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OPEN LETTER to the President of OCADU on the decision to eliminate six librarian positions

May 13, 2021

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Ana Serrano, President and Vice-Chancellor
Email: aserrano@ocadu.ca

Dear President Ana Serrano,

On behalf of the members of the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) Executive and the UTFA Librarians Committee, we are writing to urge you and senior OCADU Administration to re-consider the decision to eliminate six librarian positions. We call on you to adopt and respect a collegial process that involves librarians, faculty, students, and the broader community.

We have serious concerns about the radical elimination of six professional librarian positions under the guise of a structural re-organization that has occurred without a collegial process of consultation with faculty, students, or the librarians who have lost their jobs. We are disappointed that the University Librarian, Tony White, and the OCADU Administration have decided to terminate the employment of four academic librarians. Combined, the four librarians have more than six decades of expertise and knowledge – a loss that is irreplaceable. Despite years of exceptional service, they were given their layoff notices on May 5, 2021 and will officially lose their jobs as of June 1, 2021. We are also concerned about the decision to eliminate two unfilled librarian positions at OCADU.

We recognize that the need to restructure academic libraries is a continual norm in response to changes in research, curriculum, and evolving technology. However, UTFA believes that this unilateral move to eliminate six professional librarian positions is contrary to practices in Canadian academic libraries and

violates several academic principles, including collegial governance.

Short-term gains can result in long-term irrevocable losses.

Any successful re-structuring of academic libraries must value the expertise of professional librarians and include them meaningfully in the process. It must ensure there is continuity and growth without disrupting academic support for the community. Collegial governance must form the basis of a successful re-structuring because everyone involved can be informed, share expertise and ideas, and ultimately produce the best results.

Libraries are at the core of any post-secondary institution. They are a necessity for academic support for students, accreditation, and the public purposes of the University.

We urge you to re-consider your decision. Embrace the higher principles and values that OCADU supports as an academic community, as per your mission statements and the terms of employment in the Collective Agreement with OPSEU Local 576, Unit 1.

Sincerely,

Terezia Zorić
President, University of Toronto Faculty Association

Harriet Sonne de Torrens
Librarians Committee Chair, University of Toronto Faculty Association

Cc:

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 University Faculty Association (minsooklee@faculty.ocadu.ca)
Chris Thompson, President, OPSEU Local 576 (cthompson@ocadu.ca)

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