



Sent by email

17 May 2021

Dear Professor Phoenix,

I am writing on behalf of the University of Essex to apologise for our actions and for the distress caused by the cancellation of the Centre for Criminology seminar on Trans Rights, Imprisonment and the Criminal Justice System, scheduled to take place on 5 December 2019.

Akua Reindorf has now concluded the review that she undertook on behalf of the University which included consideration of the circumstances resulting in and arising from the cancellation of the seminar. Following meetings of the University's Senate and Council today to consider the Report, we will be taking immediate action in relation to each of the recommendations made in the Report. These include two that refer specifically to you: 1) the Department of Sociology will set aside any decision not to invite you to speak; and 2) the Centre for Criminology, in consultation with relevant communities, will agree a way forward that will result in you being invited to present a seminar.

On behalf of the University, I accept, and apologise for the fact, that:

1. we failed to plan adequately for the seminar on 5 December 2019, resulting in the event having to be cancelled at the last minute because of a risk of disruption;
2. we failed to take immediate action in respect of the flyer circulated on 5 December 2019 containing violent and profane imagery which was targeted at you;
3. we inappropriately asked you on 10 December 2019 to provide a copy of your seminar for the purposes of vetting its content; and
4. we infringed your freedom of speech without justification by deciding on 11 December 2019: (a) to rescind the invitation to present a seminar; and (b) not to invite you to present a future seminar in the Department of Sociology.

Please find attached a copy of the Report which has been redacted for you in line with specialist legal expertise.

A suitably redacted version of the Report will be published on the University website tomorrow at 9am (also attached for your information), alongside a statement setting out the University's position and its decision to take action in response to the recommendations contained within the Report. In the interests of complete transparency, the text from this apology to you will also be made public through publication on the University website.

Thank you for your patience while the Review was concluded. I hope that you will be reassured by the actions that we are taking.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Anthony Forster  
Vice-Chancellor