

19 June 2019

Sir Gregory Winter, Master
Trinity College Cambridge
CB2 1TQ

masters.secretary@trin.cam.ac.uk

ref: HEI 25a(Trinity College,Cambridge)

Dear Sir Gregory,

URGENT: CENSURE AND ACADEMIC BOYCOTT

You will be aware of the wide-ranging public comment, criticism, and petition directed at Trinity College since its Council took the decision to withdraw from the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). We write to urge Trinity College Council to reverse this damaging, un-collegial decision.

You will also be aware that UCU has launched a campaign in support of this call to reverse the decision. UCU has called on academics across the UK to voluntarily decline to undertake any discretionary work for the College, including discretionary student supervisions. The campaign also encourages all UCU members to refuse to accept speaking engagements and other voluntary roles connected with the College.

The impact upon Trinity College's reputation caused by the decision to withdraw from a strong, mutual pension scheme is already severe. UCU urges Trinity College Council to consider that widespread dismay at their decision reflects just how integral mutuality and collaboration are to a functioning higher education sector. Without urgent action to reverse the decision to withdraw, Trinity will experience further reputational damage and will cement perceptions of it as an elitist, insular institution.

There is still time to rejoin USS employers standing together to underpin the provision of a mutual defined benefit pension scheme for staff in Higher Education. Trinity College's own published statement identifies USS as being in good health.

The UCU Vice President has called an emergency meeting of the Higher Education Committee (HEC), (of which she is Chair) on 21 June. If Trinity College does not reconsider its position as a matter of urgency, this meeting will consider how to implement the recent HE sector conference motion regarding this matter. This will include the implementation of UCU's censure and academic boycott process. The relevant motion is appended to this letter.

To be clear: UCU HE sector conference has called on the HEC to apply a UK-wide censure of your institution. It is highly likely that (unless Trinity College reverses its decision to seek to leave USS) UCU will move to the immediate, public censure of the institution as part of our established, staged procedures for implementing one of our most serious sanctions.

Placement on UCU's Censure list will be publicised widely throughout the UK and beyond. It will result in international awareness of the strength of feeling against the College, and of the measures that UCU will take to protect decent pensions.

Censure and academic boycott is a process reserved for institutions where the conduct of the governing body leaves us with no other option. UCU does not implement such sanctions lightly, and does so quite rarely.

UCU sector conference and UCU members at Cambridge have demonstrated clear support for the implementation of censure and academic boycott sanctions.

We are clear that the UCU would prefer to resolve this escalating dispute. A protracted and public escalation could make finding a resolution more difficult. There is still time to avoid such an escalation and we therefore urge you as a matter of urgency to take all necessary steps within the governance arrangements of the College to reverse the path you appear to have chosen.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Bridge UCU Head of Higher Education

Vicky Blake UCU Vice President HE

cc UCU's Greg Barnett, National Head, Regional Organisation
UCU's Lydia White, Regional Office, E & C

HE sector conference motion L8

HESC condemns:

The irresponsible decision by the Council of Trinity College Cambridge on 24 May to initiate withdrawal from USS and instead establish a new section in a private Trinity College Scheme.

HESC believes:

This puts Trinity's narrow interest in protecting its own assets ahead of the principle of mutuality in USS and the interests of higher education in the UK.

HESC resolves:

To publicise Cambridge UCU's call to not undertake further discretionary work for Trinity such as student supervisions if Trinity leaves USS

To encourage all UCU members to refuse to accept speaking engagements and other voluntary roles at our with Trinity College

To call on UCU to invoke the national censure and academic boycott procedure unless and until Trinity reverses its decision to leave USS.