



# TRANSFORMATIONAL TIMES

a UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION guide for students, OCTOBER 2016

Things are happening at the UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER. It's in the air. You can sense it. Expectation. Uncertainty, a little excitement. Anger. Perhaps resignation. Fear and anxiety.

## INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Enter Paul Boyle, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER's president and vice-chancellor. Professor Boyle is new — he started at Leicester just two years ago. But he and his 'university leadership team' have a **STRATEGIC PLAN** for the university.

Bits of the Plan are quite visible: a new logo, new signs, a piazza in front of the library. But the planned institutional transformation involves more than this. Professor Boyle and his team are also merging

departments, closing departments and courses, and sacking staff. If the president and vice-chancellor gets his way, as many as 250 or even 300 lecturers and others may lose their jobs.

## DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

The **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK** is already being closed down, and over the summer five more departments have been targeted. These are just the first on a long list.

- The **VAUGHAN CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING** is older than the university itself. Leicester City Council and the city's three MPs are unanimous in opposing its closure. At least 22 employees and 40 associate tutors will lose their jobs. Some current students doubt whether they will be able to finish their courses. We are concerned that in pursuit of institutional transformation, other students will suffer such treatment and insecurity.
- **MATHEMATICS** (and **ACTUARIAL SCIENCE**). Out of 33 academic staff, 26 must reapply for their jobs. One

mathematician will be shunted to a 'teaching only' contract, five will be out of work altogether. Hundreds of mathematicians, from every continent, have signed the petition of **NO CONFIDENCE** in Paul Boyle and his team.

- **CRIMINOLOGY**. Fewer students are to be recruited and seven out of 24 academics will lose their jobs.
- **PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY**. Managers wish to close the Condensed Matter Physics Research Centre. Four academics are 'at risk' of redundancy and 12 PhD students will be lost too.
- **NATURAL SCIENCES** (iScience). Managers propose closing a renowned interdisciplinary course and making six staff redundant.

If you are a student in one of these departments — or any department — we encourage you to support your departmental staff and sign the petition. [See link over the page.]

In addition, the university's award-winning **BOOKSHOP** will be closed. In



President Boyle: institutional transformer, strategic planner



its place will be a giftshop and departmental 'pop-ups' selling assigned texts only. You will no longer be able to browse in one of the country's few independent university bookshops.

These changes are happening on top of an already bad situation for UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER employees. Your university is top of the gender pay gap league: male lecturers and professors on average earn 25% more than their female colleagues. Almost 60% of teaching is done by staff on casualised contracts, often working for less than a living wage. This is a shameful situation and no so different to that at Coventry University, which has been in national news because of its bad employment practices.

### CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

President Boyle claims that institutional transformation must be accelerated because of 'financial challenges'. But we have looked at the figures. Almost all of the deficit managers are predicting is a result of a made-up accounting term, and 'additional costs of staff restructuring'. In other words, if they weren't sacking people there'd be no deficit. President Boyle has manufactured a financial 'crisis'!



**The Fielding Johnson building's new reception. President Boyle spent £479,000 refurbishing this and his 'executive corridor'**

### WHY SHOULD I CARE?

President Boyle's hoped-for institutional transformation will effect **YOU** and **YOUR EDUCATION**. These changes are happening now; they will continue over this academic year and beyond. Do you want to study in a department where your lecturers are worried about losing their jobs, worried about losing their colleagues and worried about the impact of all this on your experience and education? Over the next few years — if president and vice-chancellor Paul Boyle gets his way — lecturers at Leicester will be working more intensely. Part of his Plan is to increase the student-staff ratio by one-sixth, which will lead to more

stressed-out teachers. Remember: lecturers' working conditions are also your study-working conditions!

You might also care about where President Boyle is spending money (half of which comes from the fees you pay). He's trying to squeeze spending on lecturers and other staff. But he's happy to splash out elsewhere: £479,000, for example, refurbishing the reception and 'executive corridor' (where his offices are located, of course) of the Fielding Johnson building, a part of the campus rarely frequented by students. That's nearly half a million pounds, on a corridor that only a handful of people use!

### WHAT CAN I DO?

If you are concerned by all of this and you support our case — or if you simply want to know more — there are several things you can do and groups or people you can contact.

**Leicester University and College Union (UCU)**. That's us!

**w:** <http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/unions/ucu>

**f:** <https://www.facebook.com/leicesterucu/>

**t:** @LeicesterUCU — #OffTheBoyle

**e:** [ucu@le.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@le.ac.uk)

**Sign our petition:** <http://speakout.web.ucu.org.uk/no-cuts-no-confidence-at-university-of-leicester/>

**Leicester Students' Union**. Ask them and new president Rachel Holland what their position is. Ask them to support lecturers defending their jobs, conditions and the university

**w:** <http://www.leicesterunion.com/>,

**t:** @LeicesterUnion or @ULSU\_President.

University of Leicester's **president and vice-chancellor**, Prof. Paul Boyle. He is the person driving this process.  
**e:** [vc@le.ac.uk](mailto:vc@le.ac.uk)

Members of the **University Council** are ultimately responsible for the good governance of University of Leicester. Council is chaired by Dr Bridget Towle CBE.  
**e:** [bt82@le.ac.uk](mailto:bt82@le.ac.uk)

Education is under attack not only in Leicester, but throughout England and Wales. Government funding is cut. Fees go up and students become more indebted. Lecturers work harder and more precariously.

Private companies profit from the situation. Join the **national demonstration** in London on November 19.

