

ARLIS/NA

ART LIBRARIES SOCIETY of NORTH AMERICA

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

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

To President Serrano,

We are writing on behalf of the Ontario chapter and the Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec (MOQ) chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) to express our concern and dismay at the news that four highly knowledgeable, experienced and committed art information professionals have had their jobs terminated as a result of the restructuring of the OCADU Library. Our organizations are regional chapters of an international association of art information professionals with members at art-specialized libraries and archives across Ontario and Quebec, at art and design universities, large academic universities, museums and other institutions.

The many open letters sent to you from faculty associations and unions have addressed the situation in terms of the concerns it raises about labour practices and collegial governance in academic communities. Our members, as well as our sister chapters in Canada, are deeply concerned by these aspects, and are paying close attention to OCADFA and OPSEU Local 576 communications.

What we are able to add to these letters, as an association of art information professionals, is insight from our membership's special expertise in the domain of art libraries and archives. We hold the deep conviction that the excellence of art libraries and archives like the OCADU Library subsists not only in the strength of their collections, but in the people who staff them. Art information professionals are uniquely expert in the intersection of information practices, education, the visual arts and the humanities. This alone makes them a tremendous asset to any academic community, but it is their embedded relationship within a particular community that makes them irreplaceable. How can the OCADU library possibly excel when it has eliminated the staff with the deepest knowledge of and commitment to its academic community? At a time of leadership transition, how can the library thrive when such damage has been done to its roots? We are concerned not only about the treatment of our four longstanding colleagues, but about the prospects for the proposed new hires (BIPOC or otherwise), who would be joining a profoundly destabilized institution.

For the sake of your library's future success, we urge you to revisit this very destructive course of action. We look forward to your reply.

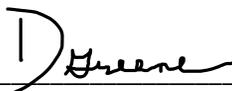
Sincerely,



Michelle Johnson, Chair
ARLIS/NA Ontario



Paulina Rousseau, Ex-Officio
Liaison to ARLIS/NA Canada
ARLIS/NA Ontario



David Greene, Chair
ARLIS/NA MOQ



John Latour, Vice Chair
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Dr. Rachel Harris, Ex-Officio
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Cc: Tony White, Caroline Langill, Jamie Watt, Min Sook Lee