

From: Peter MATHIESON <principal@ed.ac.uk>

Date: Wednesday, 26 January 2022 at 12:58

To: Free Speech Union <info@freespeechunion.org>

Cc: shirley-anne.somerville.msp@parliament.scot <shirley-anne.somerville.msp@parliament.scot>

Subject: RE: Sir Geoff Palmer's Comments

Dear Toby (if I may)

Thank you for your letter of 21 January 2022 detailing the concerns of the Free Speech Union over the comments that Sir Geoff Palmer made regarding the views of Professor Hearn and Emeritus Professor Devine following the publication of the City of Edinburgh Council's Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group report.

First it is important to state that The University of Edinburgh is fully committed to the principles of Freedom of Expression which we note in this statement posted on our website at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/freedom-of-expression>

There are very strongly held views and differences of opinion in this particular debate and we are clear that at all times debate, discussion and disagreement must be conducted in a respectful manner, abiding by the law and under the auspices of the University's Dignity and Respect Policy.

I did not feel that the recent exchanges had always been conducted with the necessary respect for different perspectives and I have therefore spoken to the Chair of the Steering Group of the University's Review, Sir Geoff Palmer, to clarify expectations under our Dignity and Respect Policy.

My senior colleagues and I will monitor events to ensure that all members of the University community can continue to work in the supportive environment that is essential to a modern University.

Regards, Peter

Professor Peter Mathieson

Principal & Vice-Chancellor

University of Edinburgh