

REVISE + RESUBMIT

ATTACK DOTORG <attackdotorg@gmail.com>

TO: ATTACKDOTORG
SUBJECT: Dean's Updates

36% Spelling, grammar + syntax - passable.
No citations, no evidence,
reliance upon anecdote
+ emotive rhetoric.

Message from the Dean - February 2020

Dear colleagues - who is this addressed to? Permanent staff? Who is your implied / actual reader?
This week I would like to spend some time on [...] the issue of so-called precarious employment within Universities. I've been considering writing on this issue for a while, and I'm conscious that with the announcement of further industrial action this could be seen as provocative. That is not my intention, REALLY?
rather I hope to engage in the debate and clarify some of the issues. I have a specific view which is wholly based on my own experience and the evidence I see as Vice-President and Dean of Faculty. LACKING IN RIGOUR, WIDER RESEARCH NEEDED

Don't dance around the issue. State both sides clearly

irrelevant

This is not evidence in this submission

Another opinion is represented by one of our own professors, who wrote about precarious employment in The Guardian last month. You can read his views here under the provocative title 'UK academics must stand up to stop universities becoming sweatshops'. Really? I doubt if many of us have ever seen the inside of a sweatshop, far less come close to working in one. As a student I worked on the floor of a very hot steel rolling mill and sweat there meant exactly that. The professor assures me the headline was imposed by an editor keen to grab readers' attention and he agrees that it is not very helpful so on that we have a consensus. In fact, the professor and I have had a number of very useful and productive discussions over the years, and I welcome his efforts to encourage debate. However, I happen to think that his substantive argument that universities have adopted a business model that requires a greater use of fixed term contracts is mistaken. -> Evidence to counter this? Citations?

Again, personal experience is not rigorous evidence. CITATION NEEDED.

Vague

I imagine we can all agree that in the overwhelming majority of cases, it is very difficult to become established in an academic career. [...] Fixed term contracts have long been part of the academic career, but the situation for staff today is so very much better. This is one of the reasons I find the rhetoric around precarious employment difficult to reconcile with what I have seen and support across this Faculty. Terms and conditions for all of us have greatly improved, due to progressive employment legislation and employers realising that you get better results from treating good people well. I regularly sign off requests to extend contracts or convert temporary posts to standard contracts when permanent roles open up. This is often because activity has stabilised, or because staff are doing such a great job that we want to ensure we keep them. Yet it is unavoidable that we will have some staff on short-term contracts. Currently there are a larger than normal number of Professional Services (PS) staff in this situation because of all the uncertainties around role changes associated with the Student Experience Project. That has taken longer than originally planned, hence people have been on these contracts longer than anticipated, but we hope to resolve this in the next few months. I regret that is where we are, but it has been necessary. [...]

contradictory

Clarify. Where have you looked? Provide statistics + evidence beyond the anecdotal

DEFINE YOUR TERMS: DO YOU MEAN PERMANENT STAFF? IF SO, THIS DOESN'T SPEAK TO THE TOPIC.

This is equivalent to 'my best friend is black, so I can't be racist.'

Please let us keep some perspective on our working environment. We work in an incredibly supportive institution and, notwithstanding all the pressures we face, academics still have great freedom to choose how to spend our time. We have a dispute about pensions and there is the usual round of pay talks, but The University is not an exploitative employer that engineers precarious employment to suit its business model. We have an outstanding record in converting people to standard contracts where possible, and we treat those on temporary contracts with dignity and respect.

Again, to whom does this refer? Casual staff? AEs? GTAS? Prob. nsv...

You have not proven this, and it is precisely the charge against you.

Best wishes,
Dean of Faculty

What do you mean by this? Avoid emotive rhetoric.

provide figures What about teaching staff?

CITATION NEEDED

You have failed to defend this claim. Provide evidence!

Expand upon this? Many work across multiple institutions, but it's hardly a choice.

Is the implication here that those on non-permanent or zero-hours contracts are not doing a great job? You run a very large university. It seems unlikely you're familiar with everybody...

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SUBJECT: ~~Dean~~ Updates

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This week I would like to discuss precarious employment

considering

intention

debate

experience

as Vice President and Dean of Faculty.

opinion

views

to stop universities

I doubt

meant exactly that

not very helpful

a consensus

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I imagine we all agree

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rhetoric

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uncertainties

Student Experience

Please keep some perspective

The University is not an exploitative employer that engineers precarious

dignity and respect.

wishes,

Dean