

Dear Mr Astle

On 4<sup>th</sup> October the President will ask the Board of Governors to authorise compulsory redundancies in pursuance of the aims of the M2020 projects. On behalf of the better M2020 group of professors and the deputation which you met on 31<sup>st</sup> August we are asking you to circulate this letter and the attached document to all members of the Board of Governors.

Despite repeated attempts to engage through the School Boards, Senate and the Professors<sup>1</sup> group, the Senior Management Team and School managements have not engaged with the evidence and argument of the many staff with operating knowledge who question the rationale for, and fear the organisational consequences of, the M2020 projects. AMBS school management has, for example, refused to release its modelling of teaching requirements after the M2020 planned reduction in student numbers.

So the group of Professors which met with you has prepared a short document - False Necessity- where three cases evidence the reasoned concerns of staff in different schools about how the M2020 projects are based on management miscalculation. In SALC, the downsizing of modern languages does not consider the broader national context or available alternative strategies for Manchester; in AMBS, the planned reductions in staff numbers will increase teaching workloads; and in FBMH, the process and criteria for redundancy are both flawed.

In our view, these cases are not exceptional but illustrate broader problems which arise inevitably when top down strategy is being formulated on the basis of an uncritical use of benchmarking and KPIs. And the result, in our experience, is a grave organisational problems about staff disbelief in strategy

and alienation from management. We understand that you believe this not to be a problem and know you have no evidence on this point because the staff survey closed before the M2020 projects were announced.

So a group of staff at AMBS organised a simple survey at AMBS. They are now collating the results and preparing a summary which we will share with you. But the basics are already clear. The survey was sent out to 290 members of academic staff and the response rate within 10 days, after one reminder, was 63%. The bleak conclusion is that 82-88% of respondent academics are not convinced by the management rationale for M2020, do not think management has responded adequately to concerns and believe that M2020 has caused reputational damage. Most alarmingly, dissatisfaction at AMBS is almost as high amongst those who are not in scope for redundancy.

We believe the cases are representative and academic staff opinion is not markedly different in other schools. If so, the overall picture is of an organisation plunged into crisis because of management strategy. The issue then is how do we repair the damage by addressing fundamental issues like governance reform which is a precondition for more internal dialogue. The first constructive step would be to take compulsory redundancies off the table and this is entirely possible given the number of volunteers for severance is not hugely out of line with the targets for staff reduction.

We hope you will share this letter with members of your Board together with the document we have prepared.

Sincerely

Aneez Esmail and Karel Williams