

**PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release – January 9, 2015

## Successful MOOC on Library Advocacy Reoffered

(Toronto, ON) — The iSchool at the University of Toronto is proud that its popular MOOC (Massively Open Online Course), “Library Advocacy Unshushed: Values, Evidence, Action” — which attracted more than 5,200 students last year — will be offered again starting in February 2015.

Wendy Newman, a Senior Fellow and Lecturer at UofT’s Faculty of Information, will offer a six-week adaptation of her popular online elective on advocacy for libraries and librarianship, giving anyone, anywhere in the world, the opportunity to learn more about advocacy for libraries and strengthening of the communities they serve.

The course is offered in partnership with the Canadian Library Association and the American Library Association, both long-time champions of best practice and education in advocacy.

Previous participants — 43% from outside North America — described the MOOC as a breakthrough in their understanding and action planning saying the course “showed me the value of building relationships,” “made me approach our library’s advocacy much differently,” and “helped me see advocacy in a new light.”

“I’m passionate about libraries, like millions of others,” Ms Newman says. “Personal access to digital information has prompted some people to question the relevance of libraries and librarians. But I believe that they are essential to our learning and creativity, our economy and our democracy, now and in the future, and I have evidence to back me up.”

Ms Newman expected the majority of students to come from North America, but was pleasantly surprised to see 15% from Europe, 9% Asia, 4% each from Africa, South America, and Australia, and 5% from other places — thus proving the course’s appeal to a worldwide audience.

Offered through the EdX consortium, in which the University of Toronto collaborates with other leading universities, “Library Advocacy Unshushed” (course ID: LA101x) is now [open for registration](#). The course will start on February 2, 2015, and end on March 23, 2015. There is no prerequisite, though basic knowledge of librarianship is recommended. Participants should expect to commit four to five hours a week.

Through this open form of course delivery, including videos, online discussions, quizzes, and video interviews with guest experts, they will learn how to be powerful advocates for the values and future of libraries and librarianship.

“Last year’s MOOC further opened the future of libraries to masses of interested and engaged global citizens,” says iSchool Dean and Professor, Dr. Seamus Ross. “Wendy Newman has worked tirelessly to pioneer yet another contribution of tremendous impact to library science, and the betterment and success of libraries around the world.”

The University of Toronto is a supporter of MOOCs, offering several popular online courses to participants across the world. In this way, it contributes to the education community and to the

broader public by sharing its expertise as one of the world's great universities, in addition to strengthening its own learning about pedagogical approaches and open course platforms.

***About the course:***

How can we strengthen libraries and librarians in the advancement of knowledge, creativity, and literacy in the 21st century? Though libraries have been loved for over 3,600 years, their relevance in the digital age is being questioned, and their economic and social impacts are poorly understood. What is really essential about libraries and librarians, today and tomorrow? How can library members and all who support the mission of 21st-century librarianship raise the profile and support of these timeless values and services, and ensure universal access to the universe of ideas in all our communities? This course is based on what works. We'll take an inspired, strategic, evidence-based approach to advocacy for the future of strong communities – cities, villages, universities and colleges, research and development centres, businesses, and not-for-profits.

Coursework includes research on current perceptions of libraries and librarians, learning the principles of influence and their impact on advocacy, strategic thinking and planning in advocacy, and effective communication: messages, messengers, and timing.

***About the Instructor:***

**Wendy Newman** has contributed in administrative, advocacy, consulting, and educational roles to libraries and the communities they serve, and to library associations in North America and beyond. As a public library director, she has led groundbreaking partnerships that build community capacity and advance economic and social strengths. A passionate advocate for libraries and librarianship in the public policy arena, she served on the National Broadband Task Force, the Blue Ribbon Panel on Smart Communities, and the Board of Directors of MediaSmarts. Her consulting practice has focused on strategic issues in librarianship. She is former president of the Canadian Library Association and a long-time member of the American Library Association. Among many awards for her work as a leader/advocate, Wendy has received the Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship from both the American and Canadian Library Associations as well as recognition for achievement at the provincial/state and national levels. She received the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for community service. A graduate of the University of Toronto, Wendy has developed and taught graduate level courses in advocacy and influence for two ALA-accredited programs, and created the iSchool's first MOOC in 2014. She is also the co-author of a forthcoming book on advocacy.

MOOCs are not for credit in degree programs at UofT but elements may be incorporated into degree courses.

***About the instructional team:***

**Gwen Harris** (MLS 1994) is an instructor, instructional designer, and consultant who has supported the Faculty of Information and the iSchool Institute in developing and supporting online courses. Widely recognized as a pioneer and guru in web search strategies, she holds master's degrees in library and information science and business administration, and is the Faculty of Information Alumni Association (FIAA) Outstanding Alumni Award recipient for 2014.

**Carolyn Dineen** is a student in the Master of Information program at the University of Toronto. She has a background in freelance writing and copy editing, and experience in academic and public libraries.

This team is supported in turn by the Open Learning staff of the University of Toronto and the Information Services team at the iSchool.

[More information on the University of Toronto's Open Learning courses.](#)

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:  
Kathleen O'Brien, Communications and Development Officer  
Faculty of Information, University of Toronto  
416.978.7184 or [kathleen.obrien@utoronto.ca](mailto:kathleen.obrien@utoronto.ca)  
[ischool.utoronto.ca](http://ischool.utoronto.ca)