

To all members of staff at ULSB,

We, as former Heads of the School that preceded ULSB, wish to speak to all staff regarding the reorganisation of ULSB in which 16 staff are in the process of being made redundant. The stated purpose of the reorganization is a proposed disinvestment from 'critical management studies and political economy' in order to refocus research expertise on data analytics, entrepreneurship, innovation, operations and logistics, with 6 new appointments to be made in these areas, by those using, we are told, only quantitative skills. Clearly this will result in a reduction of 10 staff overall which might be thought to have some impact on the work loads of those supposedly 'unaffected' by the redundancies. It may also have some harmful effect upon the reputation of ULSB if the growing swathe of external support, in various forms, for the 16 staff and their work is to be believed. If you have not yet seen this huge response from the wider community, it is collected at <https://www.uculeicester.org.uk/ulsb16/>.

Directly affected staff have been told that they have been identified on the basis that their existing research is in the areas of CMS/PE. This allocation of 'impropriety' has been assessed solely by the Dean and Deputy Dean, using their (as yet to be demonstrated) knowledge of CMS and PE, apparently gleaned from the CPPE website and their understanding of the journals in these fields. They claim to have read the 'relevant' publications that 'relevant' staff have placed on their IRIS forms, and, by specifically adjudging continuity of employment in this way, appear to counter the published reasons for the encouragement of staff external presentation. Are colleagues aware that both your website details and your IRIS submission, specifically and solely, can lead to redundancy?

CMS/PE are areas, the 16 have been told, that do not align with the 'strategic priorities' of ULSB. Much of the external commentary swirling around the School mentions the reputation that the School had and has in these areas. Indeed, the School's REF submission is likely to make reference to these areas as strengths. Certainly, the successful AMBA submission focuses, inter alia, upon the critical work that the School undertakes and the benefits of this. But as these two reputationally significant documents were being submitted, apparently the Dean and Deputy Dean, in reality, wished to disavow the School from such work.

In what ways has this very recent shift, some might say *volte face*, been argued for, discussed and presented throughout the School? None of us has seen a formal strategy document presented or shared with existing staff on what these strategic priorities are, how they were arrived at and who was involved in the decision making. The ULSB 16 have been shown a couple of quotes from Reports that are offered as evidence for the need to shift Business Schools from their current path **but** these same reports point out that the shifts that are desirable are often precisely in the direction of CMS and PE. Anyone considering the UK government's handling of the Covid19 pandemic must surely think that being critical of management is necessary and acceptable in these years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Given this background, of which many staff will be unaware, we feel this 'crisis situation' (not our words but the words of many of the external commentators) should be a matter of collective consultation and that this would be in the best interests of ULSB as an academic community of fair minded scholars. Issues of academic freedom, where you publish, your postings on twitter, what you care to 'like', what you care to research, how you care to research it, even your methods, are all under question at this moment. The atmosphere is becoming increasingly intimidatory.

While the Dean of the School has informed some that an all-staff meeting is not a 'conducive way of conducting meaningful debate' we strongly disagree and feel that the views of **all** staff in regard to this 'case for change' should be shared and heard, precisely in order for us to have a meaningful debate in the open, and not on the basis of individualised conversations behind closed doors. This is not the time for quiescence.

If you wish to speak privately to us about these issues please contact us on [simondlilley@hotmail.com](mailto:simondlilley@hotmail.com).

With the warmest of wishes

Simon Lilley and Gibson Burrell