

Expanded UTFA Biographical Statement

Presidential Campaign 2016

Election: March 16 – April 5, 2016

My name is Cynthia Messenger. I am currently completing a 6-year term as Vice-President, Grievances, at UTFA. As a highly experienced senior leader at UTFA, I am taking the logical next step—I am running for president. I have served as chair of the following standing committees: Status of Women, Teaching Stream, and Appointments. I first became acquainted with UTFA as a guest at Executive and Council meetings, chairing an ad hoc committee that explored the concerns of contract faculty (2000-2001).

If I win the election, I will be only the third woman to serve as president in UTFA's long history. The two women who served as president were Bonnie Horne (1990-1992) and Rhonda Love (2000-2002). They served for a total of four years.

Here are the questions I would pursue as president:

What kinds of pension reform would best serve our members? How can we best achieve much-needed policy change for librarians? How could UTFA stimulate a University-wide conversation on re-visioning equity and diversity at U of T? How do we address inequities in allocation of resources on all three campuses, but especially at UTM and UTSC? How can UTFA effectively articulate concerns about the funding of research across the disciplines? How do we create a dialogue with government on issues that include the working conditions of contract faculty and the funding of undergraduate education? How can the Faculty Association improve outreach to members and encourage greater inclusiveness at U of T?

Here are some of my achievements at UTFA:

Over more than 12 years at UTFA, I have used my deep knowledge of policy and practice, my considerable negotiating experience, my skill creating compelling oral and written arguments, and my ability to work with diverse teams of colleagues and staff to lead significant policy change and to challenge unfair process. I have collegially engaged all levels of University administration and mediators/arbitrators, and have successfully argued in behalf of all three streams and the retired.

Below is a brief selection of activities and achievements that *concretely* demonstrate the breadth of my negotiating experience, my commitment to collegial governance, and my efforts to advance the professions of faculty and librarians. My negotiations were informed by my knowledge of policy and my ability to work collegially with the University Administration, while never shrinking from tough bargaining when it was necessary:

- 1. I have a great deal of experience on UTFA teams that negotiated salaries, benefits, pensions (and workload more recently) in the following rounds: 2015-2017; 2011-2014 (joined team to advise on policy); 2009-2011; 2007-2008 (served as alternate). I have brought to the table knowledge of policy and the historical context for what has**

been argued and achieved in the past, especially through grievances. In these negotiations, I advocated for all three streams, including retirees. In the future, policy will be negotiated through the new SJAC process—and therefore faculty leading that process must be extremely knowledgeable about policy and experienced in handling the details of policy change.

Note: Over the years, I have attended various conferences on the following relevant topics: bargaining in the public sector, pensions, collective bargaining, mediation and arbitration, and human rights and accommodation (OCUFA, CAUT, and Lancaster Conferences, both conventional and audio conferences).

2. **I was Chief Negotiator for a landmark negotiation, completed in December 2014, as part of the Special Joint Advisory Committee (SJAC) process.**
 - a) I led the part of the negotiation that focused on teaching stream policy.
 - b) I also served on the main SJAC team and advised our tenure subcommittee on tenure policy, drawing on years of experience as Vice-President, Grievances, in which post I devoted approximately 70 or 80% of my time to the concerns of the tenure stream.
 - c) The SJAC teaching stream negotiation produced historically significant change in policy that repositioned the teaching stream through professorial title and rank and an array of other policy changes, including the protection in policy of the right to receive credit for discipline-based scholarship related to teaching.
 - d) In this kind of policy negotiation, the chief negotiator must be able to engage in detailed discussions with the Univ. Administration right at the table. The chief negotiator is always assisted by an able team, but the burden on the negotiator is considerable.
 - e) I am Chief Negotiator once again: this time for the policy on promotion to full professor in the teaching stream. I am part of an excellent team: Claude Evans (French Studies at UTM), Jun Nogami (Materials Science and Engineering), and Terezia Zoric (Social Justice Education, OISE). It is becoming clear that the Policy on Promotion used in the tenure stream is also in need of revision.

3. **I have been an effective advocate for the integration of teaching and research.**
 - a) Working with UTFA counsel, the UTFA president and I sent the Provost a detailed critique (2015) of the Provost's draft revision to the Provostial Guidelines for Developing Written Assessments of Effectiveness in Teaching in Tenure and Promotion Decisions, originally issued in 2003. Many faculty and librarians who serve on UTFA's committees expressed alarm on reading the Provost's revisions. The successful result of UTFA's protest is this: the Provost is now reconsidering the revisions, and they will not be moved through governance.
 - b) I oversaw and participated in tenure workshops for many years, advising pre-tenure candidates on both the interim review and the tenure review.
 - c) Working with both in-house UTFA counsel and external lawyers, I took the lead on an Association Grievance based on academic freedom that resulted in the recognition

of discipline-based scholarship for the teaching stream. (This grievance had been filed by colleagues before I took it over as Teaching Stream Cmte Chair.)

- d) As V-P, Grievances, I have repeatedly advocated for more frequent recognition of excellence in teaching in tenure files.
 - e) Working with the members of the Teaching Stream Cmte and the Executive, I organized the first UTFA-sponsored University-wide symposium on teaching (April 28 & 29, 2006, St. Michael's College). This was one of the first university-wide teaching conferences to be held at U of T. Over 140 faculty and librarians attended, in addition to then-Provost Vivek Goel and then-president David Naylor.
 - f) Working closely with the president of UTFA, librarians, and counsel, I organized "Workload, Tenure, Promotion, Security and Rank: A Symposium on Revising U of T's Appointments Policy," February 29, 2008, St. Michael's College. This symposium offered 14 presentations/panels and featured U of T faculty, faculty from other Canadian universities, senior officers of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and senior legal counsel from Sack, Goldblatt, Mitchell (now Goldblatt Partners). Goals of the 2008 symposium: to educate UTFA's members on the need for policy reform; to encourage feedback from members on important issues related to policy; to hear policy analysis from legal counsel on issues such as tenure appeals; to raise the level of debate on policy matters. I delivered a 30-minute paper at this symposium: "Policy Change Needed for the Teaching Stream." Note: Early versions of some of the changes to the tenure review process achieved through SJAC were proposed at this symposium.
 - g) Working with UTFA staff and members of various standing committees, I organized "Enhancing Teaching and Learning: Ten Years of Successful Collaboration." Tenth-anniversary celebration of the formation of the teaching stream. Sept. 24, 2009. Speakers included President David Naylor, Provost Cheryl Misak, Vice-Provost Edith Hillan, members of the UTFA Executive, and members of U of T's teaching stream.
4. **I have advocated successfully for U of T's academic librarians.**
- a) I played a small role in helping the librarians gain a seat on the UTFA Executive.
 - b) I was privileged to serve on the Librarians' Joint Committee in 2007-2008.
 - c) On the Joint Working Group on Workload and Work Life Balance (2007-2010), I worked closely with librarian reps.
 - d) I learned about the weaknesses in librarians' appointments policy by arguing their grievances (resolved more than once through mediation with William Kaplan).
5. **Working with UTFA lawyers, I helped draft the FAS Association Grievance that challenged academic planning in 2010.**
- This Association grievance confronted the abuse of administrative authority and helped faculty overturn ill-conceived academic restructuring that would have permanently scarred an array of humanities departments at the University. It is one of the few grievances in UTFA's history that worked in concert with

the dramatic, spontaneous, and highly effective collegial response of faculty and librarians.

- This grievance informed SJAC negotiations on academic restructuring.

6. As Vice-President, I have enhanced the Grievance portfolio's ability to serve members.

- a) With more funds available in recent years, UTFA has been able to provide vigorous legal support for grievances.
- b) A database now organizes grievance files and has greatly improved record-keeping.
- c) Using in-house counsel, some of whom I helped train, UTFA has reduced its dependence on external legal advice.
- d) I have assisted legal counsel with high-profile cases at the Grievance Review Panel. For example, I sat with Michael Mitchell (former partner at Sack, Goldblatt, Mitchell) as he faced the GRP in the case UTFA brought in response to President Naylor's overturning four positive tenure recommendations in his first year in office. Also at the GRP, I joined Jim MacDonald, senior partner at Mr. Mitchell's firm, as he successfully argued a case related to tenure appeals. I have assisted with or overseen several tenure appeals.

Brief academic bio: I have been teaching at U of T for 21 years. I taught on contract between 1995 and 2001 (part-time for 6 years at UTM), when I was appointed lecturer in the teaching stream on the St. George campus. I was advanced to senior lecturer in 2004 and became Associate Professor, Teaching Stream in 2015. I am currently director of the Writing and Rhetoric minor program at Innis College, an interdisciplinary program I designed and spearheaded, working with colleagues and an advisory committee comprising faculty from the humanities, Rotman Commerce, and the social sciences. I have developed several upper level, highly rated courses, including the following: JEI 206H, Writing English Essays (jointly offered with the Dept of English); INI 203Y, Foundations of Written Discourse; INI 301H, Rhetoric and Print Media; INI 305H Word and Image in Modern Writing (on ekphrasis); INI 409H: Rhetoric and Public Affairs: Writing a Conference Paper (a special topics course in which students researched, wrote, and presented a conference paper to a group of 40 faculty and student attendees; and INI 413H, Visual Rhetoric of the Aesthetic Movement (new course). These courses attract high-achieving students from across the disciplines. I have also developed writing courses for professionals in the workplace. My published literary scholarship on Canadian literature and the American poet Elizabeth Bishop, in the form of refereed articles, review articles, encyclopedia articles, and reviews, has been cited widely in scholarly articles, book chapters, bibliographies, and dissertations.

At various points in the past, I worked as a writing consultant at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, and at what were then called the Management Board Secretariat and the Ministry of Public Safety and Security. I was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for my work in the L-G's office, where I served during the tenure of the Honourable Hilary Weston. I received the award from the Honourable James Bartleman. The citation reads as follows: "For services in communications, writing and editorial support to the Crown through the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and as a leading educator at Innis College, University of Toronto."