

13 November 2015

Dr. Patrick Deane
President and Vice Chancellor
McMaster University

Dear Dr. Deane,

We are writing as members of the library and archives department of Laurentian University to express our profound dismay at the demands the employer team is making in bargaining for a new collective agreement with the McMaster University Academic Librarians' Association.

The employer team is proposing to:

- deny recognition of contributions to the union as professional service
- deny a number of collegial procedures and criteria for evaluation and promotion
- deny recognition of work with external organizations as academic service

These punitive demands (there were a number of others at the outset of bargaining that were no less appalling) undermine labour rights enshrined in the current collective agreement. Were they to be accepted, not only would they seriously impair the union's ability to operate, they would make a mockery of collegial decision-making.

We would point out that recognition of union-related activity as professional service by the McMaster librarians was addressed by Arbitrator Paula Knopf in a 2013 ruling. She declared "that Association service should be considered as 'professional service and professional activity' for purposes of the Annual Activity Report and for the determination of 'merit pay.'" The ruling was also upheld at judicial review.

We would also point out that the demands fall outside of academic sector norms, including the collective agreement of Laurentian University, where the librarians/archivists have full parity with the teaching faculty. Tabling such positions can only hurt McMaster's reputation as an institution that respects collective bargaining and collegiality in higher education; it will be damaged still further if there is a strike as a consequence.

The employer team should engage constructively with the union's proposals in order to arrive at a fair and equitable settlement for both sides. A welcome first step towards achieving this goal would be for the team to withdraw these egregious demands.

Sincerely,

Cindy Derrenbacker

Alain Lamothe

Desmond Maley

Tomasz Mrozewski

Leïla Saadaoui

Dan Scott

Ashley Thomson

cc. Vivian Lewis, University Librarian

Laura Banfield, President, McMaster University Academic Librarians' Association