

19 April 2024

Dear Colleagues

JOINT LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS OF PSA, BISA & UACES ON RISKS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

We write as the chairs of the Political Studies Association (PSA), the British International Studies Association (BISA) and the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) – the three main learned societies representing scholars in politics and international relations (IR) in the UK.

We fully appreciate the financial and other challenges facing many Higher Education Institutions in the UK such as Goldsmiths, and the considerable pressures on university leaders to take business decisions in the best interests of their institution.

However, we are deeply concerned about the proposed cuts to the Politics and International Relations Department, which would make 3.1 members of staff redundant (2.6 at level of Senior Lecturer or above), leaving the department with only 11.5 FTE (7.5 FTE at Lecturer level).

We are aware that the department has already lost a significant number of staff in recent years, which have not been replaced, already limiting its scope to carry out the kind of research and teaching for which the institution is world-renowned.

These cuts seem short-sighted, given almost twice as many young people are now taking an A-level in Politics compared to twenty years ago and are increasingly engaged in political and global issues. The British Academy have demonstrated (see this report) that the skills gained by politics and international relations graduates are highly valued by many employers across all sectors of the economy. Goldsmiths should be in a good place to take advantage of this and will not be able to if the proposed redundancies at the level suggested are made.

We can certainly assure you of the very high esteem in which the Politics and IR department at Goldsmiths is held in our profession and within our associations. This department also has a strong profile within the social sciences more generally. In particular, Goldsmiths is known for promoting a broad approach to politics, which challenges mainstream conceptions and provides analysis, reflection,

and proposals on the issues we face, globally and in the UK. This is core to the research and teaching of staff within the department for which they have an excellent reputation.

The success of this approach was seen in the PSA's decision to award the editorship of one of its flagship journals, *Politics*, to the department recently. The team has shown impressive innovation and professionalism in their editorial approach which has meant the journal has achieved impressive impact factors and other metrics over this period.

We urge you, during this consultation phase, to consider the damage further reductions in staff would have to the institution in terms of teaching, research, and wider reputation. We urge you to work creatively with staff and students to find a way forward without compulsory redundancies – one which protects Goldsmith's reputation and future prospects and also provides opportunities for students from all backgrounds to study Politics and International Relations.

Yours sincerely

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Chair, Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom

Professor Kyle Grayson

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Professor Simon Usherwood

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