

Gordon Yusko  
Vancouver, BC

November 2, 2022

An Open Letter to the University of British Columbia:

Dr. Deborah Buszard  
Interim President and Vice-Chancellor; and  
Dr. Santa J. Ono  
Immediate Past President and Vice-Chancellor  
University of British Columbia:

- 1. Procedural Unfairness in the Matter of My Application for a Confirmed Position;**
- 2. The Failure to Acknowledge and Correct or Remedy this Unfairness; and**
- 3. The Harm that I have Suffered as a Result of UBC's Actions and Failures to Act Appropriately**

Dear Dr. Buszard and Dr. Ono,

I'm writing this open letter to address a series of actions and inactions by the University with regard to my application for a confirmed appointment as a Head Librarian that have inflicted considerable harm on me. Despite my best and repeated efforts to raise this matter with UBC officials and representatives it remains unresolved. I am writing this open letter because I would like UBC to acknowledge what has happened to me and the consequential harm that I have suffered.

Here is what happened to me when I applied for a confirmed position as a Head Librarian at the UBC Library:

1. I had two supervisors between 2012 and 2019. Both failed to update my position description or to provide up-to-date and contemporaneous performance reviews for consideration by the Library's Standing Review Committee (SRC) and the Librarians' Appointments Committee (LAC). This meant that my application was at a disadvantage from the start. In the case of my second supervisor this inaction was deliberate.

Had an up-to-date and accurate position description and contemporaneous performance reviews been submitted to the SRC and LAC, these would have contributed to a better and fairer review of my application for a confirmed appointment.

For reasons that are unknown to me, none of the following UBC representatives insisted that an up-to-date position description or contemporaneous performance reviews be provided as part of the review of my application, although they each had the ability and in the context of the UBC Board of Governors' expectations for "the highest ethical standards", the ethical responsibility to do so: the University Librarian, Library HR staff, Faculty Relations staff, Standing Review Committee and Librarians' Appointments Committee members. The review period for my application lasted over a year, allowing ample opportunity

for such action by one or more of these University representatives.

2. Leading up the review period, one of the members of the SRC was in a clear and overt conflict of interest with regard to my application as a consequence of events in 2015. The University was aware of this conflict but did not, to the best of my knowledge and for reasons unknown to me, take any steps to address how the presence of this person might affect the ability of the SRC to fairly and objectively review my application. In the process, and as far as I am aware, the member in question influenced the review of my application. This again, meant that my application was at a disadvantage from the start.
3. In the process of developing my first application for its submission, my first supervisor chose to ignore the Collective Agreement's procedural requirements with respect to soliciting letters of appraisal for me. This ultimately led to my first application being cancelled and to the requirement for me to develop a new application.

In order to properly ensure fairness for my second application, key officials in the Library and in Faculty Relations should have ensured completely new membership of the Standing Review Committee, and should have excluded all librarians who had participated in the review of my first application. Yet they chose to disregard that principle and in doing so, added to the unfairness of the process and the harm that I have suffered.

4. Further, and in addition to the SRC member referenced above in point #2, prior to the submission of my second application, the University permitted the appointment of a member to the Standing Review Committee who was the spouse of the Chair of the Librarians' Appointments Committee. I understand that the appointment of spouses to such positions creates a conflict or potential conflict according to the University's own policies as the work of each of the SRC and LAC is supposed to be separate and confidential from the other. I was very concerned that the SRC and LAC as constituted would not be able to undertake a fair review of my application, but again, to the best of my understanding the University took no steps to address this concern and declined to investigate this and other issues that I raised.
5. At a meeting in May of 2017 which I attended, statements by a vocal member of the Standing Review Committee likely and improperly in my opinion, influenced discussion and deliberation of the Librarians' Appointments Committee. This meeting was attended by numerous LAC members. The statements from the vocal SRC member, particularly given the timing of the May 2017 meeting in relation to the SRC's recommendation and the LAC's review, contravened the principle of separate and confidential review and deliberation by the two committees.
6. In my seven-page letter to Dr. Ono, on September 5, 2018 I raised vital concerns about the recommendation of the Librarians' Appointments Committee and provided thorough evidence that the LAC didn't fully understand or give enough weight to the level of my professional work and the high standard of my performance, as demonstrated in my ability to successfully manage a number of complex, multi-stakeholder projects from start to finish and to manage signature programs that benefitted the University.
7. In a meeting on September 6, 2019, that was convened to review my employment status after the rejection of my application I asked the University Librarian to consider approving a 5-year term appointment for me, similar to other Head Librarians, as an alternative to letting my then current appointment terminate later that year. However, in that meeting my request was summarily

rejected without offering any option of fair consideration or review.

8. I asked twice for the University to undertake an investigation of the overt bias demonstrated by the Standing Review Committee and Librarians' Appointments Committee against me. One was in August of 2019 and the second in February of 2020. In summary, the requests provided details and solid evidence related to three matters: the handling (or in my opinion, the grossly unfair mis-handling) of my application for a confirmed appointment; the influence of a complaint made about me that was found to be without merit; and breaches of the UBC Code of Conduct, Policy 3 regarding Discrimination and Harassment, Policy 97 regarding Conflict of Interest and the UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff.

For reasons unknown to me the University chose not to have this matter investigated. Further, I was sent a letter from a senior University representative who, judging from its timing and the content therein, did not take the time to fairly and properly review the facts of my case. This communication was very disturbing for me. Not only did I judge it to be inappropriate, it caused further harm to my mental and physical health.

As a result, I feel that through no fault of my own I was denied a fair opportunity to be considered for a position for which I believe I was fully qualified.

The harm that I suffered was and continues to be considerable: In 2015 I was treated seven times in a hospital Emergency Room and admitted to Vancouver General Hospital for three days, and again in September 2019 treatment in an Emergency Room was needed again, all for serious and negative health impacts related to my application for a confirmed position at UBC; I lost the opportunity of the position itself; I lost my employment and associated income and benefits; and my reputation in the library community was unfairly damaged.

I tried to find an a new and alternate position but was unsuccessful doing so, which I believe was at least in part a consequence of the reputational damage that I suffered. I was unemployed for over two years and saw myself sliding into poverty as I had to draw down and deplete savings to support myself. I suffered significant depression and anxiety and that is still the case now, with the strong likelihood of continuing negative impacts on my health.

I am frustrated because at no point has the University acknowledged my concerns about either the procedural irregularities associated with the treatment of my application, the conflicts of interest which existed in the Standing Review Committee and Librarians' Appointments Committee and the repeated failure of influential UBC representatives to act properly or ethically.

By this letter I am requesting a meeting with the University at which these issues would be discussed and in which the harm that I suffered will actually be addressed.

Sincerely,



Gordon Yusko

*cc: Multiple recipients*