



## Manitoba Library Association

November 18, 2016

Dr. David Barnard  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3T 2N2

### RE: Supporting University of Manitoba Librarians and Professors

Dear Dr. Barnard:

On behalf of the Manitoba Library Association, we implore you to reassess the landscape that you and the Board of Governors are creating at the University of Manitoba, and reflect on the institution's mission, vision, and values. We urge you to honour these goals and values and reconsider your stance on UMFA's bargaining priorities: workload; collegial governance; job security; and performance measurements. The sooner you take appropriate steps towards ending the strike, the sooner students can resume classes and faculty can get back to providing the excellent education and research that they do.

With the layoff of over 40 part-time Library support staff positions and several vacant Library positions being left unfilled, it's become less and less possible for Librarians to sustain the high quality service they provide. Additionally, potential changes to the University's budget model have made job security for U of M Librarians increasingly precarious. Finally, in your recent statement to the Winnipeg Free Press, you suggest that with so many resources online, students no longer need the assistance or expertise of a librarian. This view was surprising to hear from someone who once chaired the Canadian Research Knowledge Network - a long-time ally of academic librarians in Canada. The staffing cuts, lack of job security, and dismissive comment about librarians show a startling disregard for the role and value of libraries and library workers in the academic community.

Academic libraries and library workers have a vital place in their community, and at your institution. They are essential to your University's mission to create, preserve, communicate and apply knowledge. Naturally devoted to serve, engage, and facilitate, academic librarians provide research and teaching supports that Universities can't function without: they build and enhance access to collections; they promote and train users on copyright, open access, scholarly communication issues, and more; they develop institutional repositories; and they provide much needed information literacy education and guidance. You have a lot to lose by refusing to provide protection from arbitrary workload increases, job security, and collegial governance that allows librarians to have a voice in the future of their libraries and the University.

The current direction administration is going devalues the people behind the University of Manitoba's success. Continuing on this track runs the very real risk of undermining the values your institution has committed to: academic freedom, accountability, collegiality, equity and inclusion, excellence, innovation, integrity, respect, and sustainability. UMFA's bargaining priorities, however, are a good fit with these principles. We implore you to support these priorities and prove, to students, faculty, and the academic community, that your University is a leader in teaching, learning, research and scholarship.

Sincerely,

Alix-Rae Stefanko  
President  
Manitoba Library Association

Dee Wallace  
Advocacy Director  
Manitoba Library Association