

29 May 2002

Ms Mairi Stewart  
Acting Director of Human Resources  
University of St Andrews  
College Gate  
St Andrews KY19 9AL

Dear Ms Stewart,

I am writing to resign my Lectureship in Social Anthropology with effect from 31 August 2002.

I want to make it clear that I am resigning because of intimidation, collusion in intimidation, and persistent deception by a number of people in the University, including members of the University Executive. The accumulated effect has been to make my position untenable and to render my working conditions so unpleasant that no-one could reasonably be expected to work in such conditions.

You will recall that in early November 2001, following three increasingly intimidating e-mails from the Principal, I indicated both to the Principal and to Donald Beaton, then Director of Personnel Services, that I intended to resign because of the continual atmosphere of intimidation. At that time I took advice from a number of sources and the counsel I received was that I should exhaust all internal avenues before coming to an irrevocable decision. Since I had a promotion appeal outstanding, I decided to go through that procedure to see if there was yet some institutional mechanism which would demonstrate that the University was committed to fair and reasonable employment practices. Regrettably, the conduct of the promotions appeal procedure undermined my confidence still further.

As you know, Mr Beaton made several attempts to prevent me from bringing an appeal, saying that the Convener of the Appeal Panel, Mr A.M. MacIntyre, had considered certain evidence without convening the Appeal Panel and had decided that I did not have a case. When the Appeal Panel was finally convened as a result of my persistent representations that the University's procedures had been flouted, Mr MacIntyre claimed several times that Mr Beaton had repeatedly misled me about information he claimed to have passed to Mr MacIntyre. Clearly either Mr Beaton or Mr MacIntyre was not telling the truth. Whoever was misleading me, and indeed misleading the other members of the Appeal Panel and all others involved in the process, the appeal procedure was clearly not impartial. It also emerged that Mr Beaton had passed confidential information regarding my appeal to both the Secretary to the University, Mr David Corner, and the Deputy Principal, Professor Colin Vincent who was due to answer my promotion appeal on behalf of the University.

The circumstances surrounding my promotion appeal were, as you know, deeply unpleasant. In my letter of appeal I referred to unacceptable behaviour in the Department of Social Anthropology and the failure of the line management to have any effect over a long period. Some months earlier I had brought these problems to the attention of the Secretary to the University and Mr Beaton as Director of Personnel Services, but my representations then did not appear to result in any significant change.

As a result of the information about malpractice in the Department of Social Anthropology that I put forward in my promotion appeal last summer, the Director of Personnel Services went directly to the Deputy Principal, Professor Vincent. I was then asked to meet with them both on 2 August 2001. The Deputy Principal asked me if I was prepared to put my appeal 'on ice' while a rapid but thorough investigation was carried out into the allegations I had made about malpractice. I agreed to putting my appeal 'on ice' on the understanding that my appeal would be allowed to proceed once these thorough investigations were complete. This is not what happened.

My meeting on 2 August 2001 with the Deputy Principal and the Director of Personnel Services finished with the Deputy Principal accusing me of trying to blackmail the University (because I had said to someone else in the University that if the malpractice in the Department of Social Anthropology were to become public, it would

result in very negative publicity). I was absolutely astonished by the accusation that I was trying to blackmail the University when I was suggesting that it was time that people in positions of responsibility assumed their responsibilities. I was even more astonished when the Deputy Principal followed up the blackmail accusation, still in the presence of the Director of Personnel Services, with words very close to, if not exactly: 'You might think you can damage this University, but we can damage you a lot more. We can finish your academic career'.

An investigation into my allegations was subsequently conducted by two members of the Executive, the Secretary to the University, Mr David Corner, and the then Provost, Professor Philip Esler. They interviewed all of the teaching staff of the Department plus the Head of School, Professor John Skorupski, and then sent a report to the Principal, Dr Brian Lang, dated 28 September 2001.

I was promised in person, both by the Deputy Principal (in the presence of the Director of Personnel Services on 2 August 2001) and by the Secretary to the University (in the presence of the then Provost in September 2001), that the investigation into my allegations would be thorough. And yet, while being scathing of a number of practices which they label 'pathologies', their report is only one page long and no individual is named as being responsible for anything in particular. The report states that 'we have persuasive evidence which enables us to attach a name or names of colleagues to each of the above pathologies in relation to particular incidents' and that matters are kept 'documented and on file in the event that the action we recommend... does not produce the desired effect and further action is taken against a member or members of the unit'.

However, in a letter to me dated 24 January 2002, you stated that the Secretary to the University had 'instructed that the only document which should be retained is the report of the investigation', i.e. the one-page report which does not hold anyone responsible for anything in particular. Given that Mr Corner and Professor Esler had uncovered the 'pathological' behaviour which I had complained about, including obscene communications and defamation, and the repeated breaching of contractual obligations by some which resulted in others having to take on their work to ensure the running of the Department of Social Anthropology, it is almost inconceivable that all the evidence relating to this had been removed by the Secretary to the University.

In a letter to members of the Department of Social Anthropology dated 12 December 2001, the Principal wrote that: 'while the University trusts there will be no repetition of the inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour [uncovered by the Corner/Esler report], it will respond vigorously to any significant return to past pathologies'. How the Principal or anyone else would be able to identify such pathologies is not clear if the Secretary to the University has removed all of the evidence pertaining to them. In my view, this covering up of who was responsible for the behaviour in question broke the agreement which the Deputy Principal made with me on 2 August 2001 which was the condition of putting my promotion appeal 'on ice'. Clearly I agreed to this on condition that those who were responsible for unacceptable practices would be taken to task.

It emerged during the course of the Corner/Esler investigation that Professor Overing had been spreading a very ugly defamatory rumour about me which had no foundation whatsoever but which was very damaging to my reputation among staff and students and potentially threatened my whole career. Professor Overing had apparently said that I had a 'problem' with female students though, to my knowledge, no female student had ever complained to her or anyone else in the University about my behaviour. The matter had first come to my attention when my allocation of tutorial students for 2001/2002 by Professor Overing as Chairperson was almost exclusively male and this was statistically so unlikely that the allocation could not have been made by accident. I queried this with one colleague - Dr Roy Dilley - who then told me that he had heard from Dr Bolton that Professor Overing had been spreading a rumour. Dr Bolton subsequently made a submission about this to Professor Esler as part of the Corner/Esler investigation, though it is not specifically referred to in their report.

Three of the permanent staff of the Department of Social Anthropology - Drs Riches, Dilley and myself - along with Dr Peter Clark who replaced Professor Overing immediately following the Corner/Esler investigation, were presented with a few lines of the Corner/Esler report (though nothing more than this) in a meeting with the Principal on 2 November 2001, five weeks after the report was presented to him on 28 September. This meeting was conducted by the Principal in such a threatening, bullying manner that Dr Riches felt unable to speak and he subsequently made a complaint about it to the St Andrews AUT. The Principal gave the impression that everyone was equally to blame for the Department's ills when this was manifestly not the case. I was prevented from speaking by the Principal because he clearly did not like my attempts to present him with genuine cases of defamation in

the Department. Professor Overing and Mr Platt, who bear a great deal of responsibility for the poisonous atmosphere in the Department, were not present.

Immediately following this meeting, Dr Clark approached me in private. When I said to him that I could not tackle the problems of the Department on my own, he agreed but said that no-one else would support me. He then reminded me that I had indicated to the Principal earlier in the week that I had had enough of intimidation in the University, and that I intended to resign, but would not be able to do so, for practical reasons, before 31 August 2002. Dr Clark said that he was 'sure' that if I wanted to leave, a 'deal' could be made with the Director of Personnel Services whereby I could leave the University at the end of the first semester (i.e. 31 January 2002) but that my salary would be paid until the 31 August 2002. I told him point blank that I would not consider any such compromising deal. He refused to say who had authorised this deal, but made it clear that he had been authorised to approach me in this way. Naturally, such an authorisation could only have come from the Executive.

A further meeting to discuss the Corner/Esler report was held on 28 November, i.e. exactly two months after the report was first submitted to the Principal. Mr Corner and Professor Esler were present as were the Director of Personnel Services, Professor Skorupski and Dr Clark as well as Professor Overing, Drs Riches, Dilley, Harris and myself. Mr Platt and Professor Rapport were on leave and declined to attend. We were finally given copies of the Corner/Esler report at that meeting and a number of serious objections were raised to it, and to the behaviour of the Principal at the 2 November meeting, by my colleagues and myself. In particular the complaint was made that by failing to hold anyone in particular responsible for any particular 'pathology', the impression had been given that everyone was equally at fault.

Two weeks earlier (14 November), the Director of Personnel Services wrote to me saying that the Corner Esler review 'could find no evidence to substantiate the allegations made by [me]' and that '[t]he Promotion Appeal Panel will take as its starting point the findings of the Corner/Esler review'. In fact, when we finally saw the report, two months after it had been submitted to the Principal, it substantiated all of the allegations I had made.

Accompanying Mr Beaton's letter of 14 November 2001 was a separate 2-page report in which the Secretary and Provost 'advised' the Promotion Appeal Panel that I had not demonstrated that the promotions procedures had been 'improperly or unfairly executed'. It was not part of the remit of the Corner/Esler review to 'advise' the Promotion Appeal Panel of anything. This Panel is supposed to be completely independent. The agreement I made with the Deputy Principal on 2 August 2001 was that there would be an investigation into my allegations of malpractice in the Department of Social Anthropology and then we would return to the issue of my promotion appeal. If Mr Corner and Professor Esler were not satisfied that I had demonstrated that promotions procedures had been 'improperly or unfairly executed', there was a simple enough reason for this: in the course of their review I was not asked to provide evidence relating to my promotion application. Everyone, including the Deputy Principal, the Secretary and Provost, agreed throughout the conduct of the investigation into malpractice in the Department of Social Anthropology that this investigation and my promotion appeal were two quite separate matters.

However, once the Corner/Esler investigation was complete, every possible obstacle was put in my way to prevent me from pursuing my promotion appeal. First there was the letter from the Director of Personnel Services dated 14 November, referred to above, which accompanied the 'advice' of Mr Corner and Professor Esler to the Promotion Appeal Panel. This advice was quite improper and clearly prejudicial to the conduct of any appeal hearing. Of course, had it been put to me by the Deputy Principal during my meeting with him on 2nd August 2001 that members of the Executive would carry out an investigation into alleged malpractice but that no names would be mentioned in their final report; that no-one in particular would be held responsible for anything in particular; that those who were blameless would be tarred with the same brush as those who were not; that no reference would be made to any censure of those in management positions who bore considerable responsibility for the situation in the Department of Social Anthropology; that the Secretary to the University and the Provost would 'advise' the Promotions Appeal Panel that I had not demonstrated any impropriety when I had not been called upon to produce that evidence; and that the Secretary to the University would remove all evidence relating to their report, then of course I would not have entered into any agreement with the Deputy Principal on 2 August last year.

On 3 December 2001, Donald Beaton, wrote to me that the Convener of the Promotion Appeal Panel was 'not aware of any evidence to suggest that the investigations conducted by [Mr Corner and Professor Esler] were unfair, fundamentally flawed or open to serious challenge in some other way'. As I replied immediately, a number of very serious objections had been raised to the Corner/Esler report by my colleagues and myself during the meeting on 28 November 2001, at which he was present, when the report was finally presented to members of the Department of Social Anthropology. If the Convener of the Appeal Panel was not aware that the Corner/Esler report was regarded by some as 'fundamentally flawed and open to serious challenge', he should have been because the Director of Personnel Services himself witnessed the serious objections that were raised against it.

As you know, Mr Beaton left his post as Director of Personnel Services on 12 December 2001 to take up a post at Warwick University. On 19 December 2001, you, as Acting Director of Personnel Services, wrote to me that the Appeals Panel 'can see no grounds for continuing your case'. I was not aware that the Panel had met before then to discuss my promotion appeal, or that the Panel was empowered to meet without my being present. It subsequently emerged that the Panel had not met.

I also discovered, on 18 February 2002 when the first papers for the Appeal Hearing were distributed, that copies of correspondence between myself and the Director of Personnel Services, which I had understood to be confidential to him and the Convener of the Appeal Panel, had been forwarded to the Secretary, Mr David Corner, and the Deputy Principal, Professor Vincent. Since the Deputy Principal was to be available to make a representation to the Promotion Appeal Panel in his role as Chairman of the Academic and Related Staff Committee which was responsible for promotions in the first place, it was doubly improper that confidential correspondence from me to the Director of Personnel Services should have been passed on to him. Why the Secretary to the University, Mr Corner, was also passed this correspondence is unclear but it would seem to indicate that there was collusion between the Personnel Office and members of the Executive in an attempt to prevent me from bringing my promotion appeal.

There followed other communications from the Personnel Services/ Human Resources office attempting to dissuade me from bringing my appeal at all, telling me that the Panel would not accept such and such

a submission, or such and such a question to a witness, or such and such a response from a witness, all in clear contravention of the University's published procedures.

Because of my insistence that the University's procedures be followed properly, the Promotion Appeal Panel was finally convened on 27 February 2002, months later than it should have been if the agreement made by the Deputy Principal on 2 August 2001 had been adhered to: namely, that the appeal would be set in motion following the Corner/Esler investigation which terminated at the end of September 2001. As you also know, there were irregularities surrounding the calling of witnesses to the Appeal hearing which required the Panel to be recalled on 19 March 2002.

The Convener of the Panel, Mr MacIntyre, went to great lengths to say that the members of the Panel came to the Hearing 'afresh' and uninfluenced by anything that might have been said on their behalf prior to the meeting. This was, of course, directly contrary to what the Director of Personnel Services had repeatedly led me to believe when he attempted to dissuade me from bringing the appeal. When I pressed him on what the Director of Personnel Services had put to me, the Convener repeatedly said that he had not seen the Corner/Esler report and had not been influenced by it. And he said that the Director of Personnel Services was quite wrong to have represented him as saying that I did not have grounds for bringing an appeal.

And yet the Director of Personnel Services was unambiguous about this when he wrote to me on 3 December 2001 that, 'The Convener of the Promotion Appeal Panel has considered your position in the light of the outcome of the investigation by Secretary and Registrar and Professor Esler... [and] ... does not think it appropriate that the Appeal Panel should duplicate the work already carried out by the Secretary and Registrar and Professor Esler... In view of the above the Convener is minded to accept the conclusion of the investigatory panel and accordingly considers that there is now no basis on which a case can be mounted other than by re-running the review which has just been concluded, an action which the Convener does not propose to undertake'. Clearly either the former Director of Personnel Services or the Convener of the Appeal Panel was not telling the truth.

My appeal was based on the claim that the representations made by Professor Skorupski (Head of The School of Philosophical and Anthropological Studies) to the Academic and Related Staff

Committee (responsible for promotions) the previous year were unreasonable, and prejudiced the deliberations of the Committee. Professor Skorupski candidly admitted to the Appeal Panel that he had made no effort to find out what my teaching was like. Since students fill out questionnaires at the end of each module, it would not have been difficult for him to get some impression either directly from them or from my Social Anthropology colleagues who are familiar with my teaching. As my colleague Dr Riches pointed out to the Appeal Panel, the students regularly evaluate my teaching very highly and he (with over 20 years' experience in the University and then holding the position of Director of Teaching) would put me in the top 25 per cent in the University. Dr Riches also said he would score my administrative service in the same top 25 percent bracket.

I subsequently had a meeting with Professor Skorupski who explained that he had scored me 2/5 in relation to my administration because he had reservations about my 'people management'. This referred to the circumstances leading up to the Corner/Esler investigation where I had insisted that something needed to be done about the bullying behaviour of one colleague and the deeply anti-collegial behaviour of two others. In fact I had resigned the Chairmanship of the Department in 2000 when it became clear to me that Professor Skorupski had no intention of seriously confronting the 'pathological' behaviour which was later brought to light by the Corner/Esler review. It seems to me that Professor Skorupski's recommendation to the Academic and Related Staff Committee that my administration deserved 2/5 was simple vindictiveness for my having resigned the chairmanship of the Department because I had no confidence in his management. It is also clear from the conclusions of the Corner/Esler report that my misgivings about Professor Skorupski's management were entirely justified.

As you know, the Appeal Panel rejected my promotion appeal. In relation to teaching, they commented that Professor Skorupski's written report (to the Academic and Related Staff Committee) 'showed his ability to assess different aspects of teaching'. However, it makes no reference whatsoever to how he scored my teaching. And it makes no reference whatsoever to my service in administration. In other words, the report of the Promotions Appeal Panel makes no comment on the two central elements of my appeal regarding Professor Skorupski's biased judgement of my work.

I should also point out that while failing to support my application for promotion last year, Professor Skorupski recommended that Mr Platt be promoted to a readership regardless of the latter's abusive record. Mr Platt subsequently secured promotion, an outcome which had a profoundly demoralising effect on some members of the Department and which, in my view, brought the University into disrepute. A clear message was sent out last year that promotion is to be secured by behaving in as anti-collegial a manner as possible.

It is important to separate the question of my failed promotion attempts (which I am less concerned about) from the wider abusive behaviour of a number of senior people in the University which has made life quite intolerable. As the 'whistle blower', I have been subject to vilification, particularly from Professor Overing and Mr Platt - though Professor Rapport has also attempted to get the Principal to discipline me because I have made very clear my intellectual disagreements with his work. It is perfectly true that I have made strong criticisms of Professor Rapport's work in three highly reputed international journals because I think that what he writes is intellectually untenable. It is simply not conceivable that the editors of these journals, who are all of unimpeachable academic standing, would countenance *ad hominem* comments in articles in their journals since this would clearly affect their reputation. One might add that it is surely the business of academics to engage in scholarly discussion and to bring out disagreements with others in their discipline, especially when these disagreements are of a fundamental nature. For Professor Rapport to enlist the support of the Principal who then tried to intimidate me into withdrawing remarks which were perfectly true attacks the very basis of academic freedom.

There is no doubt in my mind that I have been made a scapegoat for the problems that were so clearly highlighted by the Corner/Esler report into malpractice in the Department of Social Anthropology and the failure of the management to address those problems over a long period. The result of my promotion application is merely one aspect of this scapegoating and is far from being the most unpleasant aspect of it. Working on a daily basis with managers who conceal evidence relating to bullying and 'colleagues' who engage in vilification has made working in St Andrews in any kind of normal way impossible. Because the community of professional anthropologists in the UK is very small, it is inevitable that reports of the problems in the Department in St Andrews have reached the ears of others. My impression is that my chances of securing employment in another

department of social anthropology in the UK have been irreparably damaged by my experiences in St Andrews.

Yours sincerely,

Declan Quigley 29 May 2002