

UTFA Bargaining Report

University of Toronto Faculty Association January 13, 2009

Bargaining Report #1 for 2009–2010

So it begins...

Welcome to the first of a series of UTFA bargaining reports. We will be issuing several more in the coming weeks and months to share information and to continue seeking your advice. The formal bargaining cycle is just beginning; note that we have yet to meet with the Administration, and we have yet to announce the final composition of our own bargaining team. In fact, we are still refining our priorities for this round based on input from Council members, the bargaining team, the bargaining and workload surveys, and ongoing conversations with our members.

To stay informed, look for details on the team as well as insights into our priorities and the bargaining process in upcoming reports and on our website at <www.utfa.org> and in particular at the 'Bargaining Updates' link under 'Salaries, Benefits & Pensions' on the left side of the home page . If you wish to get involved, we encourage you to forward any and all comments and suggestions regarding the bargaining process and bargaining priorities to us at <bargaining@utfa.org>. And details on upcoming bargaining consultations are listed below. We hope you will attend one with some of your colleagues and engage in dialogue with us about UTFA bargaining.

Bargaining Consultation Meetings

Listed below are the meetings scheduled to date. More will be scheduled as needed. But whether you can attend a meeting or not, don't hesitate to send your ideas, suggestions, or views to us at UTFA directly at <bargaining@utfa.org> .

- January 22 (Thursday), 4–6 pm, University College, Room 179
- January 30 (Friday), 12–2 pm, Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2106
- February 2 (Monday) 10am–12 noon, UTM South Building, Council Chamber
- February 4 (Wednesday) 5–7 pm, UTSC Management Wing, Room 160

Toward progress in 2009...

Dear UTFA Colleagues:

The University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) has initiated the Salary, Benefits and Pensions negotiation process with the University of Toronto Administration. Our current two-year agreement expires on June 30, 2009, and in late November we gave formal notice to Governing Council of our wish to commence bargaining toward a new agreement, as prescribed in our Memorandum of Agreement. We also conveyed via Joint Committee a letter (reprinted below) in which we make clear that UTFA approaches this new round of bargaining in good faith and in a constructive spirit, with an expectation that substantive and meaningful face-to-face discussions will take place.

We make it equally clear that we do not see this round as merely 'business as usual'. Instead, we propose to the Administration that the challenges facing the entire University of Toronto community demand much more than simply exchanging documents and proceeding to mediation/arbitration. We believe that our members' interests, and indeed the interests of the institution and the values we represent, will be better served by serious face-to-face meetings and frank exchanges of views and arguments.

Early indications are that UTFA's proposal has been met with serious consideration by the Administration. That's good news and a positive signal. All members of UTFA can take some satisfaction in the work we have done to date, since the work of your Executive, the Council, and the bargaining team can only be effective with solid support from the faculty and librarians whom we represent. And over 87 per cent of respondents to the December salary, benefits and pensions survey indicated that meaningful face-to-face negotiations are either a high priority or a moderately high priority to UTFA members (see Figure 1).

Thanks so much to all who filled out both of the surveys last term, and particularly to those who took the time to write such thoughtful and insightful comments. These are of great help to us.

Nobody in UTFA is under any illusion that bargaining in 2009 will be easy or straightforward. The state of the economy; pressing issues faced by our members and their families; ongoing uncertainties

around our pension plan; and the enormous workload problems identified by UTFA’s recent consultations with faculty and librarians—all of these will require our best efforts to come to an agreement that genuinely rewards the work we do and responds to our members’ needs and aspirations.

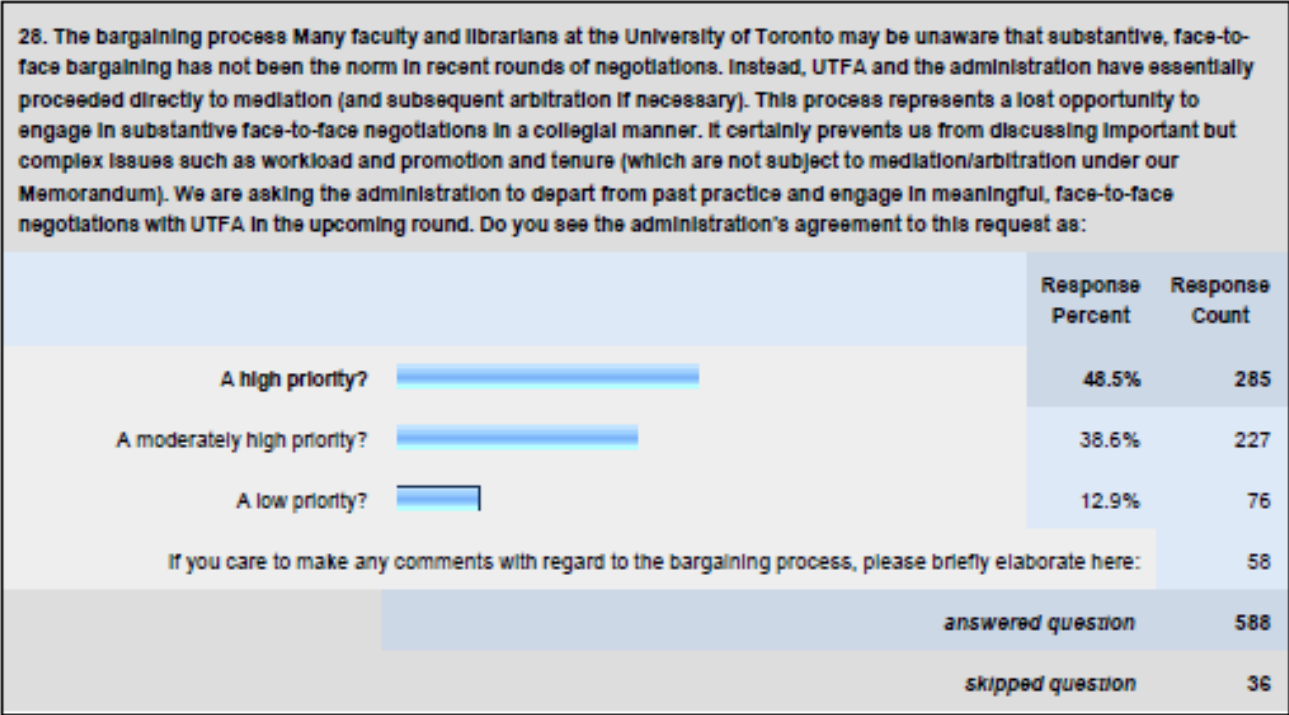
UTFA is approaching this round of bargaining with seriousness, determination and a commitment to the best values of the University and its place in society. We expect the Administration to do no less.

We thank you for your support in 2008 and wish all of our members a great 2009!

Scott Prudham,
 Vice-President Salary, Benefits and Pensions,
prudham@utfa.org

George Luste,
 UTFA President,
luste@utfa.org

Figure 1: Results of Question 28 from the December Survey Regarding the Bargaining Process



Background to bargaining – a year of listening and learning...

An organization like UTFA is only as strong as the involvement and engagement of its members. To that end, the Executive officers of UTFA and some energetic volunteers carried out an unprecedented program of consultation with UTFA members over the past year. The response has been terrific and extremely valuable.

- Our Membership Committee has conducted a series of workload consultations since the spring of 2008 with members of several constituencies on all three campuses. Over 200 members took part in these discussions. Committee members also participated in UTFA's series of lunches for newly hired faculty and librarians.
- The October 2008 UTFA survey on workload was well received with a healthy response. Dozens of UTFA members added lengthy, valuable written notes to their answers. The data gathered strengthen both our understanding of workload concerns and our positions on workload as we enter bargaining.
- The Salary, Benefits and Pensions committee has also surveyed the UTFA membership regarding bargaining priorities. The response rate was high, and while the data are still being analyzed, they will prove invaluable in the months ahead.
- UTFA president George Luste has been consulting widely with those interested in the special issues around the governance of our pension plan and their long-term implications. His provocative series of articles has opened many eyes to the challenges on that front.

...and the consultation continues!

That was just 2008! Drawing membership input into bargaining continues in the first months of 2009. A series of open bargaining consultation meetings has been scheduled to allow all UTFA members an opportunity to give their views on priorities or to provide advice to the bargaining committee. The dates, times and locations are listed above on page one. We encourage all readers of this bulletin to take advantage of these opportunities.

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December 4, 2008

Professor Cheryl Misak
Interim Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto
Room 225 Simcoe Hall,
27 King's College Circle
Toronto, ON. M5S 1A1

Dear Cheryl:

As you know, we have given written notice of our desire to negotiate, as per Article 6 of the Memorandum of Agreement.

There are many issues and challenges facing the University of Toronto, never more so than right now. Meaningful and substantive negotiations between UTFA and the administration will convey to the University community – and certainly to faculty and librarians – that both parties take these issues seriously. Meeting and negotiating in good faith is consistent with the Memorandum, and will help reflect and reinforce collegial relations between UTFA and the administration.

Our expectation is that UTFA and the administration will each engage in as many bargaining sessions as are necessary in a good faith effort to attempt to reach bilateral agreement on as many issues as we can, prior to invoking mediation/arbitration if that proves necessary.

Article 6 of the Memorandum indicates that we are to meet within four weeks of the notice to bargain (dated November 29th, 2008). Given that we are approaching the end of the term and the holiday break, UTFA is agreeable to postponing this first meeting until mid-to-late January, 2009. We propose specifically that we meet the week of January 19th. At that first meeting, we propose to arrange subsequent dates for our respective bargaining teams to meet, and to discuss how we wish to proceed in more detail, including bargaining priorities and any information that may be necessary to exchange in order to facilitate those discussions (also as per the Memorandum).

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Scott Prudham', is written over a horizontal line.

Scott Prudham
Vice-President, Salaries Benefits and Pensions
George Luste
President