

June 29, 2017

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

Dear Professor Regehr,

I am writing in response to your March 23rd, 2017 memo - Collegial Process of Exploration and Consultation about the Faculty of Forestry (PDAD&C #78).

I met with Dr. Smyth on June 12th, along with other representatives of the Faculty of Forestry Alumni Association. There are issues of trust, as I discussed at that meeting, to be overcome before this process can be productive.

As an example, I believe the long history of failures in communication and of previous restructuring attempts stand in the way of this consultation process. For example, it is galling for Forestry supporters to read in the consultation materials that one rationale for this process is the external reviewers' observation that "*some resolution to the status of the Faculty of Forestry is long overdue.*" This suggests a problem self-inflicted by the Faculty but the reviewers' next words are "*The resilience of the faculty and students in the program under this indeterminacy is frankly remarkable.*" The full quote accurately reflects the high level of support for the Faculty expressed by the reviewers throughout their report and criticism of administrators who hinder rather than help.

I recommend the following as a plan forward.

1. **Close the credibility gap.** Alumni and Faculty supporters feel the consultation process, following years of perceived opposition and underfunding by the administration, is designed to go against Forestry (i.e., anonymous submissions, oral reports). This leads to unhelpful rumours that the motivation for restructuring is to repurpose Forestry's building for other units and to absorb Forestry's significant endowment funds.

Redesigning the remainder of the consultation process with the Faculty's participation is one step in the right direction.

Another step to solving this is for the administration to begin to publicly recognize the value of forestry research and scholarship, the contribution of the broader forestry sector and the importance of a forestry education. Uof T administration is perceived to be Toronto-centric and unaware of the national and global issues associated with urban, private and public land forestry.

2. **Make forestry education and research bigger and better.** Alumni and Faculty supporters share the concern that if Forestry "loses" its Faculty designation, which gives it control of budget and hiring, it will disappear into a larger, more generalist entity.

These concerns might be allayed if there is a "pre-restructuring contract" with the university that commits to hiring more Forestry professors and replacing retiring ones with qualified persons,

assisting Forestry in attracting more research funding and students and keeping the laboratory facilities now used by Forestry.

- 3. Forestry is a valued member of the UofT.** From my perspective, university administration has framed the Faculty's efforts to transform to be a problem, rather than an opportunity to add value to the entire University of Toronto community. Surely that perspective dampened the enthusiasm for partnerships with other units? This caused years of reputational damage to the Faculty, the discipline of forestry and the profile of the forestry sector.

The administration needs to put the effort and resources required to accomplish a successful transformation whether Forestry remains a Faculty or is restructured.

I believe there are many opportunities for the Faculty of Forestry to thrive. One concept is the TallWood Design Institute which involves collaboration between the Oregon State University Colleges of Forestry and of Engineering and the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts. Its objective is to focus on the development of innovative wood products and sustainable design.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Anne Koven
Adjunct Professor, Sessional Lecturer and Alumna
Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto

c.c. Dr. Meric Gertler
Mr. Martin Lewandowski, Chair, Faculty of Forestry Alumni Association
Dr. Elizabeth Smyth