



Université d'Ottawa
Cabinet du recteur

University of Ottawa
Office of the President

Jennifer Dekker, President
Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa
170 Waller St.,
Ottawa, ON K1N 9B9

April 1, 2016

Ms. Dekker,

I have read with concern the communications sent by you and others in the APUO announcing and distributing the so-called "Assessment of Senior Administrators". I am writing on behalf of the University's administration, as well as on behalf of the Deans (who have read and expressed agreement with the contents of this letter) to record our strongest possible objections to your actions.

As University policy states:

"...the University is committed to maintaining a learning and work environment that promotes the understanding and respect for dignity of the person as part of the University community and one that is free from harassment and discrimination."

Our university community shares the same challenges in these areas as any other workplace in Canada, but our collective resolve to meet our goal remains unshaken.

Administrators work with our faculty and staff to monitor and improve performance. The University has an evaluation process in place for employees, including Deans and executives. We believe that process to be both fair and effective.

Your decision to conduct your own assessment, and then to release the results and select comments therefrom, is irresponsible and profoundly unfair.

In Health Sciences, for example, one of your letter's recipients has now distributed it to his 25 faculty colleagues (as well as to a senior executive at Montfort Hospital, where Dean Perrault sits on the Board). This is a consequence that you and APUO must have anticipated and indeed intended.

All of this occurred without the direct knowledge of the Dean, without consulting or advising her in advance, and without even providing her with a copy of the material.

The APUO approach does not adhere to any recognized evaluation process and fails to reflect the fundamental requirements of natural justice. Furthermore, it is completely inconsistent with the standard of conduct we are entitled to expect of each other as members of a collegial University community.

You suggest that you may have grounds for a complaint under our policy on harassment and discrimination (Policy 67a). Yet your actions are clearly inconsistent with that policy, which provides in part as follows:

“All individuals involved in a report or an investigation of harassment or discrimination must keep the matter confidential in order to safeguard individuals against unsubstantiated allegations, to protect the rights of those involved in the allegation and to preserve the integrity of the investigation.”

The APUO has chosen to ignore the requirements of the very policy that it now purports to invoke.

The processes laid out in Policy 67a and in our collective agreement with APUO are designed to uphold the principles of fairness through confidentiality and due process. Adherence to these principles is vital if we are to ensure that complainants can feel comfortable stepping forward, that respondents feel they are dealt with fairly, and that both parties are assured a result that is measured and constructive.

By your actions, you have caused reputational damage to the Deans, and especially Hélène Perrault. We call upon you to withdraw your letter and to deliver a written apology to Dean Perrault immediately.

We also demand that you shut down similar assessments you seem intent on conducting in other faculties.

Fundamentally, a respectful work environment is created by observing the tenets of basic human decency and professionalism. We look forward to working with the university community to maintain such an environment, one in which research and learning may continue to flourish.

Sincerely,



Allan Rock
Vice Chancellor and President