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Cc: Caroline Langill, Vice President and Provost Academic, OCAD U
Cc: Jamie Watt, Chair, OCAD U Board of Governors and
Cc: Tony White, University Librarian

President Serrano:

We, the librarians and archivist members of the University of Guelph Faculty Association, are writing to urge the OCAD University administration to halt the plans to restructure and immediately reinstate our esteemed librarian colleagues, Daniel Payne, Marta Chudolinska, Victoria Sigurdson, and Alex Homanchuk and the two vacant library positions.

In its statement from May 14, 2021, "OCAD U issues statement on Library reorganization," the OCAD U has claimed that there has been much "misinformation" about the "library reorganization", arguing that "the new structure aligns with the decolonization approach by flattening hierarchies and promoting a peer-to-peer environment." To frame this cruel restructuring, which resulted in aggressive terminations of valued members of the OCAD U community, as aligning with "the decolonization approach" is appalling. To invoke decolonization in this context is a gross misappropriation of the term.

The University's claim that "these changes will lead to a more equitable and student-focused structure" fails to recognize the collective expertise, institutional knowledge, and deep relationships with the OCAD U community -- including students -- that the four terminated OCAD U librarians have built. It is egregious to position the termination of valued members of the OCAD U community as equitable or student-focused; this action undermines the University's strategic direction of "creating an inclusive, diverse, equitable and global institution." While it may support "the institutional goal of achieving financial stability," it is difficult to see how terminating staff with over 70 years of collective experience could "lead to a better student experience." Libraries are built on relationships with their communities. As Librarian Emeritus Jill Patrick has stated, this loss will have a damaging impact on students: "The precipitative loss of so much expertise, at one time, represents a significant risk for the University."

This decision is not about decolonization or students; it is about getting rid of senior librarians in order to save money.

We express full solidarity with the four librarians, who are members of OPSEU Local 576, the OCAD Faculty Association, the OCAD U Student Union Board of Directors, and other library unions, associations, and workers across the province who have expressed their dismay and serious concern regarding this restructuring. In addition, we echo the demands of the OCAD Faculty Association in urging the OCAD U administration to take the following actions:

- Reinstate the four academic librarians and cease all plans to restructure until there has been a thorough review of best practices and community needs

- Involve OCAD U librarians, faculty, and students in any major library reorganization
- Invest in OCAD U's Library and resources
- Demonstrate that OCAD U supports and upholds the academic principles of collegial decision-making and mutual respect

In solidarity,

The librarian and archivist members of the University of Guelph Faculty Association