Vice Chancellor

Vice Chancellor’s Office

Lanyon Building

Student Name:

Student Number:

Course:

Dear Professor Greer,

I am writing to express my support for the industrial action taken between the 25th November and 4th December and to add my voice to the call for Universities UK to re-enter negotiations with the University and College Union to find workable solutions the issues of pensions, pay and working conditions.

I understand that the industrial action has come about as a result of failure to reach satisfactory agreements on the broad areas of pay, working conditions, inequality and pensions.

It is not acceptable to me that staff have seen their pay decrease in real terms by 20% since 2009, nor that they are expected to pay more into a pension scheme with no guarantees of getting the same out.

I am deeply concerned at the degradation of working conditions, particularly around workload and casualization. I find it alarming that here in Queen’s we have over 1,300 academics who are employed on zero-hour or fixed-term contracts, particularly when 64% of surveyed staff members reported that they were concerned with their workload and 63% were concerned with work related stress. I am concerned both for the wellbeing of staff and for the impact this has on the quality of the education that I receive as a Queen’s student, due to reduced contact time and less time spent by staff preparing for classes and marking and feeding back on assessment.

Finally, I am concerned at the lack of movement by UUK to address the gender and race pay gaps. I do not find it acceptable that across the sector, women are paid 15% less than men and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff are 10% more likely to be employed on an insecure contract.

These issues are important for the well-being of both staff and students and the reputation and standing of our University and are therefore important to me as a member of the Queen’s community.

I would therefore like to hear the position of the University on these key issues. I also hope that you will take a public stance against the cuts to staff pay in real terms and pensions, the casualization of working practices and the inequality in opportunity for staff.

I believe that Queen’s should be proactively trying to resolve the strike by urging UUK to return to negotiations with UCU. Can you explain to me what you are doing to resolve the industrial action? Could you let me know what you have done, if anything, to improve the working conditions of members of staff in the last decade? Can you explain how you will be able to attract world class academics to the University if the employment conditions of staff are not improved?

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours Sincerely,