

## Item 9b: Scotland Report

Obviously the Covid-19 situation has meant that on-the-ground activity has been limited.

### **A British Council**

In the light of the news concerning the British Council, JC wrote to the Principal of St Andrews University, the First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, and BBC Scotland.

A1

The Principal of St Andrews wrote to the Foreign Secretary at Westminster on 05/06/20, and this letter was shared with colleagues in UCMLS and with CG. A response was received from the Central Correspondence Unit at the FCO dated 03/07/20.

Please see Appendix 1 and attachments for the correspondence.

A2

JC e-mailed the First Minister of the Scottish Parliament on 19/05/20 and a response was received from John Swinney, Deputy First Minister, dated 01/07/20.

Please see Appendix 2 and attachment for this correspondence.

A3

JC e-mailed [newscommissions.scotland@bbc.co.uk](mailto:newscommissions.scotland@bbc.co.uk) on 19/05/20. No response has so far been forthcoming.

Please see Appendix 3 for the e-mail.

### **B Threat to German at Dundee**

JC received information on 02/07/20 from Marion Spöring of a threat to the provision of German at Dundee University. Please see Appendix 4.

MS has welcomed a suggestion that JC write to both the MSP and MP (both SNP) for the Dundee West Constituency, and this should happen shortly.

### **C UCMLS meeting re. provision of languages in lockdown and beyond**

A Teams meeting was held on 20/05/20 to discuss the provision of languages at Tertiary level in the current situation.

Joe Carson  
Chair UCMLS  
08/07/20

## Appendix 1

1. Correspondence JC/Professor Sally Mapstone, Principal of the University of St Andrews.

**From:** Principal <principal@st-andrews.ac.uk>  
**Sent:** 25 May 2020 17:04  
**To:** Joe Carson <jsoc@st-andrews.ac.uk>  
**Cc:** Master <master@st-andrews.ac.uk>; Vice Principal International University of St Andrews <vpinter@st-andrews.ac.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: UCML British Council campaign

Dear Joe,

Many thanks for your email. As we both know, the University of St Andrews is a proudly international institution. As travel restrictions ease and the world recasts its international relationships, communication across borders will be more valuable than ever.

The British Council is fundamental to this. I have significant personal experience with the Council, having served as one of its delegates on a trip to Russia last November, alongside other interactions throughout my career, so I know first hand how valuable its connections are. Institutionally, the British Council help us to foster our international presence in innumerable ways and is key to enabling our worldwide research.

As such, we're fully behind the campaign to support the British Council. Universities UK, of which I am a Board member, has made representations to the UK Government in its favour, and we are currently preparing our own letter of support which we will issue to Westminster this week. My office will share a copy of this letter with you once it has been issued.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Mapstone

Professor Sally Mapstone FRSE,  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor,  
University of St Andrews,  
KY16 9AJ.

T: + 44 (0)1334 462545  
E: [principal@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:principal@st-andrews.ac.uk)

**From:** Joe Carson <jsoc@st-andrews.ac.uk>  
**Sent:** 19 May 2020 16:46  
**To:** Principal <principal@st-andrews.ac.uk>  
**Cc:** Master <master@st-andrews.ac.uk>; VP External <vpext@st-andrews.ac.uk>  
**Subject:** Fw: UCML British Council campaign

Dear Principal

I am forwarding this to you in my role as Chair of UCML Scotland.

Apologies for taking up your time at this moment.

I have no doubt that the University has already made representations on this matter to Scottish and UK governments.

While it is currently impossible to know what might happen in the foreseeable future because of the situation with the current pandemic, part of the way out of it in due course must be continued international cooperation of the sort facilitated for students of this University and others across the UK and Europe by the British Council in partnership with its European counterparts.

Given this University's own commitment to continuing to look outward, the loss of the BC as a facilitator could have a potentially serious impact on our communication with Europe in a way benefitted from and enjoyed by many of our alumni and current staff.

May I urge you, please, to rally behind this cause the Principals of those of Scotland's Universities likely to be concerned by this matter.

Please stay safe

Best wishes

Joe

2. Letter Professor Mapstone/Foreign Secretary

Attachment 1

3. Response from Central Correspondence Unit, FCO

Attachment 2

Appendix 2

1. JC to First Minister, e-mail:

Dear First Minister

I write in my capacity as Chair of UCML Scotland. UCML is apolitical, but works in the interests of Modern Languages Education at all levels of provision.

Please see the message and link below concerning the UCML's reaction to the threat to the British Council.

I have been activating my colleagues in Modern Languages in Universities across Scotland.

I hope very much that the Scottish Government will throw its weight behind attempts to stop this attempt by Westminster to further erode our relationship with Europe.

In potentially denying future generations of our students and other young and not so young people the opportunities that have been open to their predecessors for nearly a century the Westminster government risks further damaging the UK's standing in and ability to communicate with the world.

The effect on the already beleaguered Modern Languages education sector in Scotland could be catastrophic, even terminal.

I hope you will agree that it is in this country's future, as well as the rest of the UK, to resist this move as strongly as possible.

Thank you for your time

Best wishes

Joe

=====

Dr Joe Carson  
Lecturer in French  
Honours Adviser, Dept of French  
Senior Adviser, School of Modern Languages  
Examinations and Student Welfare Officer, SoML  
Chair, UCMLS

tel: (0)1334 463641

sec: (0)1334 463647

e-mail: [jsoc@st-and.ac.uk](mailto:jsoc@st-and.ac.uk)

2. Response from Deputy First Minister via MSP Willie Rennie, Leader Liberal Democrats in Holyrood and MSP for NE Fife.

Attachment 3

Appendix 3  
1. JC/BBC

Dear BBC Scotland News

I am writing as Chair of UCML Scotland.

Please see the e-mail below from the University Council for Modern Languages (UCML) regarding the threat to the British Council. UCML is apolitical but acts in support of language education and learning at all levels of provision and for all sectors of society .

The threat to the British Council cannot be underplayed, as it has helped provide access to other countries and cultures for generations of people of all backgrounds for nearly a century.

It has also brought young people from across the globe as language assistants into our schools (I remember one from Peru helping us with Spanish when I was doing my O-Levels -- I grew up in Northern Ireland).

I'd happily talk this through with an eye to a story in defence of language education.

Best wishes

Joe Carson

Appendix 4 Marion Spöring/JC

Dear UCMLS colleagues,

I hope you are well despite the difficult situation.

just to let you know that we are currently

experiencing a threat to the first year German provision at Dundee. The University does not want to offer first year modules in the coming academic year. Apparently, that is only for one year , but , based on experience, we do not trust this and fear that this will not only do lasting damage to German, but Languages at Dundee as a whole.... We are trying everything to stop it but so far they have not listened to us. The German society in Dundee has put up a petition. Here is the link .

<http://chng.it/fWzWVg6cvc>

With best wishes to you all,

Marion

(still not 100 % retired at the mo)