



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

Dept. of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick, Gibbet Hill, Coventry, CV4 7AL
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9 October 2020

Dear Professor Amanda Broderick,

I write on behalf of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), which is the premier academic society in the UK dedicated to promoting the study of the Middle East.

We are concerned to hear about the threats of redundancy of Social Sciences professors across sociology, politics, psychosocial studies and development.

UEL has a long history of innovative and important sociological work on the Middle East, particularly focused on gender, racialization, refugee studies, global development, psychosocial studies and social work. Making the Social Sciences professors redundant would pose a severe risk to the broad and creative tradition of social science work at UEL.

We understand that these redundancies are not financially necessary, given that the financial situation of the university has improved due to better than anticipated student numbers and the success of the Voluntary Severance scheme.

Moreover, in July, UEL Social Sciences staff produced an Alternative Business Plan that would meet financial shortfalls while retaining the existing staff team and meeting students' needs. We have been told that the professorial group remains prepared to adopt that plan, which involves fractional reductions in their contracts. Sadly, management has refused to engage with the plan and, instead, is seeking to remove costs for the long term by downsizing Social Sciences and cutting most or all research activity.

UEL Social Sciences Professors are active and innovative researchers and teachers. Social Sciences at UEL, and particularly Social Sciences students, including graduate students and PhD students, would lose out significantly from the loss of their professors, especially at this difficult time, when all staff are already working overtime to ensure students get the best education possible.

Students at UEL, a large number of whom are from BAME and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve the highest possible quality of education, informed by cutting-edge research that only professors and other research-active teachers are able to



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deliver. We call on UEL to engage constructively with the Alternative Business Plan and to remove the threat of redundancy from your Social Science professors.

Yours sincerely,

Vice President, BRISMES
On behalf of BRISMES Council