



THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES BIBLIOTHÉCAIRES EN ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

Dr. Alan Shepard, President; Dr. Andy Hrymak, Provost; and Mr. Paul Jenkins, Chair of the Board of Governors
University of Western Ontario
London, ON

October 8, 2019

Dear Drs. Shepard & Hrymak, and Mr. Jenkins,

The Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL/ACBES) urges you, Dr. Alan Shepard, and Dr. Andy Hrymak, and Mr. Paul Jenkins, to intervene to support the critical work of the librarians and archivists at the University of Western Ontario, and ensure the University does not find itself in its fourth serious labour dispute in just over a year.

Librarians and archivists play a crucial role in supporting and advancing the teaching, learning and scholarly endeavours of students and faculty at post-secondary institutions. A minority and feminized group on university campuses, librarians and archivists are vulnerable to acts of administrative prerogative. The Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians urges UWO administration to demonstrate leadership and commitment to the University's Office of Faculty Relations' values of integrity, accountability, fairness, continuous improvement, respect, teamwork, and high performance by respecting librarians' and archivists' right to professional autonomy, collegial governance, fair workload, and equitable compensation.

These requests are reasonable and fulfilling them would allow librarians and archivists to engage more fully with a wide range of areas in professional practice, such as digital scholarship, copyright, research metrics, research data preservation and management, collection development and management, and the teaching of information literacy, to name but a few. Librarians and archivists deserve to receive compensation and benefits equitable to those of other campus employee groups. Their work should also be considered of equal value to the institution.

Library councils have an established history within the profession of librarianship. As early as 1931, S.R. Raganathan, the author of one of the profession's foundational works, *The Five*

Laws of Library Science, proposed that libraries with large staff complements would benefit from a council. Within Canadian universities faculty or schools councils are ubiquitous bodies that deliberate, review, and approve academic policy. It is critical that librarians and archivists as professionals and academic staff have a collegial forum where issues of professional relevance can be aired and debated. Indeed, Joan Wallach Scott, a one-time chair of the American Association of University Professors' Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, makes the point that collegial governance is the foundation of academic freedom. Depriving librarians and archivists of a library council undermines one of academia's foundational rights.

Over years of budget cuts and attrition, UWO's library staff have maintained service to their community on a shrinking budget and with fewer staff. While the work they have done is commendable, services to faculty and students have suffered and will suffer further with the impending labour strike. We urge you to consider what your librarians and archivists are requesting and to grant them these reasonable requests for fair compensation and collegial respect.

Sincerely,

CAPAL/ACBES Board of Directors

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