

Open letter to Mr Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive, UUK, on the USS dispute, 16th March 2018, from Presidents and Chairs of 29 British Subject Associations and Learned Societies in the Arts and Humanities.

Dear Mr Jarvis,

As Presidents and Chairs of Learned Societies in disciplines that traditionally attract relatively high proportions of women, we feel it especially incumbent on us to draw your attention to the equality and diversity consequences of the changes UUK has thus far proposed to the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The undermining of the USS threatens substantially to reduce benefits for all USS members, but as has been widely acknowledged, such changes would affect worst those at the start of their careers, those who take career gaps, and part-timers. There are far higher proportions of women at lower career levels than at higher ones, and they are also greater in number than they used to be, as are BAME colleagues. The current proposals will thus have a disproportionate effect on women and BAME colleagues, and are therefore inherently in contradiction with Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter principles.

We further draw your attention to a report produced for the British Academy in 2014 by Christopher Hill and Sarah Beadle. They remark that along with the BBC and the British Council, our HEIs are a key vehicle of the UK's 'soft power', 'a major national asset which attracts many thousands of international students each year with wide ranging benefits for our society and the economy'. The Learned Societies we chair represent thousands of academics in institutions across the country, whose teaching produces not only the students who currently go on in their turn to become academics in the Arts and Humanities, but also many of those who go on to jobs in the BBC, the British Council, and many other cultural institutions who contribute to the UK's global reputation. We note that as the financial rewards of an academic career decline, relative to other professions, it will become progressively more difficult to renew our ranks in future years, and we put it to you that fostering such a deterioration in the terms and conditions of academic employment in UK HEIs is not in the national interest.

Signed,

Professor Susan Bruce, co-Chair, Arts and Humanities Alliance. (Keele University.)

Professor Martin Halliwell, co-Chair, Arts and Humanities Alliance.

Professor Bill Burgwinkle, President, Society for French Studies, (University of Cambridge.)

Professor Jennifer Richards, Chair of the HE Committee, English Association.
(Newcastle University.)

Professor Greg Woolf, Chair, Council of University Classical Departments. (School
of Advanced Study, University of London.)

Professor Simon McVeigh, President, Royal Musical Association. (Goldsmiths,
University of London).

Dr Joe Morrison, Director, British Philosophical Association. (Queen's University,
Belfast.)

Professor Angelia Wilson, Chair, Political Studies Association. (University of
Manchester.)

Professor Ambreena Manji, Vice-President, African Studies Association UK.
(Cardiff University)

Dr Alex Thomson, Chair, University English. (Edinburgh University.)

Professor Julian Dodd, Director, The Mind Association. (University of
Manchester.)

Emeritus Professor Stephen Lacey, Chair, The Standing Conference of University
Drama Departments.

Professor Graham Smith, Trustee, Oral History Society. (Newcastle University)

Professor Catherine Edwards, President, Society for the Promotion of Roman
Studies. (Birkbeck, University of London)

Professor Julian Preece, Vice-Chair, University Council of Modern Languages.
(Swansea University.)

Professor Brian Ward, Chair, British Association for American Studies.
(Northumbria University).

Professor Claire Gorrara, President, Association of University Professors and
Heads of French. (Cardiff University.)

Dr Helen Junior Minors, Chair, National Association for Music in Higher
Education

Ms Seraphima Kennedy, Director, National Association of Writers in Education

Professor Andrew Linn, President of the Henry Sweet Society for the History of
Linguistic Ideas. (Westminster University.)

Dr Stephen Sutcliffe, President, British Association for the Study of Religions.

Professor Naomi Standen, President, British Association for Chinese Studies.
(University of Birmingham.)

Dr Lucinda Matthews-Jones and Professor Heather Shore, co-Convenors,
HistoryUK.

Dr Julia Egorova, President, British Association for Jewish Studies. (Durham
University.)

Dr Jamie Sherry, Co-Chair, Association of Adaptation Studies.

Professor David Wood, President, Society for Latin American Studies.
(University of Sheffield)

Professor Claire Taylor, President-elect, Association of Hispanists of Great
Britain and Ireland. (University of Liverpool.)

Professor Jonathan Hale, Architectural Humanities Research Association.
(University of Nottingham.)

Professor Christopher Gerrard, Vice-Chair, University Archaeology UK.
(University of Durham.)

Dr Tim Young, Chair, Historical Metallurgy Society.