



Media, Communications &
Cultural Studies Association

Professor Emma Hunt
Vice Chancellor
Falmouth University

11th November 2022

Dear Prof Hunt,

Implications of Falmouth Staffing Ltd

I write further to my letter on 12th October 2022 and on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Media, Communication, and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA), which is the national subject association representing the interests of academic staff and students in its fields in UK Higher Education.

In my previous letter I expressed our deep concern about the plans by Falmouth University to employ new staff through a subsidiary company, Falmouth Staffing Ltd. I was clear that the MeCCSA Executive Committee considers this to be a fragmentation of the workforce at Falmouth University and that employing new staff on significantly inferior terms to be a direct threat to students and staff in our field as in others. It will create a two-tier workforce and undermine staff, which by extension will undermine the subject areas Falmouth University specialise in.

Since my letter we have not received any reassurance that you intend to re-consider and reverse the action taken, as we urged you to do. Whilst I understand senior management is arranging talks with the relevant trade union in good faith to propose a schedule of negotiations, this does not amount to a commitment to stopping the policy.

In the absence of firm commitments towards a change in direction, the MeCCSA Executive Committee has taken the difficult decision that we cannot proceed with Falmouth University hosting our Annual Conference in September 2023 as previously planned. Subsequently we have identified another HEI to host our Annual Conference in September 2023. This is a direct consequence of the negative impact creating a two-tier workforce at Falmouth University will have on our members and the field more broadly.

We have not taken this decision lightly and I want to stress that it is no reflection on the local organising committee. They have done a tremendous job preparing for the conference and acted with great integrity and professionalism when we raised our concerns about Falmouth Staffing Ltd. The conference was shaping up very nicely with a good range of keynote speakers confirmed and a call for papers due to be published this month. We

know they have been planning this for several years, with the original proposal to host our 2022 conference submitted in 2019. We are particularly grateful that they agreed to defer hosting from January 2022 to September 2023, when we were forced to postpone our 2021 conference due to the pandemic.

We remain hopeful that your good faith negotiations will lead to a positive outcome. However, we could not take the risk that these negotiations did not result in reversing the current policy direction, thus giving an alternative host insufficient time to prepare for the conference.

Our action clearly reflects the strength of feeling towards the proposed actions at Falmouth University. Equally, we understand that proposed good faith negotiations and constructive dialogue may yield a change in direction. Should this happen we remain positive towards engaging with Falmouth colleagues and to consider proposals to host the conference in the future.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Einar Thorsen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Prof Einar Thorsen
Chair of MeCCSA