



The University of Winnipeg Faculty  
Association

25 May 2021

Ana Serrano, President and Vice-Chancellor  
Office of the President, OCAD University  
100 McCaul St., Toronto, ON, M5T 1W1

Dear President Serrano,

I am writing to you today as President of the University of Winnipeg Faculty Association to urge you to reinstate the four librarians who were laid off at OCADU as part of library restructuring. My librarian colleagues here at the University of Winnipeg – invaluable fellow researchers, teachers, contributors to the professional and intellectual life of our institution, and fellow members of our faculty association – brought this issue to my attention. Members of our faculty association are deeply concerned with these changes to OCADU's library and the ways in which they were implemented.

As a union leader, faculty member, and Department Chair at a mid-size, public university, I am aware of the financial pressures that face University administrators. However, I am also aware of the crucial role that librarians play, even more so in this age of myriad digital resources, and the critical role of institutional memory and continuity. Perhaps most importantly, guiding principles of fairness should be behind every decision made at a University, since our institutions gain their privileged position in our society from their commitment to scientific and scholarly knowledge, social and cultural outreach, and equity and justice. Universities *must* be model employers, organizations, and institutions to retain their position. This means a commitment to justice and equity in all aspects of their operation.

I have read your letter on these issues dated 14 May alongside the Care2 Petition and letters from colleagues at other institutions. Most importantly, the open letter from the former OCADU University Librarian Jill Patrick was eye-opening. It is unfortunate that her expertise was not sought on these changes to the library's structure and staffing. From these letters, I conclude in concert with colleagues from across Canada that principles of integrity, respect, and collegial governance were not followed in this process.

I am also surprised that such major changes would take place *during a pandemic*. Your experience at OCADU can be not so different than ours at UWinnipeg: service and teaching work has ballooned over the last fifteen months, and faculty members and other stakeholders are balancing work with personal challenges of an extraordinary nature. In this sort of environment,

meaningful consultation is not only challenging, it may be impossible. If drastic changes are absolutely necessary during these fraught times, then drastically different consultations and processes are necessary as well.

At this time and in this context, experience and continuity (67 years of experience are priceless!) are even more crucial to institutions as we emerge from the pandemic and look to a complex immediate future where University and University graduates will be more important than ever. Now, with the future so uncertain, is the time for true and transparent consultation that engages meaningfully and completely with all library stakeholders: administration, staff, faculty, students, and the public.

On behalf of *all members* of the University of Winnipeg Faculty Association – professors, teachers, instructors, counsellors, coaches, and librarians – I call on you and the OCADU administration to reinstate Daniel Payne, Marta Chudolinska, Victoria Sigurdson, and Alex Homanchuk and to embrace respect, academic integrity, and a commitment to collegial governance as key components of all re-structuring proposals at the University.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter J. Miller, Associate Professor, Department of Classics  
President, University of Winnipeg Faculty Association

cc: Caroline Langill, Vice President and Provost Academic, OCADU  
cc: Tony White, University Librarian, OCADU  
cc: Jaime Watt, Chair, Board of Governors, OCADU