

September 23, 2011 email to all UTFA members

Dear colleagues,

As is now obvious, attempts at the negotiating table to secure fair, accountable, productive and efficient bargaining over the important conditions that shape our work as scholars, teachers and professionals have to date been refused by the Administration.

By this point, you have all had the opportunity to read and consider the bargaining team's open letter to the Administration and two responses from the Administration, initiated by the Provost. We understand more are to come.

We welcome the opportunity for a collegial discussion and debate among faculty and librarians over the adequacy of the existing Memorandum of Agreement when it comes to matters other than compensation and workload. While the Administration has recently entered the public debate, at the end of the day the decision about whether the existing Memorandum serves the needs of the faculty and librarians and of the university as a whole, and about what kind of change might be required, is one that is ours to make.

Today, we are writing to report that UTFA's Council (at the September 22 meeting) reinforced its resolve to securing change, by passing the following resolution:

We, the members of UTFA's Council, re-affirm our commitment to securing a fair bargaining process for negotiating faculty and librarian terms and conditions of employment with the University of Toronto Administration. All negotiations must provide for accountability, comprehensiveness, rigour, good faith bargaining, and timely dispute resolution. UTFA Council therefore calls on the University of Toronto Administration to agree to negotiate all terms and conditions of faculty and librarian employment using our existing Article 6 process, including access to third party mediation and arbitration (if and as necessary).

We will continue in the days and weeks to come to engage the Administration in negotiations over the crucial matters which affect us all, including changes to the Memorandum as well as the important matters of compensation already prescribed by the bargaining process. In addition, however, ongoing discussion and debate in the wider community is absolutely crucial. It is vital that this take place in a reasoned, respectful, inclusive and collegial fashion, and that we take sufficient time to engage in fulsome dialogue about developments to this point as well as our options going forward. Now is no time to abandon the sort of careful, reasoned and respectful discourse that helps to define us as a community. UTFA is committed to facilitating and participating in these discussions, so that the issues, and choices, are clear to all.

Posted on the UTFA website (on the home page at www.utfa.org or directly via http://www.utfa.org/sites/default/files/webfiles/pdf_files/Inf%20Rep-19%20-%20FAQ%20re%20Frozen%20Policies%2C%20etc%20September%2023%202011.pdf)you will find an FAQ explanation and clarification on key points raised in recent public exchanges with the Administration, namely, how the current Memorandum works, and whether there is a need to modernize and improve it.

More information and explanation from UTFA will follow in the form of bargaining bulletins and information reports, including a response to the views coming from the office of the Provost on UTFA's proposals for improvements to the tenure and governance processes.

In addition, we wish to convey our schedule for outreach, intended to provide opportunity for questions and answers and to enable colleagues to engage with one another over the issues, as follows:

- i. Peer-based dialogue in departments, colleges and other academic units, in many instances led by UTFA constituency reps and/or members of our Executive.
- ii. A series of three open forums on UTFA and its current and future role at the University of Toronto. These will take place in October.
 - The first, at UTSC, will take place from 3 to 5 pm on Tuesday, October 11.
 - The second, at St. George, will take place from 3 to 5 pm on Thursday, October 20.
 - The third, at UTM, will take place from 3 to 5 pm on Thursday, October 27 .

All faculty and librarians are welcome at all of these forums. Room locations will be announced in a subsequent communication.

We urge you to engage in direct discussion and debate with colleagues, in your own academic units as well as in other units. If you would like someone from our bargaining team or from our Executive or Membership Committees to meet with you and your colleagues, please do let us know and we will make sure someone comes to talk with you. We are at an important moment, and UTFA is committed to ensuring that faculty and librarians understand the issues and work through their questions and concerns substantively and respectfully.

We are personally committed to the principles that UTFA engage in good faith, collegial negotiations with the University of Toronto Administration and that we deal with the substantive content of our proposals as organic living documents that can and should be shaped in the bargaining process. But we need a willing partner in bargaining to ensure that our negotiations are fair and productive.

All feedback related to our ongoing negotiations is welcome at bargaining@utfa.org

Sincerely,

George Luste
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President, University of Toronto Faculty Association

Scott Prudham
Professor, Department of Geography and Centre for Environment
Vice-President, Salaries, Benefits and Pensions, UTFA