



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Private and Confidential
Investigation Report

Regarding: Mr Geoffrey Blanche (946484)

Author: William Seagrim

Report Date: 22 June 2023

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Investigator	Billy Seagrim (Senior Lecturer, Hillary Clinton School of Law)
Date appointed	3 May 2023
Report completed	3 July 2023

Introduction

1. On 3 May 2023, I received formal confirmation from Carly Fussell that I would be conducting Mr Blanche's complaint against the Engineering department and numerous employees of Swansea University ('the University') (Annex 1). The respondents to the complaint include both academic and professional services staff, and includes the Vice Chancellor, Professor Paul Boyle. The complaint arises out of matters concerning Mr Blanche's thesis and viva voce on the MSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering.
2. Within this report, I annex key documentation that I consider to be helpful for the reader to access. Please note that I have read and considered more documentation than the annexes.
3. I should also make clear at the outset that I have no knowledge of electrical and electronic engineering. Within this report, I am not passing judgement on the science involved. This is not an appeal against academic judgement, and in any event, I am not qualified to consider such. I am considering the conduct alleged by Mr Blanche. Where Mr Blanche challenges academic judgement, I will not, and cannot, find any decision academically wrong.

Conflict of Interest

4. Aside from employment at the same university as several of the individuals implicated by Mr Blanche, I confirm that I have no personal, financial, or other form of connection to Mr Blanche or any of the potential respondents and / or witnesses to his complaint. I confirm that before undertaking this complaint I had never met or spoken to any of the individuals involved.

Background

5. The background to this complaint, and its documentation, is lengthy and complex. In my view, it assists the reader for me to highlight key dates which summarise how this Stage 2 Complaint arose. This is not intended to be as a history of important events or

correspondence. It is a very short summary that provides context for the reader of this report. Mr Blanche's complaint follows sequentially upon:

October 2019	Mr Blanche commenced MSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering
March 2020	COVID-19 pandemic restrictions commenced
August 2020	Mr Blanche submitted a first draft of his thesis to his supervisors
(unclear)	Mr Blanche's supervisors identified issues with relying upon the work of Joseph Wesley Newman, and did not support the inclusion of his work in any thesis
31 March 2021	Mr Blanche's supervisors responded to a Notice of Intention to Submit Mr Blanche's thesis by making clear that Mr Blanche's thesis was going against the advice of his supervisors
April 2021	Dr Zhongfu Zhou stood down as a supervisor for Mr Blanche
May 2021	Prof. Paul Rees became a supervisor.
September 2021	Mr Blanche submitted his thesis, <i>An Investigation of the Photoelectric Effect to the Endothermic Electric Effect During the Electric Field Charge</i> , now allegedly available on a website www.endothermic-electricity.com
30 May 2022	Vive voce at the University (in-person)
30 May 2022	Report and Result Forms ('R and R Forms') (Annex 2) confirmed suspension of the decision pending re-examination following re-submission within 12 months, and Addendum to R and R Forms identified requirements for re-submission (Annex 3)
30 May 2022	Exam Board confirmed result of suspension of the decision pending re-submission and re-examination (immediately following the viva)

30 August 2022	Mr Blanche's Request for an Academic Appeal against the Examination Board's decision, entitled 'AR1RD-1-B1' (Annex 4)
1 September 2022	Mr Blanche's Examination Rebuttal Report ('ERR') (Annex 5)
29 September 2022	Appeal outcome – rejection of the appeal and reclassification as a complaint (Annex 6)
9 October 2022	Mr Blanche's Addendum to the ERR (Annex 7)
20 October 2022	Mr Blanche's application for a Final Review of the Appeal decision, entitled 'AR1RD-2-B1' (Annex 8)
19 December 2022	Final Review outcome – application dismissed (Annex 9)
18 January 2023	Mr Blanche detailed alleged misfeasance in a public office by Swansea University staff (Annex 10 [document is erroneously entitled 18/01/2022])
9 February 2023	Mr Blanche emailed Mrs Carly Fussell, accepting the complaint as a process, albeit making numerous stipulations to the process
February 2023	Professor Michelle Lee originally appointed as the investigator. Prof. Lee's appointment was opposed by Mr Blanche
3 May 2023	My investigation formally commenced. Complaint documentation received
May- June 2023	I read documentation and conducted interviews
22 June 2023	Report completed

Procedure

6. The burden of proving this complaint rests on Mr Blanche. None of the respondents to Mr Blanche's claim need to disprove his allegation(s). The standard that Mr Blanche must meet to prove any factual allegation is the balance of probabilities, *i.e.*, that something is more likely than not to have happened. It is no more and no less than that

standard, notwithstanding the serious nature of Mr Blanche's allegations. For that standard to be met, there must be evidence proving any allegation. This can be direct and / or circumstantial. However, it is important to note that accusation and supposition alone are not evidence. In determining whether Mr Blanche has proved any of his allegations, I should look at the specific evidence, and consider the wide canvas of evidence that I receive.

7. Several of the University's Regulations are relevant to Mr Blanche's complaint. I have read them carefully. Both of those I am about to mention are publicly available on the www.swansea.ac.uk website, at [Degree of Master's by Research- Swansea University](#):
 - a. Academic Regulations for the Degree of Master's by Research; and
 - b. Guide to the Examination of Research Students

Documentation

8. I have read all of the documentation made available to me as the investigator of Mr Blanche's complaint, this includes everything provided to me by the University, *e.g.*, the 14 enclosures in a Zip file attached to the 4 May 2023 appointment letter (each of which has numerous documents attached thereto), and documentation sent to me by Mr Blanche in April 2023, when I was contacted to see if I could conduct the complaint. If a document is not mentioned herein, it does not mean I have not read it and carefully considered its contents. I have. The following list includes the more material documentation:
 - a. Report and Results Forms ('R and R Forms') (Annex 2)
 - b. Addendum to the R and R Forms (Annex 3).
 - c. Mr Blanche's Request for an Academic Appeal (Annex 4)
 - d. Mr Blanche's 'ERR' (Annex 5)
 - e. Appeal Outcome letter (Annex 6).
 - f. Mr Blanche's Addendum to the ERR (Annex 7)
 - g. Final Review Application (Annex 8).
 - h. Mr Blanche's documents setting out a potential civil claim (Annex 11).
 - i. Mr Blanche's document entitled '18/01/2022 Misfeasance in a Public office by staff of Swansea University Corporation' (Annex 10)
 - j. Various emails between Mr Blanche and different staff of the University, including between Mr Blanche and Mrs Carly Fussell.

Mr Blanche's Complaint

9. Mr Blanche's complaint is voluminous and contained in numerous different documents, for example, Mr Blanche's ERR document alone is 223 pages (plus a title page) (Annex 5), and his Addendum to the ERR is 19 pages (Annex 7). Following reading all the documentation provided to me, and to make the investigation of Mr Blanche's complaint manageable and fair to all involved, I contacted Mr Blanche with a suggested list of the allegations within his complaint (11 May 2023). Mr Blanche responded on 13 May 2023 identifying deficits in my list of allegations, including a lack of specifying individuals and the Regulations allegedly breached. I responded with an amended list on 15 May 2023 and invited Mr Blanche to consider it and confirm whether anything was incorrect; whether any respondent was missed; and whether any material allegation was missed. Mr Blanche did not respond to that email. On 19 May 2023, I chased Mr Blanche regarding this request. On 22 May 2023, Mr Blanche responded in the following terms (the full email chain is at Annex 12):

Hi Billy,

I offered to run the criminal investigation but you turned me down. I will not participate in your attempted cover up investigation. By the way you are gaslighting me, you are way off the mark, and you know it. Please do not harass me to do your job.

Regards

Blanche

10. Needless to say, this is not a criminal investigation; Mr Blanche cannot run the investigation; this is obviously not a cover up but a genuine attempt to investigate Mr Blanche's complaints; I have not gaslit Mr Blanche; rather than the allegations being 'way off the mark' they encapsulate all of Mr Blanche's material complaints; and I have not harassed Mr Blanche to do 'my job', but sought his co-operation whilst investigating his complaint.
11. It is disappointing that Mr Blanche refuses to engage in this process. It may be that not responding to the amended list allows Mr Blanche to hold the position that his true allegations have not been considered. In any event, and not passing judgement on his reasons for not responding, the amended list is, in my view, a fair and accurate reflection of Mr Blanche's complaints against the Engineering department¹ / University / individuals involved.

¹ Engineering is no longer one formal department of the University following a faculty restructuring. Now, there is a Faculty of Science and Engineering, which itself has 4 Schools, some of which house elements of engineering.

12. Mr Blanche alleges:

Overarching complaint

- 1) There was a **university-wide conspiracy** to dishonestly fail Mr Blanche's thesis and then cover-up that dishonesty, motivated by:
 - a. a desire to silence Mr Blanche's uncovering of historical crimes against Joseph Westley Newman; and / or
 - b. discontent towards Mr Blanche in light of his stance towards the University's COVID-19 pandemic-restriction policies; and / or
 - c. some other malign intent to protect the University's interests.

This conspiracy included:

1. Mr Blanche's dissertation supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Prof. Paul Rees, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna);
2. Mr Blanche's viva voce examiners (Dr. Dhammika Widanalage, Prof. Lijee Li);
3. The Chair of the viva voce and Chair of the relevant Examination Board (Prof. Huw Summers), and members of the relevant Examination Board;
4. Various professional services staff (such as Mrs. Zoe Perry, Mrs **Michelle Rees**, Mrs Sara Kane);
5. Various other members of the University's Engineering department (**including Prof. David Penney**, Prof. Perumal Nithiarasu)
6. The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle.

Particular complaints

- 2) Mr Blanche's dissertation supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna) **made false claims regarding Joseph Westley Newman to dishonestly censor Mr Blanche's thesis.**
- 3) Mr Blanche's supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna) **used 'gaslighting' to further the attempt to dishonest censor Mr Blanche's thesis.**
- 4) Mr Blanche's viva voce was conducted improperly (including by failing to minute the viva, **refusing to share examiner or Chair's notes (Prof. Huw Summers), and by the examiners having a lack of expertise**)), and the **examiners committed fraud, motivated by an agenda to fail Mr Blanche.**

This was in breach of the *Guide to the Examination of Research Students*, paragraphs 1, 13, 16, and 17.

- 5) Following the viva voce, the examiners, the Examination Board, the Chair of that Board (Prof. Huw Summers), and professional services staff (including Mrs Sara Kane, Mrs Zoe Perry) acted dishonestly to further an agenda to fail Mr Blanche, including forging signatures, improperly completing the R and R Form, and by way of the Chair of the Examination Board, Prof. Huw Summers, lacking independence. This was in breach of the *Guide to the Examination of Research Students*, paragraphs 13, 15, 16, 17, and 19.
- 6) The University failed to fairly conduct Mr Blanche's appeal against his examination decision. This was part of an agenda to fail Mr Blanche and cover up the dishonest actions of the University and its agents. This included the actions of the 'Filtering Committee', if it exists, and Prof. Paul Boyle.
- 7) Academic fraud has been committed by the University and its agents, including Mr Blanche's supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Prof. Paul Rees, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna), the internal examiner (Prof. Lijee Li), the Examination Board, the Chair of that Board (Prof. Huw Summers), various professional services staff (such as Mrs. Zoe Perry, Mrs Michelle Rees, Mrs Sara Kane), and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle, and the external examiner (Dr. Dhammika Widanalage).
- 8) Misconduct in a public office has been committed by numerous University employees, including the Examination Board, the Chair of that Board, Professor Huw Summers, and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle.

Remedy sought by Mr Blanche

13. Mr Blanche has indicated what he seeks from any appeal / complaint process several times. Without commenting on whether it is within my gift to award any of following remedies, the documentation identifies the following:

- 1) The letter dated 3 May 2023 appointing me as an investigator (Annex 1) indicated Mr Blanche sought:
 - a) Suspension of all staff under investigation;
 - b) Informing the police and CPS of fraud within the University;

- c) Punitive damages in the sum of either £7,500 (with the offer of a Masters degree) or £10,000 (without said degree); and
 - d) Higher compensation if there is 'more gaslighting'.
- 2) In Mr Blanche's undated document detailing a possible civil claim against the University and its staff (Annex 11) he sought:
 - a) The award of a Masters degree and a total of at least £2.7m, comprising claims of £300,000 against various University employees and the external examiner; or
 - b) Without the award of a Masters degree, a total of at least £4.8m, including the same claims as in a) above, but with an additional claim against the University as an institution and a claim against Prof. Paul Boyle.
- 3) Mr Blanche's ERR document (Annex 5), dated 21 September 2022, seeks, *inter alia*:
 - a) A first class Masters with honours;
 - b) A fully published apology in a national newspaper;
 - c) Publication of Mr Blanche's work in a reputable journal;
 - d) A 'hefty' financial settlement; and
 - e) Written apologies to all past, present, and future students for the 'cover up' of new educational knowledge.

I will consider the appropriate remedy if I find any allegations proved.

Interviews and Evidence

Mr Blanche

14. The reader will note that Mr Blanche does not appear on the below list of interviewees. On 2 May 2023 (13:59), I informed Mr Blanche that I would like to meet, preferably in person, but via Zoom if necessary. On the same day (18:55), Mr Blanche responded to that email but not my request. Later that day (19:30), I repeated my request to meet Mr Blanche and indicated it would be 'an important part of the investigation'. Mr Blanche responded (20:04) that he was 'extremely busy' and unable to meet me, but that he had supplied 'plenty of evidence'. I responded (20:15) that it 'might hamper' Mr Blanche's complaint if we cannot meet, and that it would be of 'great assistance' to me to discuss elements of his complaint. Mr Blanche did not respond to that email (this email chain is at Annex 13). My subsequent exchange with Mr Blanche is outlined above and concluded with Mr Blanche refusing to be involved in this investigation.

15. Mr Blanche's documentation is therefore the best evidence of his complaints. This report cannot consider all of Mr Blanche's comments, they are too many. The list of allegations above fairly summarises his complaints. The following material evidences Mr Blanche's complaints, to the extent that he has done so.

ERR and Addendum to the ERR (Annexes 5 and 7 respectively)

16. Mr Blanche's ERR is helpful for several reasons. Overall, it details alleged 'scientific fraud' against him, as the title page makes clear. It was written in response to the Board's decision on his viva to suspend and allow re-submission and re-marking. It provides a history by way of a 'personal statement'; then it identifies the 'claims' Mr Blanche seeks; it summarises fundamental points from his thesis; and then it details alleged wrongdoing concerning the viva voce (including recounting detailed transcripts from the examination), the completion of R and R Forms, and the Examination Board. It then provides email exchanges with various staff of the University, including those about the thesis and those about COVID-19 matters. Much of the ERR concerns the correctness of the academic opinion in the thesis, the pre-viva report, the R and R Forms, and the discussions concerning the topic during the viva. Overall, this document challenges the academic view of the supervisors and examiners, and I believe that Mr Blanche would say it demonstrates how they were wrong and fraudulent. For a full appreciation of Mr Blanche's complaint, the reader should read the ERR itself.
17. Mr Blanche appears to have responded to the rejection and reclassification of his appeal against the Examination Board decision (made on 29 September 2022, Annex 6) with the Addendum to the ERR (dated 9 October 2022, Annex 7). Mr Blanche's document repeats the allegations of scientific and academic fraud, it identifies how the Filtering Committee's decision to reject his appeal was an alleged "dereliction of duty", suggesting that the Committee was in fact Prof. Paul Boyle. It alleges misconduct in a public office, and it identifies motives for failing Mr Blanche, e.g., because he challenged the official narrative on COVID-19. It also allegedly identifies issues with the signatures on the R and R Forms.

Civil Claim Documents (Annex 11)

18. Mr Blanche's documents about a potential civil claim are helpful to identify what Mr Blanche seeks from the University, outlined above.

Document - 18/01/2022 Misfeasance in a Public Office by staff of Swansea University Corporation (Annex 10)

19. This document details aspects of alleged criminal conduct by the University and its staff. It also repeats alleged motives for so acting, including the desire to censor Mr Blanche's thesis and his alternative narrative to COVID-19 vaccination. It identifies alleged procedural fraud, the conspiracy to fail Mr Blanche, wrongdoing by the Chair of the

Examination Board, Prof. Huw Summers, and it details, *inter alia*, alleged false signatures and 'signature forgery'. Finally, the document contends that there had been fraud in the appeal process.

Overall

20. The overall tenor of Mr Blanche's documentation is that:

- a. he is the victim of criminal conduct, *i.e.*, a fraud (academic, scientific, and procedural), to censor his thesis, which itself uncovers a scientific lie.
- b. the University has a vested interest in continuing and protecting that lie.
- c. there has been 'misconduct in a public office' and more fraud to ensure that Mr Blanche's thesis has been failed. That failure has also been influenced, to some degree, by Mr Blanche's exposure of the University's wrongdoing concerning, *inter alia*, COVID-19 vaccinations.
- d. there was an agenda to fail Mr Blanche and individuals at all levels of the University, including the Vice Chancellor, have worked together to ensure that came to fruition and then cover it up.

Interviewees

21. I interviewed 3 of the individuals identified by Mr Blanche as respondents in this investigation. These were:

1. Prof. Huw Summers, Chair of the viva and Chair of the Examination Board.
2. Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Internal Examiner.
3. Prof. Paul Rees, Dissertation supervisor.

22. The reader may note that I have not interviewed every person that Mr Blanche has implicated. I have not, for example, interviewed Prof. Paul Boyle, the Vice Chancellor of the University, or the external examiner, Dr Dhammika Widanilage, or Mrs Zoe Perry. I have not interviewed all the individuals that Mr Blanche indicated he sought to interview (himself), in a document entitled 'Request for Interviews'. As I explained to Mr Blanche via email on 2 May 2023, I would decide whom to interview by keeping in mind a need to deal with Mr Blanche's complaint justly, including dealing with it proportionately and in a fair manner.

23. The decision not to interview other respondents was because to do so would have been unnecessary, having regard to dealing with this matter justly, fairly, and proportionately. It is for Mr Blanche to bring evidence against these individuals. If there had been evidence against Prof. Paul Boyle, for example, I would have interviewed him. As I will explain, Mr Blanche's complaint suffers from an acute lack of any evidential basis. That is not to indicate that there was a prima facie case against Prof. Huw Summers, Dr. Augustine Egwebe, and / or Prof. Paul Rees. In my view, it was only fair to Mr Blanche

that the investigator had the opportunity of interviewing at least some of the respondents to Mr Blanche's complaint.

24. One individual I sought to interview, **declined to participate: Dr. Zhongfu Zhou**; he was one of Mr Blanche's original dissertation supervisors (he withdrew from supervision before submission of Mr Blanche's thesis). I would remind the reader of several matters. First, participation in my investigation was voluntary. Second, Dr Zhou does not have to disprove any allegation against him. Third, the onus is on Mr Blanche to prove any allegation as it pertains to Dr Zhou. Fourth, it will be remembered that Mr Blanche, the Complainant, himself declined to take part in an interview. Fifth, Dr Zhou's refusal to take part in an interview is not in and of itself evidence of any conspiracy.

Prof. Huw Summers, Chair of the viva and Chair of the Examination Board

25. I interviewed Prof. Huw Summers on 22 May 2023 at 11:00am, in person, in my office, room 133 in the Richard Price Building of Swansea University. The only persons present were Prof. Summers and me. I attach my notes of that interview, these have been seen by Prof. Summers. They are contemporaneous notes and not a verbatim account. I will not recount every question and answer, the reader can see the notes if they wish (Annex 14). I will draw attention to important matters.
26. Professor Summers recounted that his role as Chair was to conduct a pre-viva meeting (this was an introductory meeting) and then chair the viva and Board. Prof. Summers was very experienced as a chair, having chaired "at least 30". Prof. Summers explained that he was not a line manager to anyone involved in the viva or Board but was the line manager of Prof. Paul Rees. **I find, without hesitation, that this does not mean Prof. Summers lacks independence.** It is entirely normal for the chair of an examination board to be the line manager of people involved in the supervision or marking of students being considered at the Board. Prof. Summers stated that it was his job as chair to follow **a due process** and that Mr Blanche had been able to put forward his position in the viva, and to answer questions. The Exam Board followed immediately after the viva, and Prof. Summers had pointed out that this was a difficult case and there were difficulties from COVID-19 and lockdown and to think carefully about their decision, which was theirs and not Prof. Summers. Prof. Summers commented when asked about **conspiracies**, regarding Joseph Westley Newman, the University would not gain anything from such; **COVID-19 was not discussed during the viva and has no relevance to his conduct towards Mr Blanche**; and that he had no contact with the Vice Chancellor concerning Mr Blanche. Regarding the R and R Forms, he 'almost certainly' cut and paste the signatures, and it was his role to collate and finalise the report. Prof. Summers stated that he put the signatures there because **that is what those people said /** wrote – it was not evidence of a cover up.

27. An aspect that is illuminating is the response to how the University would treat Mr Blanche's research if it was Nobel-prize worthy or ground-breaking. Prof. Summers stated that the University would be 'shouting from the roof tops' and 'pushing to get it in Nature'. In his view, there were no wrongdoings committed towards Mr Blanche.
28. Prof. Summers was an impressive and credible individual. I have no hesitation in finding he was both truthful and accurate.

Prof. Paul Rees, Dissertation supervisor

29. I interviewed Prof. Paul Rees on 22 May 2023 at 12:00 noon, in person, in my office, room 133 in the Richard Price Building of Swansea University. The only persons present were Prof. Rees and me. I attach my notes of that interview, these have been seen by Prof. Rees. They are contemporaneous notes and not a verbatim account. I will not recount every question and answer, the reader can see the notes if they wish (Annex 15). I will draw attention to important matters.
30. Prof. Rees explained that he came into the supervision team quite late and his role was to organize the viva and ensure it was fair, including to ensure there was a robust and sensible examining team. Prof. Rees was not present at the viva but probably arranged who would be the chair and the internal assessor. Asked about the possibility of a conspiracy to cover up the exposure of historical crimes against Joseph Westley Newman, Prof. Rees thought it was the 'complete opposite' of a conspiracy to fail. Prof. Rees stated that despite concerns and misgivings, they did organise a viva and a very fair set of examiners – the key was for Mr Blanche to defend his work from a scientific point of view, and the process gave Mr Blanche ample chance to have his work examined. Prof. Rees stated that the University would gain 'absolutely nothing' from such a conspiracy and that if Mr Blanche were correct, they would be holding him up as the "champion of Swansea", giving him Nobel Prizes, and that Mr Blanche would be the "champion of the world". Later, Prof. Rees stated that if Mr Blanche were correct, it would be the "most significant discovery in the history of science". Regarding COVID-19 vaccination views, they have no causal link, and Mr Blanche can't point to any conspiracy related to his invention (but did reduce Mr Blanche's access to the lab). Prof. Rees has had no communication with the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle, about Mr Blanche. Regarding conspiracies to fail Mr Blanche generally, Prof. Rees stated that all went out of their way to ensure Mr Blanche was viva'd in a fair manner. Following the viva, Prof. Rees had no communication with Mr Blanche, albeit Mr. Blanche would have been entitled to contact Prof. Rees, and the latter obliged to meet him. Mr Blanche was not failed but allowed a resubmission, Prof. Rees rhetorically questioned, if there was a conspiracy to fail Mr Blanche, why would they have done that.
31. Prof. Paul Rees was also an impressive and credible individual. I have no hesitation in finding he was both truthful and accurate.

Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Dissertation Supervisor

32. I interviewed Dr. Augustine Egwebe on 24 May 2023 at 11am, via Zoom. The only persons present were Dr Egwebe and me. I attach my notes of that interview, these have been seen by Dr Egwebe. They are contemporaneous notes and not a verbatim account. I will not recount every question and answer, the reader can see the notes if they wish (Annex 16). I will draw attention to important matters.
33. Dr Egwebe was a member of the supervisory team; he denied any conspiracy; and he described arranging the external examiner. This person was not someone he knew and based on their expertise. If a student invents groundbreaking work that is good for the university. Dr Egwebe contended there was no wrongdoing towards Mr Blanche and that every support was given to him.
34. Dr Egwebe came across genuinely and I have no hesitation in also finding that he is truthful and accurate.

Findings

35. I will address the allegations in turn using the numbering above:

Allegation 1)

There was a university-wide conspiracy to dishonestly fail Mr Blanche's thesis and then cover-up that dishonesty, motivated by:

- a) a desire to silence Mr Blanche's uncovering of historical crimes against Joseph Westley Newman; and / or*
- b) discontent towards Mr Blanche in light of his stance towards the University's COVID-19 pandemic-restriction policies; and / or*
- c) some other malign intent to protect the University's interests.*

This conspiracy included:

- 1. Mr Blanche's dissertation supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Prof. Paul Rees, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna);*
- 2. Mr Blanche's viva voce examiners (Dr. Dhammika Widanalage, Prof. Lijee Li);*
- 3. The Chair of the viva voce and Chair of the relevant Examination Board (Prof. Huw Summers), and members of the relevant Examination Board;*
- 4. Various professional services staff (such as Mrs. Zoe Perry, Mrs Michelle Rees, Mrs Sara Kane);*

5. *Various other members of the University's Engineering department
(including Prof. David Penney, Prof. Perumal Nithiarasu)*

6. *The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle.*

36. Mr Blanche must bring evidence of such a university-wide conspiracy. Mr Blanche must bring evidence that there was this malign intent to fail him. The fact that the examiners suspended the decision about his work pending re-submission and re-marking (approved by the Examination Board), and that his appeals have failed, is not itself evidence of a conspiracy. It is not evidence of an agenda to fail Mr Blanche. Mr Blanche was not failed. Mr Blanche bears the burden, and he falls spectacularly short. There is one overarching significant issue to bear in mind: there is no actual evidence of a conspiracy to fail Mr Blanche and / or of dishonesty towards Mr Blanche or his work.
37. I have interviewed 3 of the individuals within this alleged conspiracy. All 3 of them were, in my view, honest and reliable witnesses. They each presented credibly and I find that, far from any conspiracy, there was an approach to ensure Mr Blanche had a fair opportunity to defend his work.
38. There is a danger of legitimising Mr Blanche's conspiracy-related theories by providing them oxygen. However, numerous other points are material to note. Mr Blanche was not actually 'failed'. As is clear from the R and R Form, Mr Blanche was allowed a resubmission and remark, and he was sent an Addendum to the R and R that set out how to achieve a pass. If there was an 'agenda to fail', why not actually fail Mr Blanche? Alternatively, why not create a reason not to conduct a viva? I have no hesitation in finding that the viva was conducted fairly and gave a fair shot to Mr Blanche to defend his work.
39. The sheer volume of people involved in this university-wide conspiracy is improbable, especially bearing in mind it allegedly involved no less than 8 professors, one being the Vice Chancellor, numerous professional services staff, and an Associate Professor from a different university. One can imagine the amount of communication required to put into effect such a conspiracy, including involving an external examiner. Where is the evidence?
40. There is no evidence that Prof. Paul Boyle has had any communication with any of the other implicated individuals concerning Mr Blanche's views on COVID-19, its vaccinations, or any other purported interest of the University. It is wholly unclear what actual evidence Mr Blanche believes proves that Prof. Paul Boyle orchestrated a conspiracy or indeed how he did so.
41. The allegation raises the question: why would these individuals all lie? It should be remembered that if these people were found out, they would each likely lose their jobs and reputations. With respect to Mr Blanche, why is he so important for all these individuals to risk their livelihoods?

42. The challenge to the academic opinion about Joseph Westley Newman cannot be sustained in this appeal, for reasons discussed above. This complaint investigation will not challenge academic judgement. However, an element of Mr Blanche's complaint is a more nuanced, *i.e.*, the University are lying about Mr Blanche's thesis to cover up the lie about Joseph Westley Newman. There is no evidence of such lies or wide scale cover up. To cover up scientific progress or discovery is anathema to one of the overarching purposes of a university, especially a university's science department. The more pertinent point is, why? It is a baffling and wholly unpersuasive claim by Mr Blanche.
43. If Mr Blanche's work was "ground breaking" and "[n]oteworthy of a Nobel Prize", as he suggests (see the ERR, Annex 5), or "the biggest discovery in electromagnetism since the photoelectric effect" (Mr Blanche's claim in an email to Mrs Michelle Rees, 14.03.2022, 14:56, in the ERR, internal p.70), it is unfathomable that the University would not celebrate and champion Mr Blanche's work. As Profs. Paul Rees and Huw Summers made clear, if a Swansea University student had made such a discovery, the University would be celebrating them enthusiastically, such as pushing for publication in *Nature*. In my view, the University would be riding off their coat tails, and likely making a significant financial gain from additional students wanting to study in a university that made a world-changing, arguably humanity-saving, discovery. It would clearly be a fantastic thing for the University, not something to silence.
44. Mr Blanche's views on the COVID-19 pandemic vaccinations seem entirely unconnected to his work and his examination. Mr Blanche has not provided any actual evidence to link the two. The fact that he complained to the University about COVID-19 vaccinations and that he was then failed is not itself persuasive evidence. With respect, why does Mr Blanche believe his views on COVID-19 vaccinations are that important to the University or Prof. Paul Boyle, the Vice Chancellor? An objective eye can clearly see that they are irrelevant and unimportant to the University's operations, and irrelevant to Mr Blanche's MSc in Electronics and Electrical Engineering.
45. Of the other various conspiracy theories that Mr Blanche presents as potential motives for an alleged agenda to fail him, it is difficult to relate any of them to him being failed (albeit he was not failed, of course). They are all, in any event, outlandish and unsupported by evidence. Those claims include matters relating to 9/11, paedophilia, genetically modified species, and rapists (see the document entitled '18/01/2022 For the attention of the Registrar').
46. There is not a shred of evidence of any conspiracy against Mr Blanche. I dismiss Allegation 1. I go further than finding it not proved. I am sure that there was no conspiracy of any nature. There was no agenda to fail Mr Blanche, he did not, in fact, fail.
47. As Mr Blanche has refused to be interviewed, I am unable to discern whether or not Mr Blanche believes these various conspiracy theories, *i.e.*, whether Mr Blanche has an

honest **but warped view** of what has happened, or whether **Mr Blanche is dishonest in his claims and willing to say anything in order to achieve his desired result(s)**, or indeed whether the one has become the other. **It is unnecessary for me to determine which of these is the more likely.**

Allegation 2)

Mr Blanche's dissertation supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna) made false claims regarding Joseph Westley Newman to dishonestly censor Mr Blanche's thesis.

48. The claim that the views of the supervisors were false rests on a challenge to the academic judgement of numerous Swansea University academics. This cannot be investigated, let alone sustained. Underpinning the claim that such was dishonest is the motivation of a conspiracy. This has been found not to exist. To the extent that alleged dishonesty is grounded on something else, the claim is devoid of any evidence or merit.

49. Having interviewed 2 of Mr Blanche's supervisors, Dr Augustine Egwebe and Prof. Paul Rees, I have no doubt that they acted appropriately and in a fair manner. There is no evidence of anything other than such an approach.

50. Allegation dismissed.

Allegation 3)

Mr Blanche's supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna) used 'gaslighting' to further the attempt to dishonest censor Mr Blanche's thesis.

51. The contention of 'gaslighting' refers to Mr Blanche's supervisors indicating that submission of the **thesis relying on the theories of Joseph Westley Newman would be against their advice**, and that Joseph Westley Newman's theories had been rejected by **the credible scientific community** (Mr Blanche's document entitled 'Misfeasance in a public office by staff of Swansea University Corporation' details his argument). **That academic view is not going to be questioned within this investigation**. Any untoward underlying motivation for **that view is without any evidence or merit**. As already outlined, there was no conspiracy against Mr Blanche. I find that Mr Blanche's supervisors acted appropriately towards him and having interviewed Dr Egwebe and Prof Paul Rees, they were trying to assist Mr Blanche.

52. Allegation dismissed.

Allegation 4)

Mr Blanche's viva voce was conducted improperly (including by failing to minute the viva, refusing to share examiner or Chair's notes (Prof. Huw Summers), and by the examiners having a lack of expertise)), and the examiners committed fraud, motivated by an agenda to fail Mr Blanche. This was in breach of the *Guide to the Examination of Research Students*, paragraphs 1, 13, 16, and 17.

53. I find that Prof. Huw Summers arranged and conducted the viva and Examination Board in a fair manner, conducted with due process, and with a motivation of ensuring that Mr Blanche had every opportunity to defend his thesis. There is nothing in the Regulations that requires the viva to be minuted, and nothing that compels the examiners or the Chair to share notes with Mr Blanche. Failure to do so is not a breach of the Regulations *per se*. As already outlined, there was no agenda to fail Mr Blanche, and therefore that was not an underlying motivation of those involved.

54. Paragraphs 1, 13, 16 and 17 of the Regulations have not been shown to be breached.

55. Allegation dismissed.

Allegation 5)

Following the viva voce, the examiners, the Examination Board, the Chair of that Board (Prof. Huw Summers), and professional services staff (including Mrs Sara Kane, Mrs Zoe Perry) acted dishonestly to further an agenda to fail Mr Blanche, including forging signatures, improperly completing the R and R Form, and by way of the Chair of the Examination Board, Prof. Huw Summers, lacking independence. This was in breach of the *Guide to the Examination of Research Students*, paragraphs 13, 15, 16, 17, and 19.

56. Mr Blanche seems to me to be fixated on how the R and R Forms were signed and that such was a form of 'forgery', thus proving a conspiracy. First, there was no conspiracy. Second, there was no forgery. Prof. Summers openly states that he copied and pasted the signatures. Prof. Summers states that he did so as he was collating the report and this is what the different individuals said: it is normal practice. I accept such unhesitatingly. The only fraud or forgery would be if the individuals had not said what Prof. Summers put in the report and then Prof. Summers put their signature on the bottom of the page, as if they had. That is plainly not what happened.

57. None of the actions of the professional services staff are relevant to the contents of the report. I find, considering all the evidence I have seen, that they were simply trying to deal with queries. They are not part of a conspiracy, there was no conspiracy.

58. Paragraphs 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of the Regulations have not been shown to be breached.

59. Allegation dismissed.

Allegation 6)

The University failed to fairly conduct Mr Blanche's appeal against his examination decision. This was part of an agenda to fail Mr Blanche and cover up the dishonest actions of the University and its agents. This included the actions of the 'Filtering Committee', if it exists, and Prof. Paul Boyle.

60. Exactly what the University has done incorrectly according to Mr Blanche is a little unclear. I think it is that they have reached a decision against the wishes of Mr Blanche. If the appeal is because they did not overturn the Examination Board, that relies on challenging academic judgement and is not allowable. If it is because the appeal was transferred to a complaint, *i.e.*, this complaint, those rules appear to have been fully explained and fairly applied (see Annexes 6 and 9). No evidence of any failure has been produced.

61. Allegation dismissed.

Allegation 7)

Academic fraud has been committed by the University and its agents, including Mr Blanche's supervisors (Dr. Augustine Egwebe, Prof. Paul Rees, Dr. Zhongfu Zhou, Prof. Karol Kalna), the internal examiner (Prof. Lijee Li), the Examination Board, the Chair of that Board (Prof. Huw Summers), various professional services staff (such as Mrs. Zoe Perry, Mrs Michelle Rees, Mrs Sara Kane), and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle, and the external examiner (Dr. Dhammika Widanalage).

62. Mr Blanche has described such conduct variously as 'scientific fraud', 'academic fraud', or 'procedural fraud', and has done so in many documents (such as his Request for Academic Appeal [Annex 4] or his ERR [Annex 5]). Whichever term is considered, there are several points to note.

63. First, if there was conduct that could also be categorised as criminal, *e.g.* fraud by false representation, contrary to Fraud Act 2006, s1, I would have no hesitation in finding such, regardless of the identity of the actor.

64. Second, and importantly, the conduct that is alleged by Mr Blanche to amount to 'fraud' has already been considered by me above. The label of 'fraud' is just a framing of these alleged acts in a criminal manner. For the reasons explained above, I have not found the acts alleged to have happened.

65. Third, in any event, it is unnecessary to establish the extent to which any act that Mr Blanche contends is 'fraud' is criminal fraud, over and above considering the conduct alleged. This is not a criminal investigation, as I explained to Mr Blanche in one of my first emails to him dated 2 May 2023 (and as has been explained to him by others, such as Natalie Wathan on 4 May 2023). This benefits Mr Blanche. Matters he alleges do not need to be proved to the criminal standard. Mr Blanche does not need to prove the exact elements of the criminal offence alleged, *e.g.* fraud, under the Fraud Act 2006. We do not need to delve into, for example, the criminal definition of dishonesty or whether an individual sought to make a gain or cause a loss by a false representation, and all the complications regarding the *mens rea* of any respondent. What matters are the facts, and whether Mr Blanche has proved any of the facts he asserts entails the academic, procedural, scientific, or indeed any other type of alleged fraud. This allegation is unnecessary to consider as I have considered the underlying conduct.
66. Fourth, and finally, regarding Mr Blanche's claim of 'academic fraud' or 'scientific fraud', an element of that claim patently relies on a challenge to the academic view taken by those supervising and examining Mr Blanche. As explained to Mr Blanche on several occasions, challenging academic judgement is not available within this investigation.
67. I therefore do not find Allegation 7 proved.

Allegation 8)

Misconduct in a public office has been committed by numerous University employees, including the Examination Board, the Chair of that Board, Professor Huw Summers, and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Boyle.

68. Again, as with Allegation 7), this claim does not amount to an allegation of new conduct but rather the framing of already considered conduct through a criminal-law lens. The conduct has already been considered. There was no misconduct. Additionally, and once again as outlined above regarding Allegation 7), there is no utility in considering whether something amounts to criminal conduct, in any event. I therefore dismiss Allegation 8). I add that if I had to address this allegation, it is difficult to frame the University's employees or Examination Board as a 'public body' in the sense meant under this offence in the criminal law.

Conclusion

69. For the reasons set out above, I find that none of the allegations by Mr Blanche have been proved and dismiss every allegation. As I have not found any of Mr Blanche's allegations proved, there are no grounds to support any of the outcomes sought by him, and I therefore will not consider them.

SignedWilliam Seagrim.....

Date22 June 2023.....