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Request for support / solidarity: Public statement against compulsory redundancies at the University of Essex

Management and Marketing Group at Essex Business School

The Management and Marketing Group at the University of Essex has, over many years, built an internationally recognized environment for interdisciplinary scholarship that brings critical questions of work, democracy, inequality, sustainability, technology, and collective life into business and management education. Through initiatives such as the Centre for Commons Organizing and the Values, Equalities and Resilience (COVER) Research Centre, colleagues have developed innovative forms of teaching and research that challenge narrow market-driven understandings of organizations and economic life.

This work has sought to expand what business education can be. Rather than treating management as simply the optimization of profit and control, colleagues in the Group have explored commons-based forms of organizing, democratic governance, cooperation, mutual aid, labour rights, ecological sustainability, and socially embedded models of economic coordination. This has

involved engagement not only with academic debates, but also with workers' organizations, community groups, public institutions, and broader civil society.

The current redundancies therefore cannot be understood simply as isolated staffing decisions. They represent a broader attack on attempts to create space within business and management education for genuinely interdisciplinary and publicly engaged forms of scholarship. At stake is not only the future of individual colleagues or research areas, but whether universities will continue to support intellectual projects that question dominant organizational orthodoxies and experiment with alternative ways of understanding economic and social life.

What is being dismantled is a rare scholarly community that has successfully combined internationally recognized research excellence with ambitious teaching and public engagement. The disproportionate targeting of this Group sends a troubling message about the kinds of knowledge, values, and institutional cultures that are considered supportable within the contemporary university.

We are now seeking signatures from colleagues across the university sector and beyond who are willing to stand in solidarity with us in calling for a pause to these redundancies, greater transparency in decision-making, and a commitment to protecting the diversity of scholarship at Essex.

You can read and sign the statement here: https://sites.google.com/view/mmpublicstatement/home