

September 8, 2020

Mme. Nathalie Roy  
Ministère de la Culture et des Communications  
Édifice Guy-Frégault  
225, Grande Allée Est, bloc A  
1er étage  
Québec (Québec) G1R 5G5  
Canada

Dear Madame Roy:

The American Historical Association registers grave concern over the future preservation, maintenance, and accessibility of the historically significant archives and collections of the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice in Montréal following the recent firing of the professional staff charged with overseeing these collections.

The Saint-Sulpice Seminary, founded in 1657 and home to a diverse and remarkable collection of manuscripts, publications, images, maps, and objects spanning more than four centuries, has long been an invaluable resource for historians all over the world engaged in research on New France and French colonial history, as well as the history of the nation of Canada and the province of Québec.

The American Historical Association takes a particular interest in this situation because so many of our members have benefited in the past from the rare holdings of this repository. Moreover, we feel a special obligation to promote the importance of historical archives and libraries providing open access to scholars under the guidance of professional staff when the collections are so important to the full history of North America, including Canada and the Caribbean as well as the United States. The American Historical Association hopes future historians from all of these places and beyond will be able to continue to use this collection--one of the oldest in the Americas--to build new knowledge of our shared past. We therefore urge those responsible for the decision to terminate the staff of the archives of the Sulpician Seminary to reconsider it, and, should the situation not change, we urge the governments of Québec and Canada, and particularly its Ministry of Culture, to take all necessary steps to keep this important archive and library effectively operative.

The American Historical Association is the largest organization of professional historians in the world, with nearly 12,000 members, including a substantial Canadian contingent. The AHA represents many specialists in the history of North America, the French colonial world, and the history of science, all fields which benefit from the continued operation of the Sulpician archives. The work produced by these scholars, whether published in French or English, contributes to what we know and what we can teach about these histories.

Sincerely,



Mary Lindemann  
President, American Historical Association