

Thank you for writing to me and fellow members of the Executive Board.

First, I acknowledge this has been a challenging time for our community and particularly those affected by the changes. I would like to reassure you that we have not taken these decisions lightly.

As I wrote in my message to the University community last week, we are making these changes to build and improve on our position as a leading, research-intensive university which provides an exceptional educational experience for all students. There is a clear need and demand for investment in staff, students and infrastructure and the only way we can meet this need is to invest more strategically. This has been a constant theme in all my engagements with staff, students and external stakeholders. Throughout the change programme, we adopted a strategic approach to keep the changes to the minimum.

We undertook an extensive, 90-day consultation process during which we engaged meaningfully with staff, students and stakeholders in regard to the cases for change. The change process has been managed in accordance with the University's Leading and Managing Change Principles and Redundancy Ordinance both of which were agreed with our three recognised trade unions. The cases for change have been through our established governance processes and, where required, been approved by University Senate and Council.

Every case has been changed or refined as a result of the consultation, [the outcomes for which are available for staff to read here](#). Throughout this process, we have taken every measure to mitigate against compulsory redundancies and the number of compulsory redundancies has been reduced in each case. For example, in the School of Business four individuals were removed from the pool of those at risk of redundancy as a result of consultation and others were able to secure redeployment opportunities or apply for voluntary severance. Similarly in the Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour 12 staff were removed from the pool or were successful in securing other roles in the department. We have been able to do the same in a number of Professional Service areas. I would like to stress that no member of staff has been pressured into accepting voluntary severance. We have provided detailed responses to all the feedback and counter proposals.

In regard to academic freedom, the University's Academic Freedom Ordinance qualifies the right to "to carry out research work without any undue interference, or any suppression" by making this subject to "the rights of the University to manage its activity efficiently and economically". In other words, the University retains autonomy to decide which areas of research activity it will invest in and support. The University has to manage its resources and its activity efficiently and effectively and in line with its strategic vision and regulatory conditions. This does not in any way conflict with the principles of academic freedom, which we continue to uphold and defend.

I am aware of, and disappointed by, the negative publicity the University has received and am concerned about the way in which much of the discourse has played out. Much of this negativity has been based on a series of misperceptions and has been fuelled by social media commentary. We have taken a number of steps to mitigate against this and we will continue to engage with prospective students and staff to highlight the opportunities at Leicester. I will continue to engage with our staff and students to improve morale which undoubtedly would have been affected following a change programme. However, I am confident we have every opportunity to significantly improve the long-term reputation of this University by delivering the highest quality research and education.

Yours sincerely

Professor Nishan Canagarajah  
President & Vice-Chancellor