

Why the Court should dialogue with staff

Staff at GCU are extremely concerned at what has unfolded at our New York hub.

At this time of austerity across Higher Education when staff have had to tighten their belts we are concerned that Court has sanctioned an estimated £10 million on this overseas project, which to date still has no students and no licence to teach.

This has continued unabated despite the University announcing a deficit.

The Combined Unions have held two rallies of hundreds of staff members in the last few months since the latest shocking information has come to light. Staff are angry and want dialogue.

The Students Association has also raised its voice in protest given the two years of cuts to its own funding.

We are asking for a dialogue on this issue.

Given the lack of dialogue till present we have had no option but to call for an independent inquiry into events.

Universities are independent bodies but we feel that governance has to be transparent and two way.





What are our questions?

Was there no awareness of possible problems with the licence?

When the trade unions were approached with the plan to have a campus in New York the idea was to have it up and running in 2014 following its official launch in 2013. Now we are 3 years behind schedule. This is because the New York Education authorities have not yet issued a licence. The plan's original Risk Assessment did not mention possibility of licence delay or rejection. If due diligence was done why were management not aware of the problems attached to a licence being awarded?

What are the facts around the lease?

The lease signed for building in Wooster St, Manhattan is for 15 years. This seems incredibly foolhardy without a licence. As even in original business plan with licence being awarded in early 2014 the model was only for an initial 5 year period. **Was the lease extended and why was it signed without a licence?**

Is it morally acceptable to sub-lease the premises to sell expensive goods?

The building is available for sub-lease from a GCU online link. It has been rented to a number of private companies. In the run-up to Christmas this was for a vodka company's exclusive luxury pop-up shop. **How has GCU NY (an educational project) ended up sub-letting its premise to big business to sell its expensive goods?**

What are the justifications for the New York Salaries?

The accounts of GCU NY show the New York based individual who runs the campus being paid £267,000. This puts her salary in line with all other Principals of Scottish Universities! How can such a salary be justified? Along with herself, GCU New York employs one other person at a salary of £153,000. These are two of the highest salaries at GCU. Yet there are still no students.

Is this in the best interests of the university, its staff and students, and the Scottish community?

We are now 3 years behind schedule with no students, no licence and £10 million drawn down from a loan. **How can this be in the best interest for the University – its staff and students?**

We ask the Court to enter into dialogue with the university community i.e the staff and students.

Failing this, we feel we have no option but to continue to press for an independent audit into what has happened at GCU New York.

