall on issues that benefit both our members, and the university as a whole. We will avoid unnecessary conflict and controversy.

I have been on calls with the provost and vice presidents at Simcoe Hall. I know that sometimes dealing with them or the university's bureaucracy can be really frustrating. But I also know that they are reasonable people who are trying to do the right thing and would like to find optimal solutions in an often imperfect political and fiscal environment.

Transparency, not secrecy, makes UTFA stronger. When we are divided, we look for compromise and we are united we make that clear.

There are not two teams. There is one UTFA that needs to be able to work together. To do that, executives will canvas and conduct town halls to hear what members think before we commence. That has been going on, and that will increase and continue. What will be different is that these will actually be listening processes. I will welcome dissent and criticism, and in council, we will debate before we take major actions, and focus our advocacy work on matters that affect our members' career success, and happiness in the classroom, the library. and the research.

I pledge to focus on a few key issues because promising to focus on a dozen things is often the same as promising to focus on nothing. I look forward to working with many

executives, and volunteers who will have their own priorities that UTFA will be able to get behind.

For the president when bargaining I will focus on housing and child care, two issues that I highlighted when I first ran for president two years ago.

Other issues can be found on my website, including promises to improve the PTR process, and make it more lucrative and a bigger part of our annual adjustment.

And there are also ways that I describe how I think, can defend, and not threaten academic freedom.

You will also find a pledge that I will not risk our retirees health and travel benefits in arbitration.

I will work with the university when our interests align.

I will ensure proper controls are in place to prevent donor interference and I will not undermine advancement efforts that raise money to support our members' teaching and research.

We will advocate for more international graduate students that many of our research laboratories depend upon, and we will try to find common ground on priorities we share. Like more responsible investing, and increasing equity and diversity.

I'm proud of the support I've received in formulating a detailed platform with issues that have not been pushed weightly by.

When I joined UTFA, I thought of my experience teaching on all three campuses, my experiences living in faculty housing, and more recently worrying about COVID and rising interest rates and how all of these things would make work and home life, of course, more difficult. To my dismay, we actually spent little or no time on council on these pressing issues. Committees that could meet to craft policy remedies, like university policy, where we actually met, and for much of these last few years, negotiations over salary increases dragged on and on and on.

My opponent won't talk about experience, which is a learned ability to do things you've already done. But when we look at what has already been done? One must ask. Can we do better? We know that in the incumbent's case what she has done has often not worked. Rather than gains at the negotiating table our biggest successes have been in arbitration. And sometimes, if not many times, that is arguably the administration's case, but we have to recognize that to do better, to achieve gains at the negotiating table rather than waiting for lengthy arbitration processes and just hoping that we'll get lucky with the arbitrator. It is time to try a new approach.

Thank you.

Moderator: Question #1 to Professor Levine:

Thank you both. We will now move on to the question portion of the forum. So I'm going to start with 3 questions.

I'll ask them individually the questions we've received in advance, some with the small wording changes just to make it a bit more concise. We'll have 3 more questions of that form tomorrow that we've already received, but I do invite attendees at the forum to submit some questions of your own.

We expect to only have time for one or two of those. So staff, are in the background helping along with our Chief Returning Officer, Susan, are helping me work out, some questions from the pool to draw on. Apologies in advance if we don't get your question.

But with that, let me begin with the first one. Which is, and, I'll ask Professor Levine to answer this one, first, what specific strategies would you undertake to decrease the trend towards rising numbers of precarious appointments at U of T, such as part-time appointments and CLTAs?

Over to you, Professor Levine and you have three minutes.

Professor Levine's Response to Question #1:

Well, I think one of the first things that we need to do is address transparency. We need to know more about things like enrollment numbers, and funding formulas and how those affect hires. Both at the moment and what we expect future trajectories to be.

I think we've actually had positive developments lately where a number of people have been able to go, at least in units that I've been associated with from being sessionals to having more permanent positions. It may not be ideal because in many cases these are people who are working part time but for a lot of these people, they're actually really excited about their jobs. And I think it's real important that to work with these people and make sure that they're excited about their jobs. Their workplace environment is really challenging, then yes, that's absolutely when UTFA needs to step in because sometimes for many of us we're in really good situations with a harmonious department and chairs that listen to us, and build consensus. But it's not every department and it's not every unit. And that's what UTFA is there for to make sure that everyone gets fair treatment. And so I think UTFA has done some really good work. This is a big social issue that goes way beyond UofT.

In terms of a trend towards precarious sessional employment, sometimes it's in situations where absolutely can be avoided, and other times, there's gonna be a lot of uncertainty about funding, and about positions going to be open or not open or people who are on leave that may or may not be coming back. And so I think we need to be really careful, and recognizing when the precarious employment is a situation where the administration is just trying to cut costs and when the precarious appointment is because there are is uncertainty or there are short-term needs at the faculty and librarian level that the administration then just needs to have someone in place until there is no resolution.

Moderator - Question #1 to Professor Zorić:

Very good. Thank you, Professor Levine. Professor, I'll just repeat the question.

What specific strategies would you undertake to decrease the trend towards rising numbers of precarious appointments at UofT, such as part time appointments and CLTAs.

You have three minutes

Professor Zorić's Response to Question #1:

Thanks. This is a great question and it's of importance to all of the members, not just those who are part time.

The first place to begin is to keep doing the consultations with part-timers that we've begun ever since the recent part-time policy that brought forward improvements in job title but not and some greater predictability, but no protection. Being fired without just cause, and no ability to have a path to permanent employment, you know, CUPE Sessional lecture 3 have more job security than our 75% part-time members who've been working for 15 years have.

A second issue, so working with Kim McKinnon, who's our teaching stream chair and she is herself a part-timer, she's done an enormous amount of work trying to do an analysis working with university data on the growth and precarity, and you can see that there's been a 300% increase since 2004 in CLTA and part part time members, and part time members are the fastest growing cohort. And I think this is an issue for all of us full time and part time because if you can be let go without cause it really undermines your academic freedom and your ability to speak out.

So the question was what would I do specifically? Well, we have to bargain differently. So when Cynthia Messenger bargained improvements in the part-time policy, she did so under the part of our memorandum that leads to no binding dispute resolution mechanism. This is different than all those collective agreements that folks have or memorandums that lead to the ability to binding arbitration. We have to reform the MOA ultimately. Along the way there's the need to give enhanced grievance rights to part-timers. Develop a path to permanency for the longest serving members. Debunk the myth that the University of Toronto doesn't

sorry it was just that a 1 min warning Okay, very good.

Moderator:

That's a 1 min one, yes.

Professor Zorić's Response to Question #1:

Debunk the myth that the University of Toronto doesn't have the money to pay for part timers to have full-time pay, they're already doing full-time work. In many cases, they deserve full-time pay and a path to permanency.

And we've definitely seen a 300% increase in part-timers. Why? Because they're a cheaper and more flexible form of labour. Now, of course, some people want to work part-time, but they shouldn't be exploited or be put in a difficult position or a position that makes it impossible to have a career and they shouldn't have to choose between efforts. To move towards permanency, and the idea that we're hearing some departments say what's getting in the way if you're having a full-time position is the negotiated and improved salary increase.

Thank you.

Okay, more on that later.

Moderator - Question #2 to Professor Zorić':

Very good. Okay, so now I'll move to the second question at this time. I'll ask Professor Zorić to go first and answer it.

And the question is. How will you ensure that UTFA represents the diverse interests of the membership and how will you do this in a collegial and transparent manner?

Professor Zorić's Response to Question #2:

Great. Another excellent question. I love, I love my team. I've made Team Terezia a catch phrase of my campaign.

I strongly encourage folks to look at two different things. Look at the UTFA website to see our UTFA Council. It is by its very nature built by representation from across the entire membership. We have three campuses. We have multiple streams. We have different disciplines with people who are in professional schools. We have different demographic backgrounds. We represent retirees, junior members, librarians. We are an extremely diverse and politically, socially and otherwise very good group of people.

Take a look at the UTFA council website and take a look at my campaign website, and you will see a beautiful diversity. You'll see diversity on the executive that hasn't existed before, and I don't know why the other candidate keeps talking about how UTFA leadership did this and that. Council made policies that govern this election. It's transparent. Those minutes are published. Everyone on UTFA Council has something to contribute. They pass the agenda on council and we have a council that is flourishing. We currently have 7 seats that are vacant, which is a historic low, but we should fill those 7 seats as well. One of the key ways we attend to this diversity is by having a diverse team and leadership, but secondly, by having attention to their varied needs through those goals and priorities.

The other candidate has two priorities, childcare and housing. There are two of approximately a dozen our team has assembled. If you're a librarian, librarian issues may be a top issue view. If you're part-time, your time might be a tough issue. If you're in the sciences, the need for more funding of graduate students and the international student cap may be a tough issue for you. If you're a retiree, protecting retiree health benefits is a top issue for you. One of the ways we can collegially make UTFA a responsive place is by recognizing that a narrow version of the association simply cannot hold.

Moderator:

And that's a 1 min warning.

Professor Zorić's Response to Question #2:

I'm so sorry. That's 1 min warning. Okay. The other piece is we've been holding town halls and other outreach pieces. I've done focus groups with indigenous faculty, black faculty, women in the sciences, librarians and other groups. I and my team want to be invited to departmental meetings. We would be happy to talk with you about bargaining.

We take careful attention to our member surveys, which this year have significant qualitative opportunities where people could tell us what was on their mind.

We meet with members and I can't emphasize enough that I learned a lot about the membership when I was vice president grievances and people would come to the portfolio for advice.

The problems people have in their workplaces and there are many that come to be known to the VP Grievance because we hear about them through the grievance portfolio and we're well aware of them. And by the way, our members have never been served in that portfolio better. But more on that too.

Moderator - Question #2 to Professor Levine:

Okay, I'll repeat the question. The question is, how will you ensure that UTFA represents the diverse interests of the membership and how would you do this in a collegial and transparent manner? Professor Levine.

Professor Levine's Response to Question #2:

Thank you. First, I think it's really important that UTFA has a working functioning policy of against harassment and non-discrimination.

I think it will be important to continue to say, look. There isn't competing partisan teams and even in this election there is one UTFA. We are diverse. We have a lot of different social and identity ways that we are different. And there's specific ways that UTFA needs to recognize that our members can be very different and have very different

interests. And those interests are not always strongly represented. Sign up for council or on the executive committee. And so I think it's gonna be really important that, when I, if I'm elected for president, that we reach out to science lab faculties, and to the suburban campuses. These are two sets of faculties that tend to be underrepresented, both in terms of how many seats they get on council, but they are the places where most often seats are empty. And so I think it's gonna take a lot of proactive efforts to say, here, here's the way to things that are going on, right? If there isn't a representative that's able to come to council or that, the issues aren't brought up at council. That the extra step is taken to go out to the suburban campuses or to go to the faculties and say, okay, I know you don't have a rep, but here we're going to be here for an hour or two - just we're here to listen. We're here to find out what's going on here to find out how we can help you out and help. What's going on in your department and in your lives make that better.

The other way that I think is important that we need to address is stability in the campus environment. This year our campus community has found this past year to be very challenging, and it's little comfort that the tension's flowing from the war in Israel, Palestine affecting student, staff, and faculty at your team exist in many other campus communities. And so I think that UTFA can play an important role in trying to smooth over tensions recognizing that UTFA members know that there are times as instructors, and I'm a political scientist, so I absolutely know that these are times that we may want students to feel uncomfortable when discussing difficult topics in class. But we also know that no student should be made to feel uncomfortable every day on their way to class, and that absolutely is also true for our faculty.

And so if we're going to talk about diversity among our membership, we need to make sure that people remember that this is a workplace and that people do feel comfortable coming to work and do feel comfortable participating in faculty meetings. I've been really distressed this week. Right? I'm watching members of council, and other faculty members, attack publicly on social media - one archaeologist - and not because they disagree with his conclusions but because they disagree with his ability to be able to carry out his research work.

Okay, thank you.

Moderator - Question #3 to Professor Levine:

So just take another moment to encourage attendees to submit questions. You can do that by going to the Q&A box and on the Zoom window.

We have more questions that we will get to that were submitted in advance but we did want to take at least one or two questions from those that have taken the time to come out now.

In the meantime, I'll turn to the next question. Once again, flipping the order and we're trying to ask the candidates to respond, and this question is, if you were approached by members who wanted UTFA to certify as a union, what would you say to those members?

Right, so the question is I'll say it again, I feel like I should repeat these for the first candidate. If you were approached by UTFA members who wanted to certify as a union, what would you say to those members?

I'm gonna ask Professor Levine to go first this time.

Professor Levine's Response to Question #3:

Thank you. That is a real challenging question. I'm aware that there's a lot of people who think that certification is a really excellent, wise move. My answer involves two things. One is first to consider what we were just talking about on that last question, range of opinions, and the range of practices.

One of the things that I often hear from people who oppose certification is they say, look so if people in the humanities and social sciences push for certification, and we go on strike, they'll sit at home and they'll write another chapter or they'll write another paper, and there will be in the uncomfortable situation of walking to our labs, if we still go to our labs, where we're gonna have to cross picket lines and we don't want to do that, and we don't want that division. We don't want that contentiousness.

The second thing that I say to people who are in favor of certification is to say if we certify, we need to make sure that UTFA has its own house in order. We have to make sure that UTFA is responsive. We have to make sure that if UTFA certifies, we're not going to have so much more power that whoever is in charge can do whatever they want with it.

There's a number of issues right now that UTFA members need to ask a lot of questions about, and I think anyone who favors certification should be concerned that UTFA needs to get its own house in order before we can even look at whether or not to certify its power vis-a-vis unionization or whether in fact that might not even be such a wise move, especially considering the important ways that retirees weigh a role and has historically always played a role in the functioning of UTFA.

There are ways that I will concede that it makes sense for us to revisit our memorandum of agreement. But every time I sit here and I listen to these long talks about how the MoA needs to be revised, that's outdated, I'm reminded that my opponent's signature is on the MOA. It wasn't that long ago, and I don't want to have every year sort of a, oh, we're going to threaten to certify.

We have to be able to come to the negotiating table with more nuance than that, and more of an understanding and respect for the fact that there is a large variety of opinion on the topic and there are going to be positives and negatives even for people who are strongly for or against.

Sort of carrying in one way or the other. Thank you.

Moderator - Question #3 to Professor Zorić's:

Alright, thank you. I'll just repeat the question again. The question is, if you were approached by members who wanted UTFA to certify as a union, what would you say to those members?

Professor Zorić's Response to Question #3:

I think it's critical that when members come to us with important views about the future of the association that the other candidate who, and I'm just going to stop for a moment and say I describe him as the other candidate, he describes me as his opponent. I say that team Teresa is clear, transparent. He says we're all on the same team.

I and then he centers his campaign around mud slinging and I say, well, how are you going to work with the folks you're slinging light on?

Let me be clear. The other candidate has put upon his website that he opposes certification, but he's not being particularly clear at this moment.

To say he opposes it. I'm quite clear. I see the benefits of certification, but I know it's up to the membership.

To tell me if they sue them too. That's quite clear. So I would ask members. Why is it that you think it's important for UTFa to certify? And this is and if this happens all the time. Members want to know if our memorandum which of course I signed because I try to improve it along the way. You know, I don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. I'm not all for revolution and not for reform. The memorandum can be improved piecemeal in small ways, but that won't make it tick for purpose. We don't have the ability to negotiate, for example, improvements for our part-time colleagues. That's unacceptable. If the librarians hadn't come to an agreement, they would not have had access to neutral dispute resolution. Not acceptable.

When UTFa wants to make changes to significant terms and conditions of our members' employment, we don't have that ability. We don't have access to enforceable good faith bargaining, unacceptable. Our grievances take years to hear. Unacceptable. So I would ask the member who is so interested with why are you talking about this with me? The same way if a member came and said hey, Terezia, I'm really hearing a lot about certification and I really oppose it. I would say, tell me why because I'm so interested in what your concerns are. So what is the leadership doing? In fact, I often have to answer why aren't we moving more quickly towards certification? Because we have a scholarly community.

We are one, this year we worked in bargaining really to get the administration the opportunity to give us the affordances in the MoA that certification would have provided. The experiment taught us that they won't do it. Second, we have to do a scholarly study comparing our circumstances in the MoA, what certification would bring, and we need our members to be deeply engaged in that study and in that conversation and tell us what they make of those results. I also want to work with other legal scholars and with other more experienced faculty association presidents who've gone down the same route. For example, at Western or McGill, because they have much to teach us as well.

Thanks.

Moderator - Question #4 to Professor Zorić:

Okay, and for our last question, we'll take one that's being submitted at the forum.

The question is, can both candidates address their experience, not just their individual experience, but their formal responsibilities that are relevant to service as president?

I'll read that again, can both candidates address their experience, not just their individual experience, but their formal responsibilities that are relevant to service as president?

Professor Zorić, I will ask you to go first on this one.

Professor Zorić's Response to Question #4:

Thanks. I came to work at the University of Toronto as an appointed faculty member in 2004, so I'm coming on to 20 years of service to the university. Before that, I held a senior leadership role at the Toronto District School Board doing equity in human rights. As a faculty member at OISE, I took a real interest in education and I've come over time to become a scholar of higher education looking at the changing nature of academic work and workloads. My UTFA office specific work arose when I helped teaching stream

faculty at OISE who were unilaterally having their workloads increase, and I championed the idea that there shouldn't be just this unilateral jacking up of workloads. And then I came to UTFA and I came to see those doing some terrific work. But the more I did, the more I became concerned. That people were just not thriving at the University of Toronto. People loved their work, they just didn't like the volume of it and some of the arbitrariness of administrative decision making.

There are other pressures to be sure. You know, as I said in my opening comments so I became chair of two UTFA committees elected by the 50 to 60 person council. Those are elected positions. I note that there is an obscuring of the idea that the council elects. The nominating committee only nominates a slate anyone can run for office. I was an elected vice president, grievances for three years, and a chief negotiator as the vice president salary benefits pensions workload for one year and I've been president for four. In that time, I've worked with three prior presidents, and I paid careful attention and learned from them even when I didn't agree with them.

I have had dozens and dozens and dozens of council motions passed. I've had, you know, a few not pass as well to be sure. I've been in respectful debates and I've had much slung, slung at me from the other candidate and from some of his friends. I have a thick skin because the most important thing that prepares me for this role is to have a mutually respectful relationship with a team of teams. With an executive team, with a bargaining team, with a council team, with a membership outreach team, with a pension committee - with a diverse membership.

Please go on my website and read the thick testimonials about the work that I and my teams have led on.

I have so many emails in my inbox where people grateful for the negotiating we did on mental health benefits, what a difference it made to their family members, how the 10% increase meant that they no longer have to go scrounging for sales for dinner. Right. I wish that was a joke. Our members really appreciate the work that we've done, and that appreciation for the difference we can make in the lives of our members is the fuel that keeps our team going.

And I think being in it for the right reason is the main attribute I have and the main distinction between the candidates.

Moderator - Question #4 to Professor Levine:

Okay, the question again is can both candidates address their experience, not just individual experience but their formal responsibilities that are relevant to service as president?

Professor.

Professor Levine's Response to Question #4:

Thank you. For the last year or so, I have been head of my neighborhood Rent Payer Association, which has meant that I've spent a lot of time working with people with different opinions, within different levels of government, and try and find ways that people with very different points of view can still try to work together. I've also spent quite a bit of time on campus working with campus leaders, deans, and department chairs.

I was on a call today with the provost, and vice presidents talking about academic freedom and ways that we can strengthen academic freedom here on campus.

I want to stress two things about my individual characteristics I think are important. When thinking about being one is that I come from being a political scientist and then my own cultural background. It's really a strong culture around. Ability to have conversations, even difficult ones. Opportunities for dissent and debate. And then once everyone has said their piece, which everyone has listened because I think it's really important to listen, and I think that is something that as a leader that I often strive for is the ability to listen, and hear what people have to say.

That then once a vote then is taken, that reduces the animosity that exists because it's part of the process, the process is clear.

We've come to a decision and now the decision made, we can move on to the next issue.

I'm a bit surprised that the incumbent president says that you have to be able to do this for the right reasons. I want to make it clear, I'm here for absolutely the right reasons. I really believe in UTFA, and I've worked really hard and come very prepared for meetings. But I also know that these meetings could be improved by just making sure that people had the time to read over all the materials, that all motions were brought up long in advance and people had a chance to read it over, and that wasn't always the case and that could be really frustrating.

And so all the work that I've done, whether it's committees, organizations, community nonprofits, I think it helped me understand that I could make a difference. It's not about me. It's about making UTFA better. It's about becoming more boring. Not in UTFA that's dealing with Ontario Human Rights Tribunal complaints.

Says this is much slinging, but this is a real big problem. We lost our entire legal team. They didn't leave because they were just happy. They left because there was problems in the office. Yep. Wasn't brought to council's attention. We're the board of directors. We needed to see that. We need to hear how things will improve. Thank you.

Moderator - Professor Levine's Closing Comments:

Okay. Given the time. Let's move on to closing statements, shall we? So I'm gonna go in the reverse order with which we begin.

So I invite Professor Levine to go first and then Professor Zorić. And again, if you come back for round two, we'll reverse that order tomorrow.

Okay, so Professor Levine, you have three minutes for closing statements.

Professor Levine's Closing Comments:

Thank you. I think in some ways it's the biggest advantage to go second, in this.

Point in conclusion because you can think a bit about what hasn't been said. And what you would still like to be able to convey to the members when there is so little time. For members to hear from different viewpoints.

In this very short campaign, and I realized that I really had not had a chance to talk about what I think are two really important issues, housing and childcare. In 2018 the administration agreed to form a joint group to work on housing. I'm actually really happy to hear that almost 2 years after I first raised this in my last presidential campaign that UTFA and Simcoe Hall are finally beginning to talk. The problem is that I want to emphasize that this issue was dropped for way too long. It was put on the back burner for way too long. Even as housing costs climbed ever higher.

And whether it's housing or other issues, one needs to make sure that we're nimble, we're attentive, we hear from members what the big issues are before we do miss big opportunities. I've heard that leadership describe this as an issue with housing that mainly affects junior members, but what I've heard from a lot of people, even senior colleagues, often because they start at U of T with families who could not fit into small condo, and years later as senior professors they still have not been able to purchase homes. Some are looking for homes outside of the GTA.

But once again, and out of touch, UTFA has not advocated for changes in the eligibility that restricts support for housing to the GTA, nor have we done much to build up our existing supply of faculty housing, which right now is really small. Mainly not friendly to disabilities and it's just at the St. George campus. There is land on both of the suburban campuses that the university is ready to build on. But add our voice to the voices that say, let's make that a priority.

The other issue is childcare. In 2007 the university committed to provide a subsidy for faculty and librarians with young children. The pool of total money has not changed since 2007. \$20 a day for more than 6 hours of care and \$10 a day for 4 to 6 hours of care and it involves an onerous application process. I urge voters to vote for me to advocate to raise this pool, and allow members who only need 2 hours of after care after their kid gets out of school, which in the TDSB costs almost \$40. Right. We, we, our members will be better workers. They'll be happier. They'll be able to fill that time. Increase the eligibility, make it a simple application process so that families know that at

a minimum given the child's age, they will qualify no matter what kind of childcare arrangements they're at. I think that's gonna lead to a much easier, happier situation and one in which parents will be more able to thrive as faculty members.

Thank you. Thank you for listening to our conversation tonight.

Moderator - Professor Zorić's Closing Comments:

Okay, and Professor Zorić, your closing statements.

Professor Zorić's Closing Comments:

Thanks. Let me begin with where the other candidate left off. I could not agree more that we need to improve childcare. I was the driving force in 2007. It was not the administration giving us childcare, but to the team negotiating it to the nail. And in fact, I argued at that time with the past president, George Luste that the age was obscenely low because seven-year-olds could not take care of themselves, and on every team I've been on since then, I've raised it. And they need to improve it, including raising the issue of the need to make the process more streamlined, and put a team toward doing that and it still needs streamlining further. So I do listen carefully. All of those things are true. But in terms of updating one's policies, let's be clear, if this is half of the other candidates platform my team has already put forward in bargaining a doubling, not a 50% increase, a doubling per capita of child care of the half day amount of the full day amount, raising the age to anything, any, one under 12 unless you have a disabled child in which case it's a different scenario, and going from a 1 million dollar investment to a 2 million dollar investment.

Of course childcare matters. But it's not the only thing that matters.

Equally, housing is critical. Junior faculty, we need to know it doesn't only harm junior faculty. But you see, when one begins to try to pick apart each and every misrepresentation, or serious omission one goes down a rabbit hole. I don't want to speak about the other candidate's programs. Frankly, it's not wide enough and it's not deep enough. I want to speak to UTFA members who I understand, who are diverse

with some common needs. Overwork is an enormous widespread problem. We've heard nothing today from the other candidate about what to do with excessive workloads.

We have a workload policy not fit for purpose and a memorandum not fit for purpose. These are critical issues.

The administration did not give us adequate raises that keep up with inflation, nor did the arbitrator give it to us out of the kindness of his heart. It happened as a result of the outstanding work of my past VP grievances and the current VP grievances, and the whole two bargaining teams to drive home the point that UTFa members deserve sector leading increases and we won. I think that this really is an opportunity for folks to ask. Do you want an UTFa with a mud slinging negative candidate who's trying to tear down literally, the majority of 60 council members, the entire executive and two bargaining teams, and then claim to be the one who's going to unite us and not be divisive. Or do you want the big UTFa candidate who's proud of the diversity of voices at UTFa, for the representation on three campuses, all streams, actives and retirees, and who actually is willing to work well with the administration when that is to our members' benefit.

Right.

And has a lot of experience doing so, but also has experience. And a team willing to stand up when the administration's interests diverge from our own.

Moderator:

Have to cut you off.

Professor Zorić's Closing Comments:

That's the conversation we're supposed to be having, not mudslinging about what's happening in the office, which by the way, I categorically object to. I'm not gonna end on that negative note. We have an amazing group of that. Alright, didn't we have time? Oh, sorry. This is Eric. I do need to cut you off. But folks, if we come back. And I and I thank them for my support.

Moderator:

Very good. But we will have another of these forms tomorrow morning at which the candidates will have the ability to elaborate on anything further.

We will ask different questions, so you're more than welcome to attend for that. Also watch the next installment if you're watching the next installment if you're watching the recording after the fact.

I'll just make a final point, that the polls will open, 12 noon tomorrow. After the second forum look for an email in your inbox from Simply Voting that'll be the polls will open 12 noon tomorrow after the second forum.

Until next time, thank you all for coming. And thank you to the candidates.