

May 25, 2021

Ana Serrano
President and Vice Chancellor
OCAD University
100 McCaul Street
Toronto, ON M5T 1W1

VIA EMAIL: serrano@ocadu.ca

Dear President Serrano:

The University of New Brunswick Association of Academic Librarians and Archivists (UNBAALA) is alarmed to hear about the sudden elimination of six positions in the OCADU Library, a third of its total staff. As a result of this academic restructuring, four long-serving, senior librarians have been notified that their employment will be terminated, effective June 1st, 2021. Although it is reported that new positions will be created, the lack of consultation with critical stakeholders and the absence of an open and transparent process run contrary to principles of collegial governance and the OPSEU Local 576 collective bargaining agreement.

We note that the topic of the academic restructuring at the University of Alberta was the focus of the March issue of the CAUT Bulletin. The feature states that, similar to OCAD, **“Despite the enormity of the proposed changes, staff have been largely cut out of the process.”**¹

Our experience with academic restructuring has informed us that the process must be collegial and involve all levels of staff. Restructuring an academic unit within the time-frame of a couple of months could not possibly provide adequate time for full consultation and engagement with all parties affected by the proposed changes.

We are also dismayed by the statement that the "new structure aligns with the decolonization approach by flattening hierarchies and promoting a peer-to-peer environment."² The process of decolonization requires a thoughtful and consultative process and should not be used as a rationale for staff lay-offs.

Our membership urges the OCADU administration to reinstate the affected librarians and engage in meaningful and participatory consultation on a reenvisioning of the Library. We extend our support and solidarity to those affected, Marta Chudolinska, Alex Homanchuk, Daniel Payne and Victoria Sigurdson, during this difficult time. In an age of misinformation and disinformation, the expertise of librarians is needed even more than ever to support student success and foster critical thinking.

¹ Canadian Association of University Teachers. (March 2021). Academic restructuring at the University of Alberta. <https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2021/03/academic-restructuring-university-alberta>

² OCAD University. (May 14 2021) OCAD U issues statement on library reorganization. <https://www.ocadu.ca/news/ocad-u-issues-statement-library-reorganization>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Merle Steeves". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Merle Steeves

President, University of New Brunswick Association of Academic Librarians and Archivists

Cc:

Jamie Watt, Chair, OCAD University Board of Governors (jwatt@navltd.com)

Caroline Langill, OCAD Vice-President, Academic & Provost (clangill@ocadu.ca)

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