



LINGUISTICS & ENGLISH LANGUAGE
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY & LANGUAGE SCIENCES

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SCOTLAND

Professor Caroline Heycock FBA
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Monday 26th October 2020

Dear Professor Ezingear

I am writing to in my capacity as President of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain (LAGB) to express deep concern at the reports that the University of Roehampton is planning to make major cuts in the Schools of Arts and Humanities. As I am sure you are aware, Linguistics and English Language at Roehampton is an important research centre for theoretical and sociolinguistics, and is further particularly noted for the strength of its teaching: in the Guardian league table for Modern Languages and Linguistics 2020 Roehampton topped the entire table for satisfaction with course and with teaching, reflecting the extremely high NSS ratings. The cuts proposed are of a magnitude that is likely to have a profound effect on the student experience in this and other areas in Arts and Humanities, also worsening the working environment and research productivity for staff remaining in post.

Arts and Humanities are central to the cultural and economic life of the UK; they empower citizens, and engage students in developing cognitive, analytic, and creative skills that not only enrich the intellectual lives and economic outlook of individuals, but also help build a forward-looking, cohesive, and informed society. Participation in high level study in Arts and Humanities—and hence in the arts and creative industries, an area in which the UK excels—has tended to be skewed away from students with working-class backgrounds and from BAME communities. Roehampton has an enviable record in attracting and educating students from these under-represented groups; the proposed cuts to Arts and Humanities at Roehampton risks having a disproportionate effect in reducing access to first-class education in these areas in precisely the groups currently most underrepresented and underserved.

We acknowledge, of course, that Higher Education is facing challenging times, and that the management at Roehampton has a responsibility to the whole university community, but we urge you to reconsider what seems like an unbalanced response to those challenges, and to find ways to support your excellent researchers and teachers in Linguistics and English Language, and more generally across your Schools of Arts and Humanities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Caroline Heycock'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Caroline Heycock, FBA
Professor of Syntax, University of Edinburgh
President, Linguistics Association of Great Britain