

March 2, 2018

By email

Wendy Duff
Professor and Dean, Faculty of Information
140 St. George Street
Toronto, ON M5S 3G6
Wendy.duff@utoronto.ca

Dear Professor Duff,

Re: Inforum Collection

UTFA has learned from numerous members of the decision to dismantle and disperse the Faculty of Information Inforum Library collection effective May 1, 2018. I write to you today to express the UTFA Executive's concern that such a decision appears to have been made without thorough consultation and input from important stakeholders. UTFA, therefore, urges you to halt implementation of changes until such time that, at a minimum, collegial consultation occurs.

As you know, it is a central tenet of academic governance that decisions posing a potential substantial impact on a unit's ability to fulfill its academic mission ought to be reached through a transparent and collegial process. This includes wide and open discussions with faculty members and librarians. As stated in the *Memorandum of Agreement between The Governing Council of the University of Toronto and The University of Toronto Faculty Association* (hereinafter 'the MOA') "[l]ibrarians are important contributors to the University of Toronto's academic mission as a research-intensive institution" and the parties to the MOA recognize "the leadership, expertise and initiative of librarians in developing one of the world's great library systems." It is therefore surprising and disappointing that the recent decision to disperse the Faculty of Information collection was made with no widespread collegial process to inform the decision.

It is UTFA's understanding that, historically, collegial processes have been practiced by the Faculty of Information (i.e. the 2012-2013 Task Force and the 2014-2015 New Partnership Working Group). In fact, when the very issue of dispersing the faculty's collection was last

raised in 2015, librarians were consulted widely. At the time, at the Faculty of Information Council meeting of March 20, 2015, a motion to accept the report of the “New Partnership with the Central Library” Work Group was passed. Among the six recommendations adopted in the vote, was agreement that the Faculty of Information would “[k]eep the collections, including course reserves, within the Bissell Building.” It is this very decision, reached through a collegial governance process, that is now apparently being disregarded.

To the best of UTFA’s knowledge, the current renovation plans were developed without any involvement of librarians, except possibly one part-time librarian administrator at Roberts Library. Furthermore, the decision was made at a time when two of the three full-time librarians working with this collection in the Inforum were on research leave. These Inforum librarians are the very individuals who ought to have been consulted, as has been done in the past, when decisions of such significance have been made.

In light of the above, UTFA’s Executive believes it would be inappropriate for the Faculty of Information to proceed with its plans to disperse the collection until opportunities for open and wide consultation has occurred. We believe this request reiterates the position taken by many faculty, librarian and student stakeholders, who have written letters to the Administration. As stated above, we ask that you take steps to begin a collegial process prior to any further actions taking place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia Messenger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Cynthia Messenger
President

cc. Sioban Nelson, Professor and Vice-Provost
UTFA Executive

