

JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AND URSULA FRANKLIN, PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH, BLANCHE LEMCO VAN GINKEL AND CICELY WATSON - April, 2002

The University of Toronto, Ursula Franklin, Phyllis Grosskurth, Blanche Lemco van Ginkel and Cicely Watson have agreed to settle a lawsuit brought last year on behalf of a group of retired U of T female faculty and librarians. The retirees alleged that the university had been unjustly enriched by paying them less than men performing the same work.

The settlement will benefit approximately 60 tenure and tenure-stream professors who retired from the university at normal retirement age or under one of the university's early retirement options and who were not included in the university's 1989 Faculty Salary Review Process. The parties have agreed that the terms of the settlement will be kept confidential. The university will be contacting eligible women before July 1, 2002.

U of T Vice-Provost Vivek Goel said the university recognized that in the past many of its female faculty have faced obstacles and barriers in their careers because of their gender. "Despite our efforts to promote and advance gender-equity principles," Goel said, "the results of the two past salary review processes indicate that the university had failed to achieve fairness in ensuring that all faculty members of similar accomplishment and seniority within the same discipline received similar compensation regardless of their gender."

Ursula Franklin, University Professor Emerita, said "The settlement is welcome. A mediated settlement will benefit more people than would have been possible through the court case," she said. "It also ensures that the retired women will immediately benefit, which is especially important as many of them are in their eighties and nineties."

The university acknowledged that despite its efforts to comply with all its legal obligations, at times those efforts have not always served to prevent gender-based inequities. Gender-based salary discrepancies at the university did not result from any conscious effort or intent to discriminate on the part of the university.

"U of T is committed to fostering principles of equal opportunity, equity and justice, and to advancing these principles both within its own community and within society at large", said Angela Hildyard, vice-president, human resources and participant in the mediation. "We adopted a formal employment equity policy in 1991 and we now have a full-time employment equity co-ordinator. More recently we upgraded to full-time the status-of-women officer position. Rigorous efforts are made to ensure that all key academic decision-making processes are fair and reflect the university's strong commitment to gender equity."

The retired female professors had strongly urged the inclusion of retired librarians in the settlement. U of T was not prepared to include librarians in the settlement on the basis that pay equity legislation governing such groups was not introduced until 1988. Similarly, although the retired faculty members had sought to include retirees from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education ("OISE"), the university was not prepared to see this group included as OISE had been independent from U of T during the time period covered by the claim and OISE faculty were governed by a collective agreement which included defined pay scales by rank.

The university and the retired female professors agreed that the settlement now brings closure to the issue.