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Professor Cheryl Regehr  
Vice-President & Provost  
University of Toronto  
27 King's College Circle  
Toronto, M5S 1A1

Professor Regehr,

We are writing to respond to your March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 memo - Collegial Process of Exploration and Consultation about the Faculty of Forestry (PDAD&C #78). More specifically, as the Board of Directors of Forests Ontario, we would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the continuation and enhancement of the University of Toronto's capacity in the field of forestry and to outline the reasons for this position.

Forests Ontario is the voice for Ontario's forests, working towards a future of healthy forests supporting healthy communities and a healthy economy through forest restoration, stewardship, education, and awareness initiatives. We work with partner organizations across Ontario and Canada and are closely linked to the many forestry practitioners that play an integral role in managing the multiple benefits our forests provide to our society.

The importance of forestry to the 21<sup>st</sup> century is undeniable as many organizations around the world have stated. Our forests, and forestry, are at the epicenter of a near endless suite of ecological, social and economic values including species at risk and wildlife, water quality, clean air, employment, economic development (locally, regionally and nationally), biotechnology advances, recreation, health, art, culture, and Indigenous rights and traditional ways of life, to name a few.

With the progression of climate change, we also recognize the role that our forests will play in mitigating climate change related impacts (e.g. reducing the impacts associated with extreme weather events) and in directly reducing the anticipated warming of the planet through the sequestration of carbon. As well, we understand the need to ensure our forests are able to adapt to the impacts climate change will have on them. Never has there been a more important role for forestry and foresters to manage for these emerging and unprecedented challenges in order to sustain a healthy forest resource, and all the values they provide, for our future.

The attention paid to sustainable forest management has never been higher as the world increasingly recognizes the important role that forests play in our lives.

The need to continue to develop expertise, support leading edge research, and create an environment for informed, solutions oriented dialogue on forestry related issues has never been greater. The question is, where?

Canada was built, in large part, on our forest resources. 42% of Canada is forested and as a nation we have 10% of the world's forests. We are recognized as a world leader in sustainable forest management with 46% of the world's certified forests residing here in Canada. In short, we are a forest nation with globally recognized expertise in forestry practices. If the world cannot look to us to act as a champion for our forests, then whom?

Forestry at the University of Toronto has a long history of research, educational instruction, and collaboration and has been able to continuously adapt to meet an ever evolving set of forestry related challenges and issues. We believe that with the proper investment and support, the University is well positioned to continue to lead the way forward.

The graduates of the University of Toronto's forestry programs are highly valued for their qualifications. Graduates are in high demand, are able to find work easily, and have collectively risen to key leadership positions in Ontario, across Canada, and around the world. Equally impressive is the fact that these graduates have been able to contribute meaningfully across a broad range of interests including the private sector, various levels of government, not-for-profits and environmental non-governmental organizations, research institutes, universities and colleges, and economic development organizations.

Geographically, the University of Toronto is well positioned to help address a critical issue facing forestry, specifically, the need for a greater public understanding of the role that forests, and forest products, play in their everyday lives and the various ways in which they contribute to our standard of living. Located in the middle of the largest city in Canada, and one of the largest cities in North America, the University provides a logical opportunity for addressing this challenge.

As context to all of the points above, we feel it is important to stress that an education in forestry is interdisciplinary in a way that cannot be easily replicated by simply taking (or providing) a variety of stand-alone courses on the relevant topics. Forestry is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive and cohesive approach that provides the appropriate context and understanding of how various values interact with each other. In providing this type of learning environment within a united Faculty, the whole truly outweighs the sum of the parts.

The success of the Faculty's programs and its graduates is undeniable. However, we fear that if the University of Toronto loses its capacity in forestry, it runs the risk of losing not only critical elements of its curriculum, but also resources and potential candidates to other colleges and universities that, in contrast to the current direction of the University of Toronto, are looking to develop and/or expand more integrated forestry programs.

In the absence of a standalone Faculty at the University of Toronto, others will step forward to fill the void. As an organization that is invested heavily in education and awareness, we have seen evidence of this first hand.

In closing, we strongly believe that maintaining the University of Toronto's distinguished record of thoughtful leadership in forestry requires a Faculty status and structure, with the leadership of a Dean, to realize its potential and fulfill its mission. We would like to express our support for the Faculty of Forestry's request to invest in additional faculty positions and discuss solutions to overcome the challenges identified in the 2016 External Reviewers' report. Further, we request an opportunity to participate in the consultation process currently scheduled for the fall.

We look forward to continued dialogue on this important issue.

Regards,



Rob Keen, RPF  
CEO  
Forests Ontario



Steve Hounsell, Chair  
Board of Directors  
Forests Ontario