

1 March 2018

Dear Dean Duff,

I recently heard about the proposed plan to disperse the remaining Inforum collections to Robarts and other libraries to create additional study spots. As an alumna and librarian, I have to express my concerns about this plan and the apparent lack of consultation that went on with Inforum staff about this decision.

In their [Fact Sheet](#) the Inforum librarians have succinctly summarized all that iSchool community members will lose when the rest of the print collection is moved, so I won't reiterate those points here. I will however lend my support for the continued necessity of maintaining and supporting the collection of specialized print resources based on my experience as a UTL librarian and also currently an MA student in history. Despite the overall excellence of the U of T Libraries system, there are still significant gaps in the availability of online resources particularly for humanities and social sciences disciplines; the publisher platforms that library systems are forced to use often make it difficult to engage in deep reading of online resources; and not everything is easily discoverable in the UTL catalogue.

While the wholesale removal of print is troubling, the biggest issue is the underlying, unspoken implication in the recent **Message Sent to the iSchool Community from the Dean of the Faculty of Information (February 20, 2018)**—that is the question of what will happen with the Inforum's permanent status librarians and unionized staff. The best-case scenario would see a major revamp to their responsibilities once print resources are removed and they continue to provide the significant number of value-added services to the iSchool community from the Inforum. The likely scenario based on previous administrative discussions is that they will ultimately be absorbed into other libraries in the UTL system to save money for a faculty that is struggling financially. Either scenario reflects a lack of collegiality and respect for highly educated professionals who are the subject matter experts in matters related to the Inforum. Moreover, for an institution that educates information professionals and publically seeks to promote the value of its graduates to all types of organizations, the way in which the future of the Inforum has been handled damages the credibility of the iSchool as an educational facility for future information professionals.

Slowly dismantling the Inforum, one of the most unique features and selling points of the iSchool, even though current students and alumni regularly rate as one of the best aspects of the faculty is a mistake. As you may recall, I have served on the alumni executive for a number of years and while I have thoroughly enjoyed giving back to the iSchool community, it is decisions like this one that will make it difficult for me to continue donating time and money.

Regards,
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On leave until July 2018
