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29 September 2021

Dear Mr Young

**Re: Professor Steven Greer**

Thank you for your correspondence regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech as they relate to Professor Steven Greer.

I want to reassure you that freedom of expression and academic freedom are at the heart of our University mission. Encouraging thorough exploration of controversial issues from diverse perspectives is a vital part of this and a core component of our institutional values.

Importantly, the protections given to academic freedom are a privilege, and with that privilege comes responsibility. Our freedom of speech code of practice underlines the vital importance of both the rights and the responsibilities of staff and students, as members of a free and democratic society, to speak openly without fear of censorship or limitation, provided that this right is exercised responsibly, within the law, and with respect for others who may have differing views.

Given the degree of public interest in matters relating to academic freedom, you will appreciate the care and attention with which the University must approach this matter. It is incumbent on us to ensure that we comply fully with our procedures and policies, and abide by the best practice set out by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator in relation to formal student complaints.

Some of the information included in your letter is factually incorrect. As you are not involved in the process, and bearing in mind the requirement for confidentiality, I cannot respond to the questions 2-7 in your letter.

In relation to question 1, I can confirm both that the unit is still being taught and that material from the topic in question is still being taught, just in a new format. This follows Professor Greer's decision not to continue the coordination of the two units he created entitled 'Human Rights in Law, Politics and Society', the result of which is a change in approach to the course contents by its new coordinators.

The new coordinators for 2021/22 have designed a new structure for these units, which will continue to cover Islam, China and the Far East, placing the issues raised in a wider context and broadening the focus to include other perspectives.

As Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I recognise that this matter has caused deep concern for some members of our community, and that people hold very different views on the issues raised. I also fully appreciate that there is a clear tension between those who wish us to explain where we are in our process and those involved in the process who can and should expect the University maintain its confidentiality.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

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

**Professor Judith Squires**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost

cc Professor Ken Oliphant, Head of School, University of Bristol Law School

cc The Rt Hon Michelle Donelan, Universities Minister

cc Lord Wharton, Chair, Office for Students

cc Nicola Dandridge, CEO, Office for Students

cc Iain Mansfield, Special Advisor, Department for Education

cc David Smy, Office for Students