

CARDIFF



CAERDYDD

## Our Mission

**Working together to foster fairness, equality and dignity in support of the advancement of knowledge and the education of students.**

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### Being respectful

1. University communications and other activities appear to be continuing in a ‘business as usual’ fashion. Given that approximately 1,800 academic members of staff have received letters telling them they are at risk of redundancy, and telling Professional Services staff that they will be next means that a very large proportion of members of staff are currently undergoing unimaginable trauma. Students in schools earmarked for closure and on affected courses likewise speak of shock and trauma. In this context, it appears highly disrespectful to pretend it is business as usual. For example, university communications continue to pump out chirpy messages, communications with staff continue to feature pictures of UEB members with smiling faces, and alumni were recently invited to a reception at the House of Lords ‘for a chance to hear the latest news and research highlights from the University. Enjoy wine and canapés in this historic setting, with wonderful views of the river Thames’. Have you considered how to communicate more appropriately across all communication channels, and if so why has this been refused, and if not, why not?

### Sequencing

1. Consultation schedules circulated on 7 February indicate that decisions on re-organisations and closures will not be taken before May, but risk of redundancy letter have already been sent, and Voluntary Redundancy scheme information is to be launched in the week commencing 10 of February. How do UEB know what staff to target in with VR and what staff to make redundant if the consultation on re-organisation is genuine? That is to say, are UEB working on redundancies assuming that plans will not change through consultation?
2. What does the UEB mean by “key stakeholders (by School)” in the proposed consultation timeline?
3. Why will Heads of School who have received risk of redundancy letters be involved in reducing the numbers of those in ‘scope’ of redundancy? Doesn’t this constitute a conflict of interest?

4. There are reports that in some Schools, like MATHS, only a sub-group of academic staff have received 'in scope/at risk' letters. On what basis and criteria was this selection made?
5. Are decisions about whether to proceed with the proposals or accept alternatives and about whether to make staff redundant being made **at the end** of the 90-day consultation (as indicated in the briefing on 28 Jan and the VC's all-staff email of 29 Jan) or are at least some decisions being made **during** the 90-day period, as indicated in the PVC's letter (sent from HR) of 29 Jan, which suggests that decisions will be made during the process which would remove some staff from the pool of people at risk of redundancy?
6. What exactly is the relationship between the 'formal' process of consultation on UEB's proposals and the statutory process for consultation regarding redundancies?
7. Why are the consultations on UEB's proposals *and* on possible redundancies arising from them being conducted concurrently? Isn't it necessary to decide first whether UEB's proposals or some other alternative proposals are going to be carried forward *before* determining which posts are at risk of redundancy? Different posts are very likely to be 'in scope' under different proposals.
8. When exactly will any necessary redundancies take effect? The consultation period seems designed to lead to redundancies during or very soon after the 90-day period, but the VC's email of 29 Jan says that 'If, at the end of the consultation process, we think we need to go ahead with reducing our number of academic staff, then we will not be looking for those staff to leave immediately – rather we are anticipating a gradual reduction in the number of staff over several years'.
9. Is it possible that some staff could be told at the end of the consultation that their posts will certainly be terminated, but not for 'several years'?

### **Proposal justifications**

1. The data pack uploaded to Academic Futures on 7 February provides only statistics but no assumptions of the proposed university model or workings that show how the changes lead to savings. These should be provided to staff for the consultation.
2. Data allocation is incorrect in complex schools, e.g. planning data is returned alongside architecture and human geography alongside earth sciences. For all cases, can data be provided from internal sources to reflect current school allocations.
3. Research income figures are a snapshot; the last five years should be provided to understand wider averages.
4. Can you provide the formula and rationale used to calculate operational SSRs in each school?

### **Proposal rationales**

1. Why is the Global Humanities proposed SSR of 1:24 so out of line with sector medians?
2. How is the existence of one college above two schools justified financially? What would it do exactly that cannot be done in schools?

3. How have 'future state' student numbers been determined and why do some schools have no change expected (e.g., LAWPL) while others have considerable decreases expected? What data was used to determine these numbers?

### **Financial information**

1. What were the UEB's total travel expenses last year and what sum was spent on first-class travel?
2. How much has Cardiff University paid Southern University Management Services (SUMS Consulting) in all services related to the production of the current proposal?
3. What is the annual cost of the university's membership to SUMS Consulting?
4. What is the total cost of services/assignments given by the university to SUMS Consulting since the 2020/21 financial year?
5. Can the university provide a copy of all contracts signed with SUMS Consulting since the 2020/21 financial year?

### **Workloads**

1. The proposal notes 'some immediate challenges' and increased workloads. This will have a mid to long-term impact on academic staff and research output, including funding applications. Has this been considered? As Research Power is one REF metric, what is the anticipated impact here? Has this been considered?
2. Workloads in some Schools – based on the agreed tariffs – are already high. Reducing staff and increasing SSRs will only increase workload pressures. In the context of there not being a standard WMAs at Cardiff, how will a 'sustainable workload' be ensured?

### **Schools of Global Humanities proposals**

1. The Academic Futures Consultation Document sent to ENCAP staff states that "There will be benefits to the student (and staff) experience with smaller, similar-tariff, cohorts." But, as SSRs are planned to increase, won't the benefits from smaller cohorts be off-set by the concurrent reduction in staff numbers?
2. The Academic Futures Consultation Document states that "we currently [...] run similar programmes and modules simultaneously across many Schools". Exactly which programmes and modules currently taught in other Schools does UEB think are 'similar' to what is taught in ENCAP?
3. In the proposals, the Schools that are to form SOGLH are the only ones that don't have target job reductions assigned to individual Schools, but instead have a total for the four Schools combined: what is the rationale for treating these four Schools so differently from all others in the University?
4. The consultation tells us that it will be "necessary" to "review programmes, including number of optional modules, mindful of information provided to students during recruitment and enrolment". ENCAP has only very recently been through a very time-consuming and highly stressful process of revalidation, which we are now told it will be

necessary to re-do. Given that UEB must have been working on its proposals for much of the last 18 months and known the likely need for extensive programme review, why was the revalidation process not halted pending decisions on Academic Futures?

5. To what extent were QS rankings and REF results taken into account in the proposals? ENCAP is one of the few Schools that was already in the QS top 100 and one of the best performers in REF, yet it is set to lose both staff members and identity under these proposals, jeopardizing both subject-area reputations and REF performance.
6. The international reputational damage already caused for ENCAP subjects by the announced proposals will take years to repair: was this factored in to UEB's planning? Was jeopardizing English Language and Literature's top 100 QS ranking and other league table rankings in this way felt to be a price worth paying as part of the larger project?
7. Does 'Global Humanities' feature as a category in any relevant league tables?
8. Why do the proposals not allow for the possibility that any MUSIC staff might move to the new School of Global Humanities? What is the rationale for treating them differently from ancient history, religion, and modern languages staff whose programmes are similarly being discontinued?
9. The proposals for SOGLH include an aspiration to be "Renowned for educating humanities graduates who have engaged in a Global Humanities Curriculum and who have had the opportunity to participate in global mobility, *supported as appropriate by language acquisition and intercultural awareness*" (italics added). How will this be possible if provision in modern languages is ceasing?
10. SOGLH is to be organised around "four interdisciplinary thematic areas". Why these four themes in particular? Which humanities academics were involved in determining them? Which experts in English Literature, Language, Philosophy, Welsh, History, and Modern Languages did UEB consult in order to determine what would be appropriate interdisciplinary themes?
11. The proposed 'interdisciplinary themes' seem to consist partly of recognizable disciplines (e.g. 'history', 'ethics') and partly of terms closer to actual themes (e.g. 'ideologies', 'heritage'): what is the rationale behind this odd mixture?
12. League tables are organised by traditional academic discipline (as are REF UoAs): why is it felt that it would be better to organise and manage SOGLH (with the exception of Welsh) by 'theme' rather than by units corresponding to league tables and REF UoAs?
13. Throughout secondary school (including at A-level) pupils study academic subjects that correspond to recognisable university disciplines, and currently the majority of students in ENCAP have chosen to study a single academic subject, with a sizable minority doing joint honours in two recognizable disciplines. What market research has been undertaken to show that in future students will instead want to study 'interdisciplinary themes' of the kind listed in the proposal? What evidence is there for applicant demand for programmes in 'Global Humanities'?
14. The proposals envisage SOGLH taking fewer, higher calibre students than at present: why would better students be more attracted to programmes with a significantly *higher* SSR and *more restricted* optional choice than is currently the case?
15. SOGLH is to include a 'Department' of Welsh, but (it seems) no other departments. What is the rationale for treating Welsh differently from the other disciplines within the new School?

16. What does it actually mean in practice for Welsh to be a 'Department' within a School, especially if the rest of the School is not organised into departments?
17. In the diagram of the proposed structure of the College and constituent Schools on p. 13 of the Academic Futures Consultation Document sent to ENCAP staff every School except SOGLH is sub-divided into constituent academic disciplines. Only SOGLH is subdivided into 'themes' plus one 'department'. What is the rationale for treating this one proposed School so differently from all the others?
18. Page 14 of the Academic Futures Consultation Document sent to ENCAP staff states that "Given its overwhelmingly *home* student demographic, the School is highly exposed to variation in student demand" (italics added). Yet much of the blame for the University's current financial crisis is being placed on a fall in *international* student recruitment. Have recent events not shown that high exposure to 'variation' in *international* student demand is much riskier and has worse consequences than variation in *home* student demand?
19. We are told that the new School of Global Humanities will be managed by one Head of School, four Heads of Themes, and a Head of Welsh. Many staff will feel that their work engages with more than one of the 'themes': will they have several managers within the School? How will that work in practice? Or will they pick (or be assigned to) a single theme? Conversely some staff currently teaching programmes that it's proposed will continue to be offered do not seem to align obviously with any of the themes: how will they be managed? Staff in the Department of Welsh will be doing work that falls under the four themes: does that mean they will be answerable both to the Head of Welsh and the Head(s) of whichever themes connect with their work?
20. The proposal has SOGLH move to a "1:24 operational SSR", but it is clear from the Academic Futures Data Pack on the intranet that of all the Schools in the University, only SOGLH is being required to raise the SSR to that level. What is the rationale for requiring this one School to move to that specific ratio? Why is it so much higher than other Schools, some of which are planned to be as low as 1:10, 1:12, or 1:15?