



May 20, 2021

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

BY EMAIL: [aserrano@ocadu.ca](mailto:aserrano@ocadu.ca)

Dear President Serrano,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association (UWOFA), including Librarians and Archivists, we are writing to express our dismay with respect to the elimination of six positions in the OCADU Dorothy H. Hoover Library. This figure includes four incumbent staff who collectively represent nearly seventy years of accomplished service to OCADU.

UWOFA has serious concerns about the process undertaken under the guise of departmental restructuring. The manner in which this process has been handled is an affront to collegial governance and makes a mockery of the notion of due process and consultation. Library staff were kept in the dark as to what plans for a “Library Department Restructuring” might entail, and only learned of the details at an all-staff meeting on May 4th, 2021. This meeting was immediately preceded by the extant three Library Heads and Learning Zone Librarian being informed that their positions were eliminated as of June 1, 2021 - less than one month’s notice.

Reorganization in academic environments is a fact of life, and at the best of times can be a challenging time for all involved. However, these processes must occur over a period of time that allows for collegial engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff and faculty. Restructuring should occur in a manner that respects the experience and expertise of those who work in the organization and results in a structure that meets users’ needs and expectations. This will not be the case at OCADU. The four longest-serving librarians have been unceremoniously cast aside in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century. It is difficult to imagine how the remaining staff will ever again feel secure in and valued by their workplace.

While the OCADU library may be modest in the context of the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL), it is a diverse and important collection that encompasses the pedagogical mandate of the institution which it serves. Developing this collection, serving the OCADU community, and meeting accreditation standards requires a degree of expertise and specialization

that does not spontaneously materialize. It is grown and nurtured, carefully, and deliberately, and cannot easily be rebuilt once destroyed.

A statement issued by the OCADU on May 4th states “The new structure aligns with the decolonization approach by flattening hierarchies and promoting a peer-to-peer environment”. This statement, without further context, is disrespectful to Indigenous groups and undermines institutions who are genuinely working towards decolonizing their organizations.

UWOFA urges you to reconsider the decision to eliminate the six librarian positions. While restoring these positions would not fully repair the shattered trust, this remedy together with adopting and respecting a transparent, consultative, and collegial process would be less difficult than the task of rebuilding a newly poisoned workplace that could remain so for generations.

Sincerely,



Beth MacDougall-Shackleton  
President, UWOFA

Courtney Waugh  
Research and Scholarly Communication Librarian

Kelly Hatch  
Teaching and Learning Librarian

Stephen Spong  
Teaching and Learning Librarian

Cc: Jaime Watt, Chair, OCAD University Board of Governors, [jwatt@navltd.com](mailto:jwatt@navltd.com)  
Caroline Langill, Vice President Academic and Provost, OCAD University, [clangill@ocadu.ca](mailto:clangill@ocadu.ca)  
Tony White, University Librarian, OCAD University, [twhite@ocadu.ca](mailto:twhite@ocadu.ca)  
Min Seok Lee, President, OCAD Faculty Association, [minsooklee@faculty.ocadu.ca](mailto:minsooklee@faculty.ocadu.ca)  
Chris Thompson, President, OPSEU Local 576, [cthompson@ocadu.ca](mailto:cthompson@ocadu.ca)