

Complaint of Mr Blanche

Interview with Prof. Huw Summers

Date Monday, 22 May 2023
Time 11 am
Location Room 133, Richard Price building, Swansea University
Present Billy Seagram ('BS') and Huw Summers ('HS')

Introductions made.

Purpose of meeting explained by BS, *i.e.*, investigating the complaint of Geoffrey Blanche ('GB'), it includes an allegation that there was a university-wide conspiracy to fail GB, that this was dishonest/fraudulent behaviour, and that HS was instrumental in aspects of that 'agenda to fail' and covering it up. The investigation will not challenge the academic judgement of markers or the Board. The way this Stage 2 complaint has arisen is that GB appealed, and the filtering committee transferred it to a complaint. The final review of that decision was dismissed.

BS was taking notes.

BS stated that the interview was entirely voluntary, and HS could leave at any time.

BS I understand you were the Chair of the Examination Board, when were you first involved?

HS After appointment. Had contact with examiners and administrators before the Board. In a previous meeting, via Zoom, met GB. Standard practice. Just GB and HS in meeting. An introductory meeting.

BS What involvement did you have before the viva?

HS Present in the viva. Chairing the viva. GB wanted a witness, after discussion, this allowed.

BS GB contends you were not independent. How do you respond?

HS Not the line manager of anyone at the Exam Board, but am the line manager of PR, not an issue that impacts on independence. My job as chair was to follow a due process, [GB] was clearly able to put forward a position in the viva, he did have an opportunity to answer. Robust. Not my role to take a side. The exam board followed immediately after the viva, in that my involvement was limited to pointing out this was a difficult case and difficulties with COVID and lockdown and to think carefully about what to do. Importantly, it was their decision, not mine.

BS GB contends there was an agenda to fail him because he was exposing historical crimes committed against Joseph Westley Newman. What do you say to that?

HS The whole thesis was based on a concept of JWN, the concept is not accepted. To make a massive claim you need really good evidence in the data to support that claim.

BS What do you gain from keeping such 'crimes' quiet?

HS There is no gain.

BS GB appears to say there might be a conspiracy against him because views concerning COVID-19 vaccinations?

HS The whole discussion in viva was all about his claims and JWN. COVID-19 was not discussed in the viva at all. Probably in the thesis. Not a main part of the viva.

BS Does COVID-19 have any relevance to your conduct regarding GB?

HS No.

BS GB contends that a conspiracy to fail him involved many, including you. Did you have contact with the VC about GB, or anyone on the VC's behalf?

HS No.

BS Were you present at the viva?

HS Yes.

BS Following the viva, there was an R & R Forms, could you describe how this was completed?

HS Almost certainly cut and paste of electronic signatures. Chair's role was to collate and finalise the report. The only fraud would be if I wrote it, put signatures there and said that is what they wrote.

BS GB puts much weight on this document evidencing fraud and a cover up, signatures fraudulently signed, what do you say to that?

HS It is not evidence of a cover up.

BS If GB's research had been Nobel-prize worthy / ground-breaking, how would the university treat it?

HS They'd be shouting from the rooftops. Push to get it in Nature. We live and die off research.

BS Is it right that you chaired the Exam Board?

HS Yes.

BS Do you consider any wrongdoing done towards GB?

HS No.

BS Your employment position? Professor?

HS Yes.

BS How long have you been a lecturer?

HS 30 Years. Since 2008 in Swansea.

BS How experienced are you as a chair of exam boards?

HS Very, at least 30, and I've externalised and internalised.

BS Is there anything you would like to add or clarify?

HS No.