



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

May 14, 2021

BY EMAIL: serrano@ocadu.org

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

RE: Decision to terminate four senior librarians and eliminate two library positions at OCADU

Dear President Serrano,

We are writing to express our dismay regarding OCAD University's decision on May 4th to lay off four senior academic librarians (effective June 1st) as part of the Administration's restructuring plans for the library.

We acknowledge the pressures on universities to make changes to university libraries in the face of rapidly changing technology, and evolving curriculum and research needs. However, collegial governance is one of the key and unifying principles for academic institutions across Canada. We decry the lack of meaningful consultation with library staff, library users and OPSEU Local 576, which represents OCADU's library workers, on the reorganization of OCAD University's library. This lack of consultation raises serious questions about the extent to which OCAD's Administration understands how important collegial processes are for demonstrating respect for the diverse range of professionals that are critical to the University's academic mission.

The termination of four senior librarians and elimination of two library positions at OCADU seriously depletes very important expertise. Librarians bring unique and valuable skills to academic institutions, including instruction and guidance in information literacy to improve students' learning and expertise in research methods and tools across all disciplines. They develop the institution's collections and promote the access to and use of these collections—all while adapting and pivoting to keep libraries current with the latest technologies and maintaining the collections and research practices that have been central to academic libraries for decades. The reorganization without meaningful consultation that included librarians devalues the skills and knowledge librarians bring to the institution.

This failure to engage with staff is also clearly in violation of the spirit and word of OCADU's negotiated agreement with OPSEU Local 576, which is explicit about the importance of collegial governance and treating all employees with "dignity, respect, fairness, equality and integrity".

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We would like to echo the concerns raised by the OCAD Faculty Association. We strongly urge you to demonstrate that OCADU supports and upholds the principles of collegial decision-making and mutual respect by taking the following actions:

- Cease all plans to restructure and reinstate the four academic librarians until there has been a thorough review of best practices and community needs.
- Involve OCADU librarians, faculty and students in any major library reorganization; and
- Invest in OCADU's library and resources.

In almost every university in this country, librarians are considered academic staff because their pedagogical role is as significant as other faculty at post-secondary institutions. Instead of gutting a core resource that supports student learning, curriculum development and delivery, and faculty research, we agree with the OCAD Faculty Association that OCAD should be supporting librarians and improving the quality of the University's library.

Yours sincerely,



Brenda Austin-Smith
President



David Robinson
Executive Director

/ch

c.c.: Jamie Watt, Chair, OCAD University Board of Governors, jwatt@navltd.com
Caroline Langill, OCAD Vice-President, Academic & Provost, clangill@ocadu.ca
Tony White, OCAD University Librarian, twhite@ocadu.ca
Min Sook Lee, President, OCAD Faculty Association, minsooklee@faculty.ocadu.ca
Chris Thompson, President, OPSEU Local 576, cthompson@ocadu.ca