

**The following email was sent to UTFA members on June 30, 2005 by the UTFA president.**

Dear Colleague:

By now, many of you will have received the June 27 issue of the U of T Bulletin, which sets out the Administration's position in the salary and benefit negotiations with UTFA, which are currently headed for arbitration.

Virtually the entire 400-word article is devoted to the Administration's "spin" on the issues in dispute. Thus, it is suggested that the Administration's proposal of a two-year agreement would provide "greater stability", that augmenting pension benefits for retirees would be "irresponsible," and that the positions advanced by the Administration have been "fair, fiscally responsible and reflective of the important work done by our faculty and librarians."

Singularly lacking is any presentation of the faculty's point of view. Why not?

When the Bulletin approached me for comment, I prepared a brief 340-word statement with the approval of my colleagues - somewhat shorter than the Administration's position as articulated in the Bulletin article (and on the UofT website) - covering the issues in dispute. Imagine my surprise when the Bulletin's editors, apparently even after consultation with the Administration, advised me that the Bulletin would not publish the text UTFA had prepared, but only an edited version, due to alleged "space constraints".

My initial surprise turned to anger when it was suggested that I should delete specific details, in particular, that the Administration was proposing a salary increase less than that agreed to at York, Waterloo, Western, Windsor, Queen's, McMaster, Nipissing, Lakehead, Carleton, and Brock. I made it clear to the Bulletin that UTFA's statement could not be abbreviated without diminishing the force of the faculty's position. The Bulletin refused to print UTFA's statement without editing and proceeded to report solely on the Administration's position.

The excuse of "space constraints" does not hold water. While refusing to print the faculty's views on issues considered so important that front page coverage is given to the Administration's position, the 16-page Bulletin managed to find a full third of a page for a photograph of a U of T boxing club trophy awarded over 30 years ago. Additional space was devoted to an article on a dress code covering necklines at South Carolina's Bob Jones University. And, ironically, space is made available for a notice headed

"We value your opinion".

Indeed, in publishing a one-sided version of events, the Bulletin has disregarded the terms of reference of its own mandate, as published on page 2: not only to convey accurate information on the official University position on important matters, but also to report on issues at the University "thoroughly and from all sides". In this regard, the Bulletin has published an excellent opinion piece by outgoing President Frank Iacobucci which underscores the importance of freedom of speech. President Iacobucci states:

"It is my firmly held view that our University has a continuing obligation to maintain and enhance the principles of freedom of speech, an inherent right, central to a civilized democracy. This freedom has been won in academic and political life after much struggle. We must continue to learn from our experiences. They can instruct us on how we might do even better at ensuring that the principles of free speech are promoted and that the debate is as full and complete as possible.

In discussing this issue, it is important to realize that the law concerning freedom of speech represents minimal standards. We go beyond these standards in our daily lives. I would hope that, given its leadership position in society, the University of Toronto would always seek ways to achieve more than the law requires. In short, I believe our University should be the exemplar of the best practices in the exercise of freedom of speech."

UTFA suggests that the Bulletin would do better to save the space it devotes to emphasizing plunging necklines and boxing trophies and instead commit itself to meeting the mandate of which it boasts, i.e. to report on issues "thoroughly and from all sides".

In the interests of fairness and to provide faculty with the means to make an informed assessment, we reproduce below the Bulletin's exposition of the Administration's position, together with UTFA's full, unedited response.

For future UTFA updates please see the links at [www.utfa.org](http://www.utfa.org)

Best wishes for the summer.

George Luste  
President  
University of Toronto Faculty Association

**Bulletin text in the June 27, 2005 edition, page 1.**

Salary and benefit negotiations between the university and the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) appear to be headed to arbitration after a mediation process ended recently without agreement.

The university's current agreement with UTFA, with respect to salary and benefits for faculty members and librarians at U of T, ends June 30. Negotiations began in February and moved into mediation in April but the mediator ended the process in late May after the two sides failed to reach agreement on a number of issues.

Areas of difference include the length of the agreement: UTFA is seeking a one-year agreement while the university is suggesting that a two-year agreement would provide greater stability as budgetary allocations across the post-secondary sector are negotiated with the government.

With respect to salaries, the university is proposing a 2.5 per cent increase in each of two years while UTFA's position calls for a four per cent increase in one year.

Pensions are also at issue with UTFA proposing increased augmentation of pension benefits for current retirees, provided in surplus years in the past.

However, now that market constraints and interest rates have created an unfunded liability in the pension plan, the university believes that agreeing to UTFA's position would be "irresponsible," said a memo to principals and deans from Professor Vivek Goel, vice-president and provost, and Professor Angela Hildyard, vice-president (human resources and equity).

". The positions advanced by the university have been fair, fiscally responsible and reflective of the important work done by our faculty and librarians," the memo said. "While the university remains open to reaching an appropriate agreement with UTFA through a resumption of negotiations, we are also prepared to take these issues to arbitration in a speedy manner."

The memo notes that the university has approached the negotiations aware that much of the new funding for universities announced in the recent provincial budget is restricted to specific funding envelopes and spread over several years. "Much of that funding is not new but is confirmation of funding that is already built into our current budget," it said.

The mediator's report containing the university and UTFA positions can be viewed online at [www.news.utoronto.ca/bulletin/](http://www.news.utoronto.ca/bulletin/) under the June 13 issue.

Editor's Note: The Bulletin approached UTFA for comment on these issues. Due to space constraints, The Bulletin was unable to publish the e-mailed response in its entirety. Professor George Luste, president of UTFA, would not permit the newspaper to excerpt his comments.

### **UTFA text as submitted on June 23, 2005**

We are pleased to have at last resolved the long-standing and thorny issue of ending mandatory retirement with the able assistance of mediator Kevin Burkett. However, it is regrettable that despite the assistance of the same mediator, we have not reached consensus with the Administration on salary, benefit and pension matters. We expect an arbitration panel to review these issues in the fall.

The Administration is suggesting a two-year agreement in the interest of stability. UTFA is receptive to this proposal but only if the terms of the agreement are fair. In our view, currently they are not. Thus, for example, the Administration claims that the positions it has advanced are "reflective of the important work done by our faculty and librarians," repeatedly asserting that the University of Toronto is the leader in the post-secondary sector in Canada, but its proposal is for an annual salary increase of only 2.5 per cent. This is less than has been recently agreed to at other Ontario universities such as York, Waterloo, Western, Windsor, Queen's, McMaster, Nipissing, Lakehead, Carleton, and Brock. Indeed, the Administration's salary proposal amounts to the lowest increase in Ontario, and would do next to nothing to catch up U of T faculty for the losses to inflation of about 7.5 per cent over the past eleven years.

As for pension benefits, contrary to the pattern in previous negotiations, the Administration has refused to continue the augmentation of retirees' pensions so that their value is maintained relative to inflation, and as a result retired faculty stand to lose 25 per cent of the increase in inflation during the coming year. The Administration maintains that it agreed to full augmentation only when the pension fund was in surplus. However, the pension plan is not in surplus today due to the fact that for more than a decade the Administration diverted its pension contributions to other areas of spending.

UTFA will be addressing the Administration's proposals more fully in a newsletter in the Fall which will be forwarded to all faculty and librarians.