April 8, 2013

Open Letter to Dr. Daniel Caron re. LAC “Code of Conduct”

Dear Dr. Caron,

The Newfoundland and Labrador Health Libraries Association is dismayed by the recently created Library and Archives of Canada *Code of Conduct* and the implications it will have for our federal librarians and archivists. We strongly urge you to create a Code of Conduct that strikes a more even balance between the duty of loyalty to the Government of Canada and its citizens and the fundamental right of freedom of expression that is important to the work of all librarians and archivists.

The Library and Archives Canada mandate states that Library and Archives Canada is committed to being a “source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society”. This suggests that librarians and archivists who are employed by the federal government have a responsibility to promote the purpose and services of libraries. Instead, public servants are being put in a position where they no longer feel safe to promote our National Library by disseminating their research findings and sharing their knowledge through teaching. Teaching and speaking at conferences should not be considered “high risk” activities but should be considered highly appropriate activities as they have in the past at Library and Archives Canada. Professional dialogue and the sharing of ideas are collaborative activities supported and encouraged at professional conferences and these activities have a positive impact on the quality of work being produced by federal employees.

We join together with the Canadian Library Association and the Canadian Association of University Teachers to urge you to revisit the *Code of Conduct* to encourage federal public servants to engage in activities that will help to promote our National Library and disseminate widely their information and knowledge through teaching, presenting at conferences and appearing at public engagements.

Sincerely,

Alison Farrell

President,

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Libraries Association