

**UPEIFA**  
UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
**FACULTY ASSOCIATION**

May 25, 2021

Ms. Ana Serrano  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
OCAD University,  
Toronto, ON

Dear President Serrano:

We write on behalf of our union's membership, including the academic librarians at UPEI's Robertson Library, to share our deep alarm at the recently-announced "restructuring" of the OCAD University Library and Learning Zone. When OCAD U functions well, Toronto, Ontario, and, indeed, all of Canada benefit greatly, but, by the same token, when OCAD U suffers, the impacts ripple far beyond your university's walls: the ill-conceived and poorly-executed attempt to reshape library services at OCAD U stands as an unfortunate case in point, and we join with academic and library colleagues across the country in condemning the measures recently announced by OCAD U University Librarian Mr. Tony White.

In doing so, we note that Mr. White's actions have also been strongly criticized by many within the OCAD U community, including the campus labour unions and the Student Union. The interests being served by these measures are obviously not those of the students, faculty, or the other academic staff at OCAD U, since the representative bodies of these groups have all publicly stated that they were not properly consulted about what is being done and disagree with it vehemently.

Quite apart from the clearly-apparent lack of care and consultation in the preparation of these measures, the evident callousness with which they are being executed is also deplorable. The abrupt termination of the careers of librarian members of your academic community — who have, between them, dedicated decades of service to OCAD U — in the middle of a public health emergency, offers further indication of a mindset in some parts of your administrative ranks that is so blinkered and insensitive as to threaten serious additional harm to OCAD U if it is not adjusted drastically and quickly.

Before closing, we should also note that it is extremely insulting and irresponsible to claim that a clumsy assault on the Library by some OCAD U administrators is somehow in keeping with the principles of "decolonization."

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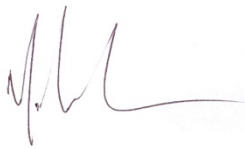
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In fact, this decision, with its narrow, technocratic, and top-down conception and execution, models exactly the type of biased and autocratic administrative behaviour that those engaged in the anti-colonial struggle have courageously resisted for decades. A Newspeak attempt to co-opt their efforts to justify a bungled management decision is in painfully bad taste.

Clearly, then, the reckless words and deeds of a (hopefully) small handful of misguided administrators, most notably the incumbent University Librarian, have already done some considerable harm to OCAD U and its Library and Learning Zone. It is not too late, however, for wiser heads to prevail and so prevent further damage: an immediate suspension of the announced restructuring (including the proposed terminations), fulsome and sincere apologies to those harmed, holding those who promoted such flawed measures to account, and a commitment to launch a truly inclusive, constructive, and respectful round of consultations on the Library's future course will hopefully allow the OCAD U community to begin healing.

We trust you will begin this journey of recovery at the earliest opportunity, and we wish you and your OCAD U colleagues well as you do so.

Sincerely,



Michael Arfken, PhD  
President  
UPEI Faculty Association



Simon Lloyd, MLIS  
Member-at-Large  
UPEI Faculty Association