



University of Toronto Faculty Association

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Mr. W. David Wilson  
Chair  
Presidential Search Committee  
Office of the Governing Council  
Room 106, Simcoe Hall  
University of Toronto  
Toronto, ON  
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September 28, 2012

Dear Mr. Wilson and Members of the Presidential Search Committee,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the qualities we think are important to consider when selecting the next President of the University of Toronto. UTFA is the independent collective voice of faculty and librarians (including retirees) with multi-year and continuing appointments at U of T. We are pleased to offer some comments and suggestions in this capacity.

First and foremost, we believe that the new President must be an academic with a strong record in teaching and research who understands the rigors and the professional culture of a top research intensive and comprehensive university such as ours.

In addition, the unique character of the university workplace requires a President committed to the principles of academic freedom and collegiality in university governance, as well as a respect for the diversity of research, teaching, and professional activities taking place across the breadth of our three campuses. The new President will be reviewing the tenure and promotion files of people responsible for carrying out much of the research and teaching mandate of the University. Thus, it is imperative that this person uphold and defend the importance of peer review. It also means the President must actively promote academic excellence by safeguarding the freedom of faculty and academic librarians to pursue independent research, to develop innovative pedagogies and to build library collections suitable to the comprehensive scope of critical inquiry that characterizes our unique institution.

The University of Toronto also requires a President committed to working with UTFA to help foster an appropriate degree of self-governance within academic units. Real and meaningful involvement of faculty and librarians in shaping the conditions under which they undertake their research, teaching, and professional activities is a core requirement of any university, and critical to maintaining the distinctive excellence of the U of T. The President will need to understand and advocate for collegial modes of governance that facilitate balance among scales and sites of authority. This includes knowledge of and respect for the role that UTFA has played at the University, as prescribed by the Memorandum of Agreement and as evidenced by decades of productive engagement between the Association and the Administration. An understanding of and

a willingness to work constructively with UTFA is a particularly important consideration given the changes to our MoA and the role of UTFA now being contemplated.

A President committed to the principles of academic freedom and collegiality will be best suited to promoting academic excellence not only within but also beyond the University. That means the new President must be comfortable with, and ready to engage in, public and political controversy if necessary. Current provincial initiatives to restructure post-secondary education, disputes over fair dealing and copyright, and the increasing role of private-sector donors in funding academic endeavors are all examples of challenges that require supple leadership responsive to the wider political-economic milieu. The leadership in question must be steadfast in defending the role of free scholarly inquiry as a valued public good in our society.

Finally, we would suggest the need to find someone who will be a committed advocate for the U of T's diverse and exceptional community of faculty, librarians, students, and staff.

Thank you for your consideration. I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Scott Prudham  
President