

## **Declaration of dispute**

Professor Koen Lamberts  
Vice Chancellor  
University of Sheffield  
Western Bank  
Sheffield  
S10 2TN  
26.8.21

Dear Vice Chancellor,

**Subject: Declaration of a Formal Trade Dispute over (i) the decision to close the Archaeology department, (ii) the decision to restructure the School of Languages and Cultures, the School of East Asian studies, and the 12 dual and single honours partners impacted by this decision, and (iii) the breach of the implied term of trust and confidence by the University in its failure to provide fair governance procedures for its decision making leading to (i) and (ii).**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> July the staff-side unions submitted a joint formal letter to Ian Wright and registered a failure to agree over the above issues and as a consequence of that two meetings were convened under schedule 4 of the recognition agreement. Those meetings took place on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August and Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August, respectively, and unfortunately no meaningful progress was made to progress or resolve the concerns that trade unions raised during those meetings. Since then UCU have undertaken an indicative electronic ballot of all UCU members and held a further emergency general members meeting and in all of these consultations members have voiced their serious concerns over the university's governance and decision making processes that have been followed in relation to (i) and (ii) and similarly their opposition to the decisions as described in (i) and (ii).

Regrettably in these circumstances we have been left with no alternative but to register a formal trade dispute over (i), (ii) and (iii). However, in the interest of good industrial relations - and to avoid UCU escalating the matter to a statutory industrial action ballot - should the University wish to meet with UCU to explore and agree actions that would resolve this dispute UCU are more than happy to meet at any time.

We are specifically calling upon the University to initiate an independent external review of the governance procedures that have led to these decisions. We are requesting that such a review will be fair and transparent, led by a mutually agreed, qualified and

experienced barrister, that there will be full access to records, witnesses, staff and trade unions and that the Terms of Reference will be mutually agreed. We would further require that during said review, the university implements an immediate and comprehensive pause in (a) the plans for the closure of Archaeology, and reinstatement of full support to the department, and (b) Phase 2, and all subsequent phases, of the Future of Languages restructure. At the conclusion of the review we expect that the University will adhere to its recommendations, including making changes and improvements to governance arrangements and subjecting the decisions pertaining to (i) and (ii) to a further review under the new arrangements.

UCU reserves its right to progress this matter but the institution is aware of the action needed to resolve this issue and we remain open to meaningful negotiations.

This dispute will continue until such time as all the above issues, and any issues related to any industrial action UCU may call for in support of the dispute, have been resolved to UCU's satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,



Julie Kelley

UCU Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Official

*cc SUCU Branch Officers*

*cc Greg Barnett, National Head of Regional Organisation & Nations*