



**FSU**  
FREE SPEECH UNION

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David Isaac CBE  
Worcester College  
Oxford  
OX1 2HB

15 March 2022

Dear Mr Isaac,

**Re. Wilberforce Academy**

Further to your letter dated 29 September 2021, I am writing to you regarding further developments concerning the Wilberforce Academy conference held at Worcester College from 5 to 11 September 2021.

As you will be aware, Christian Concern commissioned an independent inquiry into the conference. The independent report convincingly establishes, among other findings, the following:

- there is no evidence of any 'aggressive leafleting' of College members by attendees at the conference;
- conference attendees did not approach College members to initiate unsolicited conversations about conversion therapy; rather, they responded to queries posed by new students of the College.

The second of those findings is particularly pertinent:

The students had discussed [a copy of the Wilberforce Academy handbook] among themselves and by breakfast time on Saturday were ready to raise the subject of conversion therapy with attendees. Thereafter it appears that some of them made complaints to the College.

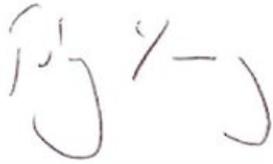
The interaction between attendees and College members was not, as the College claimed, a 'distressing' episode meriting unreserved apologies. It was, in fact, a laudable example of free speech in action. Students and attendees showed mutual respect and curiosity about each other's beliefs and engaged in civil discussion on a controversial topic.

The College's uncritical acceptance of claims that the conference harmed students was a serious error. In keeping with, as you put it yourself, your own and the College's commitment to freedom of speech, the College should have investigated and faced down students' ill-founded complaints. No higher education institution should apologise for free speech.

We suggest the College could put right its error by apologising to Christian Concern for its demeaning mischaracterisation of the conference and taking its booking for the next Wilberforce Academy conference in September 2022.

You do not need reminding that refusing to provide the College's services because of Christian Concern's religious beliefs would constitute unlawful discrimination. We continue to stand by Christian Concern and will provide whatever legal and financial assistance we deem appropriate should this matter escalate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Young', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Toby Young  
General Secretary, The Free Speech Union  
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cc: Andrea Williams, Director, Christian Concern  
Ms Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor, Oxford University  
Rt Hon Michelle Donelan, Universities Minister  
Lord Wharton, Chair, Office for Students  
Nicola Dandridge, CEO, Office for Students  
Mr Iain Mansfield, Special Advisor to Michelle Donelan  
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