

Inforum collection dispersal, please reconsider

Brenna Pladsen [brenna.pladsen@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2018 12:30 AM

To: Wendy Duff

Cc: Elisa Sze; Kathleen Scheaffer; Nalini Singh

Dear Dean Duff,

I am alarmed and disturbed to learn of your plans to remove the physical holdings from the Inforum. I know that others have voiced the accessibility concerns with a primarily screen-accessible collection. I also foresee the dispersal of materials decreasing the overall circulation of materials. But, as a recent Student Assistant at the Inforum, I know that this decision will be disastrous for the integration of the Faculty and the Information sector, and professionals-alumni-student network built around this shared resource.

The sense of community with alumni and the integration of the Faculty in the broader information sector are undermined by the elimination of a publically accessible physical collection. As a new alumnus, continued access to the physical holdings is an invaluable research resource at the beginning of my career. Even established GLAM professionals rely on the Inforum to access both industry standards and obscure resources. The on-site collection is an incentive for alumni to return and informally connect with students and give honest career advice, their opinions on the sector, and academic and research leads. The physical collection is a key factor in the Inforum's role as a community hub. This community extends between departments and outside of the Faculty, a place of connection with students, faculty, and professionals.

You state that the removal of physical holdings is to "establish a sense of identity and enable possibilities for social and intellectual exchange." However, without the core collection, there is little intrinsic difference between the Inforum from other common spaces on campus. We are not the Information Commons; we are not the public floor of Robarts. The Inforum is where a friendly conversation with desk staff leads to a book being excitedly thrust into your hands, where you can find the only other paper on your obscure thesis topic, and where you can curl up with a gem from the juvenile collection.

This decision encourages isolation and siloing between user groups. It eliminates a valuable link outside of the hermetic University of Toronto ecosystem. I hope you reconsider this decision.

Sincerely,

Brenna Pladsen, [M.M.St.](mailto:brenna.pladsen@gmail.com)

brennapladsen.com