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Media, Communications & Cultural Studies Association

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Mr. Siôn Simon MP,
Minister for Creative Industries
Department of Culture, Media and Sport,
2-4 Cockspur Street,
London
SW1Y 5DH

Dear Mr. Simon,

Re: British Film Institute/UKFC

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of the Executive Committee of this Association, following a meeting with Amanda Nevill, the Director of the BFI at which the Committee raised a number of concerns about the proposed merger of the BFI with the UK Film Council.

This Association represents teachers and researchers working in our field in Higher Education. As such the Association has particular concerns about the responsibilities and holdings of the two organisations involved in this merger. We have a particular concern with the role of the British Film Institute, which since the 1930s has had an important role in relation to the development of education in film and television. At various points in its history the British Film Institute has played a key role in the development of media studies in mainstream education, including HE, and we are concerned that the discussions and decisions involved in any merger should not lose sight of that. Our specific concerns relate to:

- the accessibility of the archive including screening facilities as well as online accessibility,
- the maintenance of library facilities which include important collections of paper material,
- the production and publication of appropriate research and educational material,
- the contribution of specialist staff to the film and television culture of the UK,
- the relationship with bodies such as Skillset which promote a particular version of film education.

We feel that the current relationship between the UKFC and the BFI has not been successful, and that the responsibility for education and research has been inadequately maintained. This has been compounded by the fact that the UKFC has a remit to focus on film while the BFI has a broader commitment to the moving image.

We would ask that, in the urgent discussions that are taking place, serious attention should be paid to these issues, and that any revised body should have a clear duty to maintain and support activity on research and education and to work with the range of

bodies in education at all levels to maintain and raise the standards of teaching and research in this area. Such a commitment should be reflected in the governance of any new body.

We would very much welcome your comments on these concerns, and especially would value an early reply that might be communicated to our members at the Association's annual conference in London on January 6th to 8th 2010.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Golding
MeCCSA Hon. Sec.