

Lee, Sue

From: Alexander, Karen
Sent: 07 September 2007 17:32
To: Hardcastle, Cliff; Nabhani, Farhad; Rampley, Matthew; Green, Eileen;
Cc: Barnes, Liz
Subject: Visiting Professor Appointment

Dear All,

In case you have not already been made aware, I thought it was appropriate that I draw your attention to the fact that the recent decision of the Professorial Conferment Committee to confer upon Patrick Holford the title of Visiting Professor has caused a lot of controversy.

Whilst the citation, references etc. presented to the Committee appeared to lead to a relatively straightforward decision it transpires that Patrick Holford's work is highly controversial and has been for many years – even to the point that we have now been made aware that websites exist dedicated solely to criticising Patrick and his work.

Since Patrick made it known that he had received this honour from the University through his website and other vehicles, I and others within the University, have received extensive correspondence from the research community in the field of nutrition heavily criticising the University for its decision and expressing serious concerns about academic standards at the University. Further, as a result of a series of Freedom of Information requests, some of these correspondents have acquired information pertaining to his appointment (in the form of our criteria for appointment, minutes of the meeting, the citation submitted by the School of Social Sciences & Law etc.) and much of this information, including the names of the members of the Committee in attendance, have now been published on the web.

The University is currently investing a lot of time and resources into investigating some of the concerns that have been expressed, with a view to determining what action, if any, may now be necessary or appropriate. In the meantime, however, the University has instructed Patrick that he should not continue to use the title of Visiting Professor of Mental Health & Nutrition, which he appears to have adopted without the formal approval of the University, as this would appear to suggest that he is in fact a Visiting Professor in the School of Health and Social Care linked to our nutrition and obesity research group, which clearly is not the case.

Whilst all of these events have resulted in the University retrospectively checking some of the information provided to PCC, and indeed to review its Governance and "due diligence arrangements" for ensuring the veracity of all information provided to the Committee, it remains our view that the Committee made a credible decision on the basis of the information provided and no criticism is being attached to the Committee for its actions.

With best wishes.

Graham

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