

(Sent by email to John Hutton CSU Finance Coordinator on May 14, 2019)

### **CULEU Statement of Support for the CSU Campaign for Accountability and Transparency at Concordia**

As you know, CULEU is the Library Support Staff Employees' Union. And because of this, whenever our Union representatives meet with University or Library Administrators, our concern is how management decisions affect our staff and our libraries.

Our experience, unfortunately, is that Administrators will use principles of accountability and transparency when it is convenient for their decision-making process.

At labour-management meetings, we routinely find ourselves returning to the same questions because Administrators are unable to answer or have made little attempt to inform themselves between meetings. We're left then to ask ourselves whether these are examples of a lack of accountability or a lack of transparency, or perhaps both.

In the period since the 2012-2013 academic year, CULEU members have felt the impact of the University's austerity measures. University and government pension reform decisions have resulted in net pay cuts for CULEU staff members. Over the same period, Library Administration was able to provide the University with major savings from staff retirement programs as very few of these vacated support staff positions were re-posted.

Of course, Library Administration used austerity arguments to support decisions to not replace most of these full-time, permanent support staff positions. Within departments, the workload has been re-organized and "prioritized" using "band-aid" or quick-fix solutions. Where Library Administration deemed necessary, new employees were hired, but mostly in temporary jobs. On the other hand, during this same period of time, staff members have noticed that the number of high-paying and high-level Library Administration positions has increased.

During the austerity period, the University's CFO scheduled budget presentations for library staff and these presentations always highlighted the "high" cost of labour in order to support management decision-making. Last year, as more government money became available, CULEU asked Library Administration about the possibility of a new presentation from the CFO to explain re-investment decisions. Library Administration dismissed this idea.

Because of the Library Services Fund, the CSU is a very important partner for the Library. Looking back over the initial term of the fund, it's clear that certain services have become vital to the Library's operations and to students' expectations for their library. With the students' renewed commitment to this fund, the Committee is uniquely positioned to hold our Library Administration accountable.

PR campaigns for the recent Webster Library renovation project and for the University's new Digital Strategy transformation process point to the importance of accountability and transparency in the success of any project. User surveys and consultation forums were very important to the Library's renovation planning process. However, behind the scenes, valuable staff input was ignored. Only now do we all find ourselves struggling to deal with these planning deficiencies.

As the Library positions itself as a central piece of the University's Digital Strategy transformation, there is a clear priority to direct new planning, resource, and hiring decisions to this area. Again, the University has prioritized consultation, but the process cannot be successful without a commitment to real accountability and transparency.

Good luck at today's press conference. CULEU values the CSU's work on this and other campaigns and we look forward to the next opportunity to work together.

In solidarity,

Kent Cluff

CULEU - President