

June 29, 2017

To the attention of:  
Dr. Cheryl Regehr,  
Vice-President & Provost,  
University of Toronto  
27 King's College Circle  
Toronto, M5S 1A1

Dear Dr. Regehr,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to assist in the deliberative process of exploration and consultation about the Faculty of Forestry. As a follow up on our last consultation meeting with Dr. Elizabeth Smyth on June 7, 2017, we would like to underline the following points from our meeting.

As a professional faculty, we have been very successful in creating forestry professionals and producing innovative research. Our graduates find work easily, all of them within the first year following graduation, evenly split within the private and the government sectors. Our alumni reach high-level positions, either in research, with NGOs, consulting companies or within different levels of the government. As a whole, the forestry sector offers tremendous opportunities and can boast a current 100% employment rate. As a result, in recent years our enrolment has been steadily increasing. The tremendous opportunities for growth in the Faculty of Forestry cannot and should not be discounted.

The University of Toronto's governance of the Faculty appears to ignore the successes of our researchers and alumni while failing to recognize the great capacity for growth within this profession. For example, since 2000, the Faculty has lost nine professors (most due to retirement); however, none has been replaced by the University in spite of repeated requests by the Faculty. Today this leaves us with only seven full-time professors. In another example, the Faculty loses out on well-deserved funding as it does not receive a budget allocation for the Forestry courses given to its undergraduate students. This model discounts the contributions of this Faculty and is unfair particularly to undergraduate students interested in Forestry.

As past restructuring attempts of the Faculty of Forestry suggested relocation to University of Toronto's Scarborough or Mississauga campuses, we would like to remind you of the importance and legitimacy of our current location. The Earth Sciences building was built thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Faculty's alumni. Without Forestry, the Earth Sciences building as we know it would not be here. It represents the great past of the Faculty as well as its promising future, if given the chance to succeed. It is extremely important for many of our graduate researchers to remain in this building and on the St. George campus. For example, some of our students studying biomaterials and engineering collaborate closely with other departments on the St. George campus and rely heavily on sharing their instruments. If we were to be relocated, these instruments would not be easily accessible. Potential migration to other campus implies that graduate research students will suffer major disturbances for their timely completion of their programs.

As you are well-aware, the biggest threat to our world at this time is the negative effects of climate change. On December 12, 2015, Canada, along with 195 other countries signed the Paris Agreement, agreeing to reduce our carbon emissions. Healthy forests are a major tool in fighting climate change by absorbing one third of all carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuels. Canada is a global leader in sustainable forestry, and accounts for 10% of the world's forests. In this context, we believe that the Faculty of Forestry at the University of Toronto has a major role to play in the fight against climate change by training foresters, forest technicians, researchers, professors and forest advocates. The disintegration of the Faculty of Forestry will signal that forest research is not taken seriously by the University of Toronto, and will be a major loss to Canada and our fight against climate change. At the same time, educating forest specialists in this challenging period of yet another softwood

lumber dispute can be of paramount importance for the future of this aspect of Canada's green economy. Ignoring the importance of a strong Faculty of Forestry is not something the University should undertake during this time of global crisis.

With these key points in mind, We, the Students of the Faculty of Forestry, are requesting the following:

1. During our June 7 meeting, Professor Smyth repeatedly reassured us that it was not the intention of the University to dissolve or close our Faculty. However, we feel that the past attempts of restructuring and the uncertainty linked to the current process may discourage potential student enrolment, as well as our own opportunities. Therefore, we request official written communication from your office to clarify that the University does not plan to dissolve the Faculty of Forestry anytime in the near future.
2. Since this is not the intention of the University to dissolve our Faculty, we request that necessary steps be taken within the next six months to hire a minimum of two new full-time professors to mitigate the current shortage of professors at the Faculty. If no significant effort to this end has been taken within this time frame, we will be forced to conclude that the University of Toronto indeed has the intention to let our Faculty dissipate from academic exhaustion.
3. The University of Toronto should consider allowing undergraduates to be fully integrated in the Faculty of Forestry by, at minimum, allocating budgetary funds to the Faculty based on the courses that are being offered to these undergraduate students.

As a final note, we would like it to be made clear that the timing of the consultation is very inconsiderate of Forestry students. As we expressed during our meeting, a vast majority of students have begun their summer internships and field research. As such, many are not in the city, province or country and may have limited or no access to the Internet. By holding the consultation during the summer months, Forestry students have not been given the proper opportunity to be informed about or involved in the first step of this consultation process. This is especially unfortunate given the potential impact of this restructuring on our futures.

We would like to thank you for your patience and attention in reading this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

The students of the Faculty of Forestry (signatories listed below)

cc: Dr. Elizabeth Smyth, Vice-Dean, Programs, School of Graduate Studies

Dr. Meric Gertler, President, University of Toronto

List of signatories:

Andrew Asvec, MFC alumni

Jennifer Baici, MFC Alumni (2017)

Erika Bolliger, Undergraduate student (3rd year), Forest Conservation (Arts) major

Laura Brodey, MFC Candidate

Scott Cassidi, MFC candidate, FGSA member

Laura Curran, undergraduate student, Forest Conservation (Arts) major

Rhoda deJonge, PhD Candidate

Kimberly Dowell, MFC Candidate

Ben Filewod, PHD Candidate

Nigel Gale, PHD Candidate

Sossina Ghezahegn, PhD Candidate

Adam Gorgolewski, Phd Candidate  
Abdul Halim, Phd Candidate  
Thibault Hoppe-Glosser, MFC Candidate  
Joey Kabigting, MFC Candidate  
Prarag Kadam, MFC Candidate  
Pamela Martin, MFC Alumni.  
Annonciade Murat, MFC Candidate  
Daniela Palacio, MFC Candidate  
Nicole Pinto, MFC Candidate  
Christopher Preece, MFC Candidate  
Danijela Puric-Mladenovic, Phd alumni and Assistant Professor at the Faculty  
Nasim Ramezani, Phd Candidate  
Pedro Rios Guayasamin, PHD Candidate  
Rana Roy, PhD Candidate  
Tom Schicks, PhD Candidate  
Maria Semeniuk, MScF. Candidate  
Janani Sivarajah, PhD Candidate  
Basil Southey, undergrad student (3rd year), Head of the undergrad Forester Club  
Nicolas Tanguy, PhD Candidate  
Ambika Tenneti, PhD Candidate  
Maria Toledo, PhD Candidate  
Nicole Tratnik, MScF Candidate, FGSA member  
Juliana Vantellingen, PhD Student  
Geyi (Wendy) Wang, MFC Candidate  
Yuki Yung, MFC Candidate  
Yiwen Zhang, PhD candidate