



# FSU

FREE SPEECH UNION

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**Professor Colin Riordan**  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
Main Building  
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Cardiff  
CF10 3AT

10 March 2022

By email to: [v-c@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:v-c@cardiff.ac.uk)

Dear Professor Riordan,

I am writing to you in my capacity as General Secretary of the Free Speech Union (FSU). The FSU is a non-partisan, mass-membership public interest body that stands up for the speech rights of its members and campaigns for free speech more widely.

As you may be aware, the Free Speech Union has been assisting a group of our members at Cardiff in connection with a long-running campaign targeting them for their beliefs. To that end, we wrote to the Education Minister Mr Jeremy Miles MS last month, after our members concluded that the University's internal process had come to a dead-end following the failure of the administration to address their concerns over an extended period of time. Since then, the matter has received national press attention and has been raised by members of the Welsh parliament.

Our letter was a public letter which you can see [here](#), and set out in detail the background to these events and the university's handling of them. We will therefore not repeat the substance of that material here.

We have two purposes in writing to you:

- 1) To advise you about another escalation in the campaign targeting your staff members and their colleagues and to present new material evidence about this campaign; and
- 2) To ask you to set up an independent inquiry to examine the handling of the events at Cardiff.

### New evidence of harassment

We have been alerted by a whistle-blower at Cardiff that more stickering has taken place near one of the Cardiff University campuses. Alongside innocuous and unobjectionable stickers supporting trans rights are stickers depicting:

- 1) A woman holding an outstretched gun with the caption "Not gay as in happy, but queer as in fuck you"
- 2) Another image of a person holding a gun, with a trans flag and the logo "Antihomophobe action" and the caption "Destroy fascism/eat shit Nazi scum".

The first of these repeats the imagery and phrasing of the leaflet handed out on campus last year. The use of exactly the same imagery, coming immediately after the matter was again in the public domain, suggests that the individuals behind this latest effort are linked with the long-running campaign against your staff.

We defend the rights of students and members of the public to campaign for whatever they wish. But materials like these are not simply a case of one side in a debate expressing a strong view; they are characteristic of one side in a debate trying to frighten the other into silence by threatening violence. This has been a long-running campaign intended to silence academics who don't agree with every aspect of the agenda of certain trans activists.

We can also present new evidence related to the demonstration which took place on campus last year. We have been given new video evidence of the protest at which the "Act Now" gun leaflet was distributed. We believe this material may assist, along with other evidence, in identifying witnesses who could corroborate the identity of the individuals handing out the leaflet. This material can be downloaded [here](#) and on behalf of our members at Cardiff we ask that you review this footage as part of a broader investigation.

To be clear, students have every right to protest and demonstrate peacefully. There is no implication that all attendees at this protest knew what the contents of the intimidating leaflet were or endorsed it. There is, however, a legitimate concern about multiple incitements to violence against members of your staff because of their beliefs. The University failed to interview attendees at this protest as witnesses to identify individuals who had handed out materials inciting violence. We now urge you to revisit this.

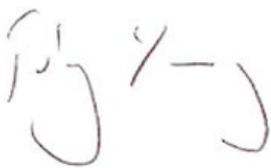
#### Independent inquiry

Given that senior figures in the University administration have failed to handle the matter to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, that evidence was misplaced, and that the University has consistently failed to recognise the seriousness of this situation, we believe that an independent third party should be appointed to chair an investigation into the University's handling of this matter.

This inquiry must have broad terms of reference to include all possible relevant avenues of investigation. It must consider the particular details of this case, including the new material we have supplied, the failure of the University to properly investigate the death threats made against its staff and its failure to take timely action. Crucially, the investigation should encompass the culture of intolerance that has been allowed to take root at the University – in no small part due to institutional failure.

We will continue to raise this matter publicly.

Yours sincerely,



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