

February 28, 2018.

Prof. Wendy Duff,  
Faculty and Dean  
Faculty of Information  
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cc: Larry Alford, Chief Librarian, University of Toronto Library System; Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President and Provost, University of Toronto; Lari Langford, Head, Access & Information, Robarts Library; Kathleen Schaeffer, Librarian, Inforum; Nalini Singh, Librarian, Inforum; Elisa Sze, Librarian, Inforum.

Dear Professor W. Duff,

We are writing to express our deep concern over the manner in which recent decisions pertaining to the dismantling of the collection in the Inforum Library have been determined. We understand that the students, alumni, staff and librarians were not engaged in the decision making process. Furthermore, two of the Inforum librarians are currently on research leave (July 1, 2017 -- June 30, 2018), Nalini Singh, the Reference Services Coordinator, and Elisa Sze, the Collections & Public Services librarian. Given that the decision was made when librarians were on leave and one of the individuals is the expert on the collection, it is particularly shocking. The absence of respect for the professional expertise of librarians at the local level and the lack of consultation with all stakeholders is disconcerting and an inappropriate way to manage an important resource. Not even the full-time Inforum librarian who is not on leave was consulted. This contravenes the University's goal to foster excellence in teaching and research and current policies negotiated with UTFA. The University of Toronto's *Mission Statement* includes "Providing information, library and research services of the highest international standards". The *Policy and Procedures for Faculty and Librarians on Academic Restructuring* states that the University is:

"...commit[ted] to collegial processes for academic planning and consultation on various matters that include faculty and librarians and include students and staff and other interested members of the University community."

In addition, "...faculty and librarians of potentially affected Academic Units must have a reasonable opportunity to participate in a collegial, inclusive and deliberative process..." This has not occurred. To totally dismantle a long-standing, historical and contemporary collection supporting professional programs since 1928, which will greatly affect the Inforum's services to its scholarly communities,

necessitates the input and the expertise of professional academic librarians and all stakeholders. Our concerns are widely shared by alumni, students and colleagues in the UTL system and the community who have been informed of this decision.

The transformation of academic libraries is a given, one which we continually review and assess in our libraries. We are well acquainted with what it means to down-size, strategically select what is sent to storage in Downsview and what is essential to maintain in order to serve our communities. However, it requires careful consideration, strategic planning and the expertise of those who maintain such collections.

The absence of consultation with the in-house information professionals, students, faculty and alumni is distressing on several levels. Firstly, it contravenes current policies, core principles of academic collegiality and respect for the professional expertise of our librarian colleagues in the Inforum. Secondly, there will be workload ramifications to dismantling the library collection, both short-term and long-term. Librarians, like faculty, have a workload policy that supports collegial discussion and strategic planning. Thirdly, to disregard the views of the patrons, faculty and students on this matter, jeopardizes valuable relationships and introduces unnecessary tensions within our community. We have a professional responsibility to ensure our students' academic needs are not diminished by a rushed decision-making process lacking in collaborative consultation. To ensure that the best course of action is taken necessitates the expertise of academic librarians. The Memorandum of Agreement, Article 5.3 clearly states:

“...A librarian shall carry out his or her responsibilities with all due attention to the establishment of fair and ethical dealings with library users, colleagues and staff taking care to be properly accessible...A librarian shall ensure the fullest possible access to library materials.”

We understand that there are often numerous competing priorities for limited resources and spaces, however, in this instance, we urge you to reconsider this decision and, instead, turn to your colleagues and community to arrive at collegial solutions.

Submitted by the following concerned colleagues,